

INNOVATING FOR INCLUSION + EQUITABLE GROWTH

HOW INNOVATION IMPACTS EQUITY IN THE SMART CITY AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

On January 22, 2019 at the Guadalupe Theater in San Antonio, Bryan C. Lee, a design justice advocate and architect from New Orleans was asked to speak about his work at Colloqate and throughout the US. This event was organized by the City of San Antonio Office of Innovation, Overland Partners, and AIA San Antonio as part of DreamWeek San Antonio.

The City of San Antonio Office of Innovation and architects, designers, planners facilitated two discussions about smart cities and the built environment. The discussions were guided by prompts but were not restricted by an established framework. This one-pager aims to document group discussions from that evening.

Event Description

Innovation creates both opportunity and unintended consequences. Good design and development unifies people, profoundly affects the health and well-being of communities, and sustains our unique identities, cultures, stories, and experiences.

In Smart Cities and the built environment, where new technologies and the data generated by them are poised to re-shape how people connect to public services, how does innovation impact equity? How can employing principles of design justice to empower historically underrepresented communities create inclusive spaces in the smart city?

**EVENT WAS
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COLLABORATORS

COSA OFFICE OF INNOVATION MISSION

We put the City at the forefront of innovation by challenging the status quo, finding creative solutions, and continuously improving City services.

OVERLAND PARTNERS MISSION

Unlock embedded potential by modeling how we should live and influencing the world through the practice of architecture.

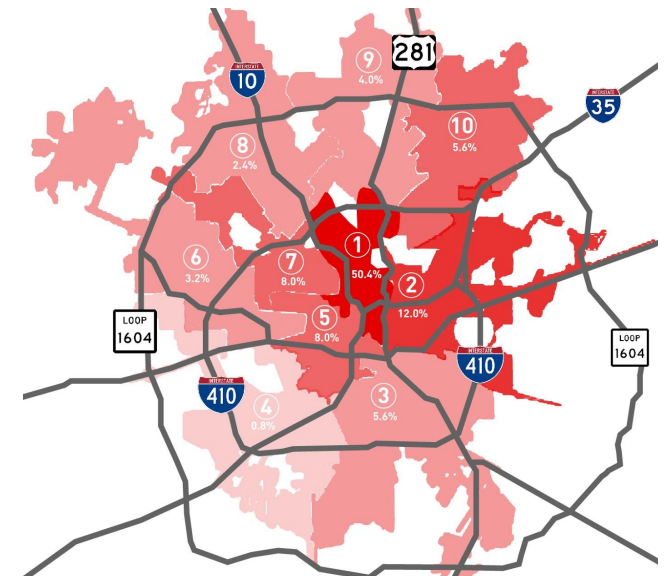
AIA SAN ANTONIO MISSION

AIA San Antonio unites the community of architects to advance architecture as professional craft and shape a more livable and sustainable future.

DREAMWEEK MISSION

Each annual DreamWeek Summit comprises a series of events designed with a singular purpose in mind: to foster the free exchange of ideas on universal issues affecting the human race. Ideas become empowered through human interaction. In a city defined by its diverse cultural heritage, DreamWeek is bridging the gap between people and ideas through an international summit on tolerance, equality, and diversity.

**About 150 individuals gathered at the event.
Attendees were from all 10 San Antonio city
council districts.**



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process

After a presentation given by Bryan C. Lee, attendees were asked to move to one of two groups. Two discussions were facilitated about the built environment and smart cities. Both groups were asked about forms of injustices in their neighborhood(s)/communities. The following questions were identified to guide the conversations but evolved and verbal report outs were given after about an hour of discussion time:

dialogue

SMART CITY DISCUSSION

WHAT DOES DIGITAL INCLUSION MEAN TO YOU?

User friendly interface for city services + platforms impacted // less of a digital divide // app to report potholes to city // access to internet // access to mobile service

WHAT DOES A SMART CITY MEAN FOR SAN ANTONIO?

emotionally smart // digital citizenry // social, community and cultural development // tangible + intangible system // diversity of experiences + diversity of assistance // education efforts for tutoring // multi-generational exchanges about technology // parks // free wifi

take-aways/action items

SMART CITY DISCUSSION

Discuss who cities are smart for.

Developing infrastructure that brings systems together (schools, roads, tech, etc.)

Shift in thinking about what successful space looks like and how to include all people of all accessibilities.

Become more transparent with efforts.

Focus on how conversations come into fruition and how the public is informed about how their conversations were implemented.

Understanding who is included in data and who needs to be included.

Create a new platform for participation.

QUESTIONS:

- Do forms of injustice persist within your community/neighborhood? If so, what are they?
- Do those experiences affect how you access government & digital services?
- What is your experience accessing government services and digital services today?
- What would better access look like for you and/or your family?
- What would equitable design in community engagement look like?
- How can San Antonio create a cohesive built-environment and community fabric that responds to change and preservation?

BUILT ENVIRONMENT DISCUSSION

FORMS OF INJUSTICE: no sidewalks // others defining "blight" // lack of green space, lack of accessibility // lack of nursing homes // toxic land use near residential land // disinterest + marginalization of people // lack of public transit // lack of integrated ADA/accessable spaces // lack of infrastructure to manage flooding // failure of decision-makers to fully evaluate impacts of policies // poor air quality // not all voices are valued equally // majority of funds used for unaffordable housing // meetings are set but results are not seen // ramp locations

WHAT WOULD EQUITABLE DESIGN LOOK LIKE?:

community leads the meeting // opportunities to respond in multiple forms // Spanish translators + ASL // decisions made should be best for "all" not "me" // transparency of data collected // proof that issues have been heard.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT DISCUSSION

When questions are being asked, who is being asked?

Feedback and follow up from community meetings need to be prioritized.

Give all neighborhoods and communities public places to gather and speak.

Meetings need to be free.

New developments should be required to consider context, history, culture of place.

Do not rush community meetings.

Language needs to be accessible.

Clearer sharing and notification of zoning changes / increase notifications.

Gather where people already are.

Include information regarding developments in other mailings.

Build trust with listening and follow through.

