Scanning for City Futures: a report to the Asia-Pacific Cities Summit Management Committee

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Contents

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

This report has multiple purposes: (1) to be used to develop the Conference Design, particularly, conference themes, of the 2003 Asia-Pacific Cities Summit; (2) to provide Brisbane City Council with a knowledge base of current trends and emerging issues from which it can develop long-term strategic directions; and (3) to provide a knowledge base for planning the future for other Queensland and Australian local councils. In effect, this report serves as a 'State of the Future of the City' Report.

The scans help determine what strategies should be pursued to further the goals of Brisbane. This is done by understanding the changing needs of the public and other stakeholders.

Scanning as a prerequisite for planning the future has history of at least 20 years. Leaders in this approach have been the Hawaii Judiciary and the US Council of State Policy and Planning Agencies in the 1980s, and the Virginia Courts in the 1990s. The National Center for State Courts, also in the USA, is currently engaged in scanning the future. The Singapore Subordinate Courts have institutionalized scanning.

In Australia, The Department of Justice, Victoria, has conducted a scan of the Judicial System. Currently the Office of Corrections Services Commissioner, Department of Justice, Victoria is engaged in scanning the futures of corrections.

Internationally, UNESCO through its Futuresco project engaged in cross-cultural scanning along a variety of topics, including education, ecology, communication and human rights.

Executive branches of government have generally been less prone to engage in futures planning as pressures generally come through the political electoral process and short-term budgetary cycles. Longer-term interests are often lost sight of.

However, most recently local government throughout the world has begun to engage in futures activities. This is due largely to the following factors: rapid advances in technology allowing for increased access and speed of delivery; globalization limiting the effectiveness of the nation-state; dramatically changing citizen demands that go far beyond rates, roads and rubbish; and the swift growth of social movements and third sector organizations reframing politics by re-including the ethical. One example of a city futures project is that of the UK local government association (www.lga.gov.uk). It uses scanning and scenario development to inform action by local government to secure a healthy future for the communities it serves. Mayors recognize that while their term in office may be limited, many of the problems these seek to address have solutions that require long term partnerships.

Scans are of utility as they provide the knowledge base for planning the future. They alert decision and policy-makers to the latest trends, to swings in citizen concerns.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Scans must be seen in the context for planning for the future. There are four main approaches.

1. **Problem-oriented planning**. In this approach, the problems facing the system are assembled and prioritized by the stakeholders. The utility of this approach is that the functional efficiency of the system increases; however, structural problems are often not noticed (meta-problems) and gains are often for the short-term.

2. **Mission-oriented planning**. In this approach, the system's fundamental core missions are determined. For example, the justice system as a bureaucracy with a responsibility to be accountable and transparent, or the justice system as a public institution with the responsibility to anticipate and respond to the changing judicial needs of the public. The utility of this approach is that there is clarity of core competence and mission – individuals know why they are doing what they do. The weakness in this approach is that it is static, not accounting for technological or economic changes or for the changing needs of citizens.

3. **Vision-oriented planning**. In this approach, strategic directions of the system are developed by discerning what stakeholders would prefer the system to move toward. While this approach moves the organization forward, it is often difficult to get buy-in from day-to-day managers who prefer the problem-oriented approach.

4. **The Future-oriented approach**. Strategic directions are determined by anticipating the short and long-term future. Environmental scanning aids in creating a map of the probable future. This map gives the tools to analyze how specific trends might impact core missions, which missions need to emphasized, which directions need to become a focus of human and budgetary resources. The weakness of this approach is that it can be overwhelming, as well it is difficult to ascertain what is relevant versus what is merely interesting.

TYPE OF PLANNING	PROBLEM	UTILITY
Problem	Reactive	Solves immediate concerns
	Politicized	Recognized by managers
	Banal focus	Puts "runs on the board"
Mission	Static	Clarity of core competence
Vision	Can be too lofty	Moves organization in desired direction
	Hard sell to some managers, often leaving them behind	Active
Future	Overwhelming	Proactive
	Relevance versus just interesting	Clarity of operating environment
		System wide big picture

SCANNING

Scanning seeks to identify issues and trends as evidenced in published material. These may be, for example, speeches by experts, items in newspapers, scholarly journal articles, magazine editorial pieces, as well as interviews with leading thinkers. Scanning is both volume driven — seeking to focus on issues where frequency is high (the smart city) — as well as leading indicator driven — searching for new issues of which there is only marginal support in the literature (the Bio Living City, for example). Scanning also seeks to understand which issues are located in the current paradigm and which issues *challenge* the current paradigm, and which issues are outside current understandings of issues facing cities (outside the doxa). Scanning requires an understanding of the micro dimensions of a particular field as well as the macro 'big picture'.

Scanning needs to be conducted on a regular basis, so as to able to track issues from being "beyond the horizon" to "on the horizon" to "today's problems". Regular tracking can also help identify anomalous issues. Scanning is similar to the more academic literature review; however, the issues presented are more focused and news item driven. While breadth and depth are important to this particular scan, it is relevance in terms of the design of the Asia-Pacific Cities Summit that is far more crucial and strategic directions for Brisbane City Council.

However — and this is crucial — scanning is, as far as possible, an objective assessment of the social, political, economic and technological environment. Scanning is generally less concerned with the search for specific information bits and more with gaining a thorough understanding of the future justice terrain. While individual scans are important, far more noteworthy are the trends and patterns — the themes — that emerge from environmental scanning.

These themes define future action.

SCANS

THEMES

The following themes have emerged from the scans.

1. Urban Reform

2. Transportation Planning

3. Smart City

4. Green City

5. Community and Healthy City

6. Globalization

7. Trends and Emerging Issues

8. Scenarios of City Futures

9. Visions of City Futures

10. Planning tools and methods

For each theme, some of the key ideas/issues are noted. Details are provided in the full scan.

Theme One – Urban Reform

1. Smart Growth. The industrial conditions (concentration of labour around place) that created sprawl are no longer there. Sprawl has reached its environmental and political limits. Smart Growth, focused on reducing greenhouse gases, facilitating the new economy, saving landscapes and the desire to rebuild community is smart economics and smart futures.

2. European Recommendations: (1) Tax reform, shifting the burden to consumption (pollution-producing fuels and highway congestion); (2) High-tech road pricing programs; (3) Long-term maintenance of urban public safety requires abandoning public housing complexes and incentives to strengthen families; (4) Using vouchers to better schools; (5) Mixed land uses can make urban land use more interesting (a richer fabric of neighborhood enterprises); (6) Revenue sharing among local, state and federal; (7) Raise excise tax on motor fuel; and (8) Liberal migration to cities.

3. Population growth is leading to increased sprawl, creating edge cities, and dramatic losses in productivity. Smart growth, transportation management, and new land use laws (acquiring farm and parkland) are likely to increase.

4. Urban Husbandry is revitalizing inner cities. This is different from high-capital project management. Urban husbandry includes farmer markets, trolley

systems, artist enclaves, public building and community space. Cities cannot project plan; they must steward and create spaces for revitalization.

5. Urban growth boundaries to discourage sprawl are likely to increase, as is smart growth, defined as: pedestrian friendly communities, a mix of housing types, a 'main street' type town centre, and less dependence on the car.

6. Livable and Sustainable Communities are foundational to the success of Australia. Specifically, this means: (1) Federal/state/local working together to create livable communities; (2) Investment will lead to globally competitive, livable and healthy cities, serviced by the highest quality infrastructure; (3) Closing the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged, thus enabling social participation; (4) Environment Sustainability through smart growth; (5) Regional approach to community development; (6) Best practice design for quality living environment, not just the cheapest alternatives; (7) Harmonize development and regulatory systems, coordinated and flexible as in the Albury-Wodonga program; and (8) Foster greater debate among business and communities in the debate about livable community, perhaps through a national roundtable.

7. Triangle of developers, local councils and administrative bureaucracies is thwarting change, creating the appearance of small towns and communities but generally these are gated or too small, without any necessary conveniences.

Theme Two – Transportation Planning

1. Reduce problems associated with traffic ($500 billion a year on deaths and injuries plus congestion, sprawl, noise, loss of forests and farms, and increasing carbon emissions) by banning cars from central areas, introducing cleaner fuels, fuel taxes, car sharing, coordinated transportation and land use policies, **or** funnel new investments toward rail, bus, and bicycle infrastructure so that people have a variety of attractive, non-car choices, with less damage to the environment.

2. Create car-free cities as they offer a more sustainable, healthier, and happier future than any plan to `improve' the car or ameliorate its impacts.

3. Ending gridlock through GPS, tolls, active traffic management (sensors), shared taxes, integrated bus system, and shared taxis.

4. Dual-model transportation systems. Since people will not give up their cars, a "dualmode transportation system" will result in transport that is safer, faster, cheaper, less stressful, and less polluting. Under such a system, vehicles will be used in two distinct modes: driven in the normal manner on the streets, and/or traveling automatically on high-speed dedicated guideways for trips of more than several miles

5. From a Car for all to Mobility for All. Mobility for all could reduce environmental demand, increase accessibility, improve the quality of life of

8

older and disabled people and offer new commercial opportunities to the very companies threatened by a reduction in traffic volume.

6 The car paradigm is at the heart of our environmental and social problems. European cities and Singapore show that an alternative light rail and other transportation modes are possible.

7 Transport planning needs to be integrated to include land use planning, community development and educational development. Curtiba, Brazil stands out as an example of innovative planning – a third world city that works.

Theme Three – Smart City

1. E-topia — Lean, green cities that work smarter, not harder by pursuing five basic design principles: dematerialization, demobilization, mass customization, intelligent operation, and soft transformation that is subtle, incremental, and nondestructive.

2. Tele-cities — Tele-villages virtually connected through individual computer systems or community kiosks. Community is created through connectedness.

3. Smart Cars — Making cars smarter through GPS, sniffers and other technologies that can ensure that the car shuts down if there is alcohol intake.

4. Working from home — The 5% of people who work from home will grow to 20% by 2002 and perhaps 40% by 2020.

5. Award for Intelligent City — Clarity of Purpose, Internet for all and vision for the future, so as to adapt to changing conditions (what happened to those cities based on railroads – where are they now?)

6. Smartness plus sustainability — In the cybernated city, machine intelligence will be linked to all the social and environmental information needed to analyse issues and generate ideal options for decision making. Like an electronic, autonomous nervous system, the Cybernated City will extend its sensors out into the social complex, then coordinate production and distribution on the basis of human needs in full accordance with the carrying capacity of the Earth.

7. Smart home — The home can be rewired, creating an intelligent house. The key is user friendliness.

Theme Four – Green City

1. Australian government system of rating housing on star system in the following nine categories: (1) biodiversity; (2) embodied energy; (3) energy consumption; (4) water consumption; (5) indoor air quality; (6) resource efficiency; (7) location and transport; (8) waste management; and (9) food production.

2. Disastrous environmental impacts if population forecasts for Brisbane are correct.

3. Green Architecture. Going beyond the tired recycling metaphor and designing objects so that they have a productive afterlife. This means, for example, designing for car companies a wool-and-cellulose upholstery textile that can, when composted, serve as garden mulch. Full life cycles must be designed into every product.

4. Reduce demands for cars and create healthier cities. 700,000 deaths in developing countries annually could be prevented if three pollutants — carbon monoxide, suspended particulate matter, and lead — were brought down to safe levels. Simple changes can create brighter futures, for example, 70% of water in developing nations is lost via faulty pipes.

5. Sustainable planning. This means city planning focused on environmental concerns in the context of health, economic development, public education and social justice.

6. Is Sustainability possible or will it always be a side issue (under construction)

7. Shift from Gray (drab) City consciousness to Green City consciousness focused on: the city as a living system; the city as an experience of nature and the city as a particular place.

8. Organically integrating nature and city through the direct transfer of know-how from nature to architecture.

Theme Five - Community and Healthy City

1. Foundational parameters for a healthy city are: environment, social justice, participation, basic needs, connection, urban design, access to health, and high health status.

2. Enhanced health is partly determined by level of social connection in city. Social inclusion leads to better health.

3. Place has become more important for individuals and community health as globalization makes place less important for business.

4. New Strategies for Communities. Communities must move away from dead-end strategies such as: competing for multinationals (leads to erosion of labour and environmental standards); export strategies (leads to vulnerability); lobbying for federal funds (vulnerability as funds are reduced or eliminated). Instead what is required is: A Community Bill of Rights; A State of the City Report; Community-Friendly Business Schools; Community Reinvestment; Local Purchasing; and, Real Devolution leading to self-reliance.

5. Placelessness — Postmodern Globalization has led to the search for nostalgia for place. However, this is often reactionary, that is, exclusionary, and even fascist. Postmodern urbanscapes may however lead to neighborhood community development.

6. From space to place. Space is empty, place is filled, has meaning. NGOs can help as long as they move from protest to project.

7. New leaders are likely to arise from the community development movement.

8. Expanded notions of community development that are inclusive of physical, intellectual, financial, and political. E.g. security, partnerships, local jobs.

9. Violence and civic engagement. Local civic engagement does not only lead to social capital but it can prevent violence during times of upheaval and crisis.

10. Slow cities. Slow cities stress environmental policies that create public green spaces and promote new ways to dispose of garbage. They also agree to restore old parts of the city before expanding to new areas. This movement is focused on ending the mad rush of rush hour, drive through cuisine and multinational branding.

11. Gift Economies. Gift economies can revitalize local neighborhoods, can succeed when Federal and State project management fail. They empower local communities. The Gift economy expands as opposed to social capital, which is consumed as it is used. The gift economy enables and ennobles a people.

12. Community involvement leads to community power. Neighborhood initiatives have led to green teams, declaration of community rights, partnerships of neighborhood and city, holistic development and community inventory.

13. Symbiotic Cities. Cities must heal, become more self-sufficient, green, learn from each other, and above all learn from nature. The alternatives are global megalopolis and sick world: sick city.

14. New technologies could create urban villages, individuals working and living where they choose.

15. Healthy megacities. Given the reality of megacities, how can they become healthier? A healthy megacity is one which reduces its resource inputs and waste outputs, whilst simultaneously improving the quality of life for its inhabitants. Healthy megacities are possible if appropriate policy actions are taken.

Theme Six - Globalization

1. Cities as Agents of Global Change. Instead of merely being impacted upon by global change, cities can create change, or for example, political change through their values, e.g. on policy towards Burma.

2. Multiculturalism. Multicultural cities are likely to be leading indicators of future; for example, the French city of Toulouse is where Europe is likely to be in 20 years.

3. New Challenges coming from: deregulation of state and local authority and revenues; loss of revenue through competition; governance challenges of applying new technology to improve delivery of public services; and the loss of loss of skilled computer professionals to the private sector, and potential revenue losses from electronic commerce);

4. Edge or A la Carte cities are likely to spread.

5. 100 emerging supercities are developing. They have the vital elements: water, transport to hinterland, domed stadium, adequate wiring for telecommunications, green infrastructure, excellence in a field of technology, new political structures that are cross jurisdiction and project focused.

6. Golden Age City is one that has "a unique buzz, a unique fizz, a special kind of energy, will prove more magnetic than ever for the production of products and, above all, the performance of services."

7. Second-Tier cities are developing because of globalization, leading to clear winners and losers (with second tier as the losers).

8. Hong Kong currently has a yang policy in respect to globalization – hyperconnectivity, brand name image, global city, but it is missing a yin image – sustainability, liveability, well-being. Can a mix be possible? Yin-Yang?

9. Communities that create the most livable environment will win the globalization sweepstakes; that is, increased and qualitatively enhanced investment and economic growth. Sustainability is thus a goal in itself, as well as being capable of leading to economic development.

10. Australian government talk on sustainability is not matching practice.

11. Urban problems ahead. Globalization and migratory diasporas are a source of survival as well as creativity; new forms of cultural politics that revolves around complex questions of difference, representation, identity, citizenship, and local democracy; transnational identity formation; "third worlding" of major First World city-regions; and the ecologies of fear these phenomena produce.

Theme Seven — Trends and Emerging Issues

1. Hot Towns. Unlike earlier waves of migrants, Hot towns are being created by wave migrants that are skilled, well-educated, relatively affluent, and often retired.

2. Humanizing the city, linking cultural pluralism, sustainability with deep democracy, new forms of governance. Without a revival of civic spaces, ungovernability will result.

3. Paradox of highly differentiated globalized societies (from mass industrial modes to customized individualized creative fluid modes) and vision of sustainability.

4. New urbanities are transforming the Inner city, generally revitalizing it. Immigrants from other countries and a growing cadre of native-born migrants, largely young, single, educated, and childless are central to this transformation.

5. Disasters – earthquakes, tsunamis – are likely to inflict heavy damage to cities. This is especially as cities become more complex.

6. Mental health problems of cities of today and, even more, of tomorrow are many and severe. They complement and aggravate other health problems that endanger existence and quality of life.

7. Third world cities in crisis. Common characteristics of these cities are the massive social dislocation, polarizing inequality, uneven distribution of resources and congestion, pollution and environmental degradation. They must become democratic, productive, inclusive, sustainable, cultural and educational.

8. The emergence of the polycentric city, enhancing the peripheral districts and sub-centres in terms of better management, cultural diversity, and improved transport.

9. Gender and the city. What would the city look like if designed from feminist principles?

10. Postmodernity and hyper-reality challenge the notion of the traditional physical city. Sim-city becomes the real with reality the simulacra.

11. Zoos and civilization. Zoos will continue to draw people, but developments in genetics will make the zoos of the future truly unusual. Every museum is a repository of animals waiting to be resurrected through genetic technology.

12. E-governance is set to take off. In India, it appears it can be used as a way to bypass corrupt officials. Bio gas and other energy sources can run the Net cheaply, allowing enhanced access. In Europe, numerous cities are experimenting with e-governance. These include Tampere (Finland), Manchester (UK), Venice (Italy) and Eindhoven (The Netherlands). In a later stage we will involve the South African cities of Capetown and Johannesburg as well, and perhaps some Asian and American cities. Preliminary findings are that: E-governance is a very complex matter. It entails new relationships between government and city users (which can be citizens, companies, commuters or visitors). It also requires new types of relationships between the public and the private sector, and among public sector actors.

Theme Eight – Scenarios of City Futures

1. Inayatullah's Scenarios:

A. Globalized and Smart. The A.I. city sensing us;

B. Sustainable and Connected. Rural and other communities in authentic conversation and interaction. Stable in regards to population; and

C. Multicultural city – alternative ways of knowing, spiritual, indigeneous, modern, postmodern. Feng shui as central.

2. Inayatullah's Transportation Scenarios:

A. Great Divide. Smartness and globalization for the rich and nothing for the poor.

B. Smart for All. Smart cars, houses and transportation systems.

C. From a car for all to Mobility for all.

3. Saul's scenarios:

A. Smart cars and Smart houses. More safety and interactivity.

B. Carless Global Village. Community prospers.

C. Café's society. Resurgent inner city communities.

4. Tegart and Jewell:

A. Econologic City – Rich. Hi-Tech, Internet connected, Community & Government responsive.

B. Monopolis – Sustainable, Hi-tech tropical, megacity. Stringent regulations and cars banned from city. Slums are abolished. It has been redesigned with more efficient resource allocation, mixed use land planning, innovative transport modes, and a target of four square meters of open space for every resident.

C. Fat City – vibrant intercultural and intellectual interaction – a concentrated network of self-governing communities. Corrupt and convoluted Bureaucracy has been superseded significant local democracy and participation. With low unemployment, concern for the elderly and disadvantaged and substantial decision making at the community level, Fat City is a megacity on a human scale.

5. Marvin Manchester Scenarios:

A. Demythologized City.

B. Integrated and Sustainable City – environment and community are key

C. Better Led City – Leadership is the key variable

D. Longer term future – Future is the key variable, end of short termism

E. Cyber fantasy city.

6. Daffara's Scenarios for the Sunshine Coast:

A. "Amorpohous Suburbs in SEQ SuperCity"

- Weak regional government and planning policy lead to urban sprawl.

- Social isolation increases as those who are unable to drive.

- Inequitable.

B. "Diverse Sunshine Coast Towns"

C. Triple Bottom line by half of organizations

- Sustainable development
- Social interaction promoted
- Social capital grows
- Diverse local economy

D. "Sunshine Coast Archologies"

- Urban form is transformed from sprawl to architectural ecology.
- Triple bottom line as dominant form of accounting
- Voluntarism is high, social capital is vibrant.
- Communities live in walk-able mixed use towns

E. "The Sunshine Coast Bio-City"

- Regional governance and planning policy is transformed by the sustainability/glo-cal movement. It is replaced by community self action and governance, enabled by technology. The city becomes a living entity co-habiting in a symbiotic relationship with its citizens.
- Biocity is walkable, carfree and connected to other Biocities by rapid maglev trains, airships and other forms of transports.

7. Malik's Third World Scenarios:

A. The inherited city – dilapidated; unkempt and disowned but still a repository of knowledge

B. The modern city – is built for the government, the decision-makers and the well off to project an image of progress and affluence but without the technology and economy or resources to sustain it. – A meaningless construct of costly images irrelevant to the life and need of many.

C. The vast slum city – urban poor and rural migrants, without help skills or resources.

Theme Nine – Visions of the Future

1. End of Sprawl vision of unlimited low-density sprawl. Instead of a new vision, governments are focused on urban management.

2. Garden City Vision:

- Within an overall park-like setting, there will be community gardens, hydroponic farms, orchards, vineyards, and solar-domed conservatories. City centers will be "hanging gardens," the main trafficways will be lineal parks, and local streets will be sheathed with canopies of foliage. As our cities are made to leaf and bloom again,

gardening will be a favorite avocation and nature appreciation and outdoor recreation will become ever more a part of city living.

3. Brisbane Vision

- [A city of inclusive communities](); [A smart city](); [A prosperous city](); [A creative city](); [A clean and green city;]() [An accessible city](); [A regional and world city]().

7. Belfast Vision

- A United City
  A City Of Liveable Communities
  A City Of Culture And Sport
  A Healthy City
  A Learning City
  A Prosperous City

  Key values behind this vision are: **equity** - fairness of treatment of both people and places across the city; **education** - knowledge and learning as the means to make the most of ourselves and our city; **economy** - a competitive economy that allows the city to earn its living and provide all with the opportunity for a decent livelihood; **efficiency** - the best use of resources, opportunities and strengths; **empowerment** - new forms of decision-making that enable all voices to be included, and partnerships that allow for effective networking across agencies and sectors; **environment** - an awareness of, and respect for, the surrounding natural environment and a keenness for aesthetic design and cleanliness in the built environment; and **excellence** - development across the city in all fields to be underpinned by quality and

8. Ananda Nagar – the Eco-Spiritual City. The Vision:

- Spirituality, global/local community, economic democracy, and multi-culturalism. Central to this rethinking of the city, this new vision, is the re-situation of land from individual and state ownership to cooperative means.

Theme Ten – Planning Tools and Methods

1. Traditional Planning a Mistake. The traditional planning practice of assuming that the future will continue like the present is a mistake. Responding to change after the fact increases the costs to the city. External circumstances and public attitudes are changing so rapidly that the practices of the past are quickly becoming obsolete.

2. Creative actors are central instead of strategic planning A creative city region hosts *creative actors*. These include not only the obvious actors such as artists, but also those who are capable of negotiating borders and of abandoning secure lines and inherited truths. Creative actors are able to co-operate with others, are open to the experiences of different cultures, and understand the `enemy' at the far end of the table. Creative action involves being open, communicative, informed and willing to develop a vision … a creative city region is an environment where everybody is invited to develop creative potentials in an experimental situation.

3. Models of planning must include the image of the city: visual but also touching upon the other senses.

4. Long term foresight is needed. Current trends are leading to future-shock and creating inadvertent consequences. For example, in the USA federal funds encourage home ownership but this has generally only been for whites, thus leading to racial tensions.

5. Complexity leads to new roles for the planner. Planner must be an administrative, regulator; an advocate and bargainer; an inventor or innovator; and a problem finder or social learner.

6. Asian situations are unique and thus Asian city planners need to develop their own models and modes of planning

7. Visual preference surveys is an excellent way to help citizens imagine their preferred future.

8. Functionalist paradigms of city planning, design and construction in the guise of ubiquitous infrastructures such as transportation limit the livability of cities. Participatory scenario development is a far more effective way to design the future.

A MAP OF THE FUTURE

The Themes provide the knowledge base for what is likely to occur in the future. However, they must be contextualized by two methodological tools. First is emerging issues analysis. Emerging issues analysis uses the S-curve shape to locate issues along a continuum. Current issues are near the top of the curve. They are well-researched problems. Lower down is the trend line. There is considerable quantitative data to support the trend, however, the final trajectory of it is not yet clear. Will it continue to go upward, for example, population migration to Brisbane and South-east Queensland, or are there factors which will lead the trend line to peak (job possibilities) or are there events that may cause the trend line to swerve directions (global warming, urban sprawl, for example)? At the bottom of the S-curve are emerging issues. These issues may or may not eventuate, and generally they are between 10-20 years forward. Anticipating them is crucial for providing decision-makers ample lead-time. However, since some emerging issues may not eventuate allocating funding to research possible problems is difficult. Yet, through adequate lead-time, considerable opportunities can emerge. For example, instead of focusing on Biotech after other cities have entered the race, why not forecast emerging technologies and invest in them, or most importantly, why not create cultural, economic and knowledge capacity for learning and inventing.

Generally, the Themes provided in this scan are of the problem variety (Urban reform) and the trend variety (globalization, smart city). However, in the section on Trends and Emerging Issues, some are further out – the carless city, bio city, for example. Discerning the issues along an S-curve can thus provide valuable information to Brisbane City Council in terms of the changing expectations and needs of the community.
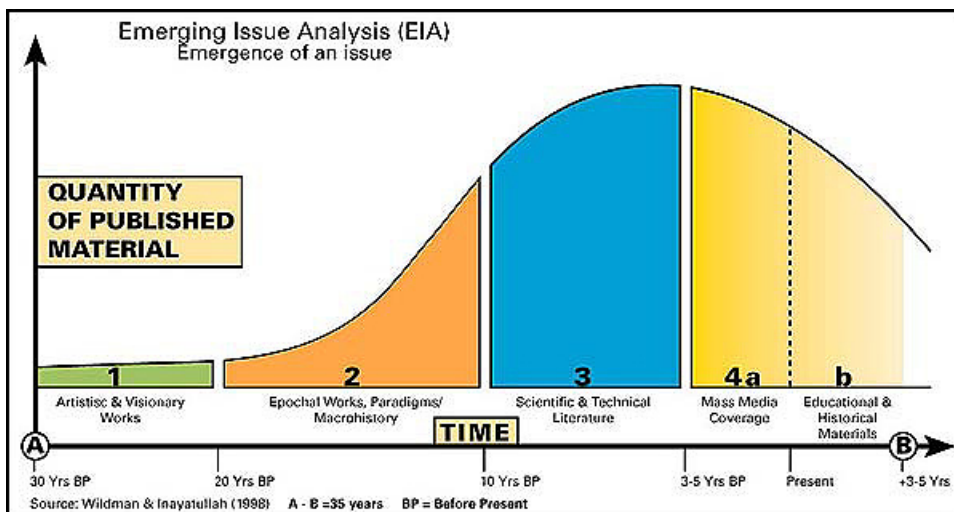
The S-Curve of Emerging Issues Analysis

The second methodological tool is the futures triangle. The top of the triangle is the Pull of the Future. The pull is the image of the future that which defines what citizens and communities desire. It is the preferred future. However, there are often competing visions. In this scan, we can see that there is competition between Smart Growth, the Green Healthy City and the Cyber Global City. And over the longer period there are new images emerging such as the Eco-Spiritual City. There are also negative images, pulls to be avoided – the economically and socially divided city, for example, and certainly urban sprawl.

At the bottom of the triangle is the push. These are the drivers. These drivers include: globalization (privatization, a global market, the porousness of the nation state, breakdown of the Western worldview); Demographic shifts (Aging, international and regional migration, the global teenager); technological (GPS systems, the Internet, smart houses), and new worldviews (Genomics and customization; Sustainability and future generations). These drivers push the direction that the city is likely to take. Which direction it actually does take, however, is partly dependent on a third variable. This is the weight. The weight is difficult to change. In the context of the City, this is usually the partnership between developers and local councils. However, with globalization, the weight as well comes from the dictates of global corporations. Cities define their policies based on attracting such corporations. Other weights include patriarchy, class, and in the case of the city, endless and continued economic growth – the paradigm of growth. Competing visions challenge this final weight however. The discourses of Genomics, the Net and Multiculturalism all imagine the city with far more choice, individual and civilizational choice. The competing vision of sustainability, however, focuses more on community choice. Place becoming far more important once globalization and the Net create the conditions for placelessness. More expanded notions of Sustainability imagine a city focused on environmental principles along with issues of social justice, multicultural inclusive and intergenerational solidarity.

Pull

Push   Weight
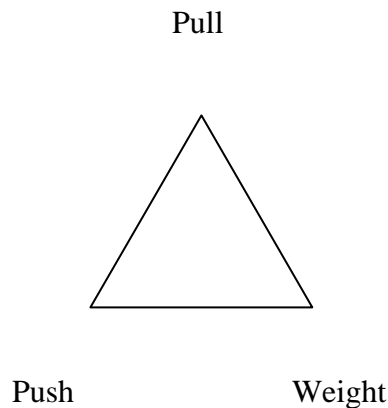
The Futures Triangle

What the future, thus, will ultimately look like is essentially a political question. Political, however, is defined in a complex way. It is partly about definitional politics: what is real, what is important. It is partly about economic politics – who has what. It is partly about electoral politics – who wins elections. And it is partly about popular community concerns – the values expressed by civil society. In this sense, while the probabilities of the future can be known, the future itself cannot, since it is always in the process of being created. Humans have agency. The scans suggest that cities do as well, or at least may.

TRENDS AND ISSUES

While there numerous trends (directional, frequency) and issues (overarching concerns) that emerge from the themes and scans, the following stand out.

1. The sense of place paradoxically increases with globalization and the Internet. Community development and relations becomes even more important. The vision is that of a local neighborhood in a global world.

2. There is a direct correlation between social inclusion – connectedness – and individual and community health. A City thus must be about creating connectivity (net) and connectedness (belonging). Not doing so creates more health costs in the longer run.

3. There are real alternatives to urban sprawl – integrated planning, a carless future, taxation of consumption, energy efficiency. Urban sprawl does not have to be the future. Individuals and cities have agency.

4. These alternatives, while possibly more expensive up front, in the long run will save money as environmental and health costs will decrease and productivity will increase. A good environment and good health (particularly access) is a building block of good business.

5. Transportation planning must be integrated to land use planning, educational planning and community development. Planning, however, must be open-ended, experimental, and not rigid or "master" plan based.

6. The previous vision of unending sprawl has ended (as a vision if not a practice) as well as the functional planning approach that underlies it. New Visions and approaches are being developed.

7. A new paradigm of the city is emerging – it is (1) Community based; (2) Green; (3) Healthy; and (4) Inclusive.

8. An alternative vision is the global, high-tech, smart city. An emerging issue is: Can this be reconciled with the local vision? Can there be a Glo-Cal city?

9. Alternative Economies particularly the notion of a gift economy push conventional understandings of social capital and the commons. Gift economics is a clear emerging issue.

10. Smart technologies are being pushed by suppliers and are not necessary foundational to citizens – community is!

11. E-governance is and can be used to enhance transparency and democracy. Pilot projects are necessary and increasing.

12. New types of city planning, using foresight, scenarios and complexity are on the rise.

13. There is clarity among writers on which directions the city should not go in, that is, current sprawl, anti-green policies must be transformed. Doing so requires new levels of coordination and cooperation between federal-state and city as well as between social groups, locally and globally.

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