Transformation, Liveability, and Opportunities in Urban Planning

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By

John G. Jung

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To my wife Carolyn and my children, Christopher, Michael, and Catherine who have often explored the world of incredible cities, towns, and regions with me. And to the many people in each of the communities around the world who shared their stories and cultures with me over the many decades.

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SYNOPSIS

The evolution of ideas offers inspiration and evidence that no idea is too small or too old to turn into tomorrow's innovation. This book draws together thought leadership from the author who has been involved in urban planning and design, economic development, and the rise of smart cities and intelligent communities the world over for many decades. While the foundation of the author's work has been in urban planning and in the technical fields that involved high-speed broadband and related development of digital technologies and data, his focus has been from a people-first perspective and their communities, enabling these technologies to create smart, liveable, sustainable, and intelligent communities.

His early work as a planner, urban designer, and economic developer helped to shape the ideas of evolving cities into smart and intelligent communities. Over a quarter century ago, he and his colleagues formed the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) which, as a social enterprise, helped hundreds of communities around the world give direction to their strategies making their cities, towns, and regions become smart, liveable, sustainable, and intelligent communities. While ICF's principles inspired many communities around the world, it also inspired many global consultants and organizations to use these principles to advise the communities that they worked with. Examples include projects as far afield as Vietnam's Binh Duong Smart City to Toronto's Intelligent Waterfront and from Eindhoven in The Netherlands to Taoyuan's Intelligent Aerotropolis in Taiwan.

In ninety-one chapters, this book brings together the author's writing in articles, blogs, books, and journals that have contributed to the current thinking about city development, especially in the direction of creating smart cities and intelligent communities. Hopefully, it will act as inspiration, help communities as a guide, and offer a framework for cities to evolve beyond merely developing smart cities and create more liveable, sustainable, and engaging intelligent communities.

Image 1: Intelligent Aerotropolis, Airport City in Taoyuan, Taiwan

Image 2: Binh Duong Smart City, Vietnam

PREFACE

Over millennia, cities evolved as vibrant centers of life. In the grand spectrum of human civilization, many of these cities have developed their diverse communities and cultures with the rhythm of bustling streets, advancements in infrastructure and technology, and the enthusiasm of curious individuals advancing innovations and sharing their knowledge through books, libraries, and storytelling. More than just conglomerations of buildings and infrastructure, cities mimic living organisms that foster countless connections, innovations, and opportunities advanced through the determination of civic leadership and human capacity. Humanity's narrative is revealed over time in these brilliant grandstands we call our towns, cities, and regions. Cities are the magnets that attract skilled workers, foreign investment, innovations, and jobs to their epicenters. People come to these cities, towns, and regions for the promise of economic prosperity, education, and professional advancement. They are melting pots of traditions, catalysts for ideas, crucibles for meeting aspirations, and vessels for cultures coming together from around the world to celebrate and create a rich tapestry reflecting the wonders of human diversity and heritage.

This book will cover the multitude of ways cities, towns, and regions and their partners in the private sector and academia play a vital role in the lives of their citizens. Equally, we recognize the importance of developing and maintaining a skilled workforce and their inclusion and active engagement in the process of developing their cities and communities.

But before we journey on a global visit over the past couple of decades on essays, articles, blogs, and passages from books that I have contributed to over the years, let me explain who I am and what I have been up to.

For over half a century I have been advocating the creation of the very best in cities, the very best in communities, and the very best neighborhoods and public spaces possible, especially from a "people-first" design and development perspective. I started as an urban planner in the early 1970s. I worked on developing strategic municipal plans, but I also planned and designed the development of communities, streets and subdivisions, exhibitions, public spaces, and urban infrastructure. I wrote policy,

developed urban design guidelines, and curated public programs and exhibits of the plans that I worked on. Following my undergraduate degree in Urban Planning from the University of Waterloo in 1973, my first professional planning position was for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador working across the province out of St. John's. I wrote a fictionalized account based on some of my unique experiences in a book entitled "All Around The Circle." Thereafter, in 1975, my wife, Carolyn, and I moved to England to obtain my master's degree in urban design from the University of Manchester. Afterward, I pursued opportunities for my urban design skills professionally in Calgary, Alberta, Fredericton, New Brunswick, and Toronto, Ontario focused on creating the best municipal plans and public spaces in these cities to which I could contribute.

Today some people might refer to this urban design activity as placemaking, working with community groups and municipal assets to create public spaces that became vital, memorable, and enjoyable places in their cities. But often, placemaking is executed as temporary endeavors and affected by limited funding and changing attitudes. Rather, urban design, as I was trained in, informs the process of designing buildings and the spaces between them, creating places that are not only functional, attractive, memorable, and sustainable - they bring together the practices of architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture, and engineering to give shape to the communities that people will occupy.

Among my varied aspects of work as an urban planner and urban designer for municipalities was to build the foundations for long-term, sustainable urban development in these cities. This ranged from Official and Secondary Plans for communities as well as developing "built-form guidelines" based on sun and wind data and excellence in urban design principles. Using technology based on wind tunnels and water flumes, we experimented with built-form design to mitigate the negative impacts of wind and draw out positive design-related attributes from significant project areas of the city of Toronto. Two key areas I undertook to do this in were along a 20-block area around the Bloor-Yonge Corridor in Toronto and the Toronto Waterfront, especially in developing its dome stadium.

Later when innovative technologies such as teleports and high-speed broadband became increasingly important, I became an early advocate for cities preparing for the coming digital age. I recall that my early advocacy was sometimes met with skepticism. When I think back to the early 1980s of the talks that I gave, the articles I wrote, and the meetings I attended, I

was often a lone voice in articulating what we now see as our common way of life in the 2020s. I was not a visionary. I just observed globally what others saw within their limited silos. Then as an urban planner would naturally do, I brought many of these unique and singular insights into a more holistic and integrated perspective. Slowly, I began to gain converts to see what I saw. Today, I am happy to see that a substantial number of people, agencies, and municipalities have engaged in strategic approaches to applying technology, data, and methodologies that the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) has advocated for over the past quarter century to create the most sustainable, resilient, prosperous, and empathetic communities possible.

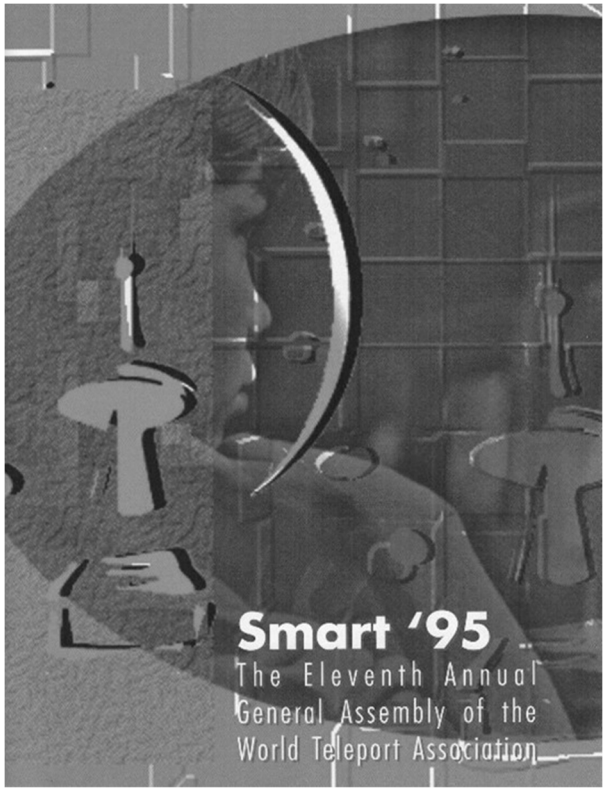
With a major economic downturn in cities in the late 1990s I turned to the relatively new field of economic development in municipal administrations where I spent over three decades in cities and regions creating and implementing economic development strategies. The City of Toronto started an office of economic development in the early 1980s, after which many other cities began to develop similar offices across Ontario and Canada. My time to head up such an office of economic development came in 1996 when I returned to Calgary to lead the Calgary Economic Development Authority (CEDA) as its President and CEO. Thereafter I joined the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA, now called Toronto Global) during its inaugural years. It brought together thirty-two municipalities and regional authorities to market the greater region globally to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in jobs, investment, and talent. After nearly a dozen years, I left the GTMA as its President and CAO to join as CEO of Canada's Technology Triangle (CTT) in the Waterloo Region of Ontario before focusing full-time as Chairman and Co-Founder of ICF, headquartered in New York City. ICF grew, in part, out of my work with the World Trade Centers (WTC) and World Teleport Association (WTA) since starting with the Toronto Harbor Commission (THC) as its Planning and Development Director.

During my time living in Toronto since 1980, I taught, lectured, wrote, and explored topics about cities and communities of all sizes and locations around the world that linked excellence in urban planning, urban design, and economic development. Among several initiatives I worked on, I initially collaborated with the World's Winter Cities organization through my time with the City of Toronto. It promoted winter activities and tourism in northern cities, such as Toronto, but it also exposed me to the issues of climate change. During my time with the City of Toronto, they also allowed

me to pursue a unique celebratory experience of Toronto's neighborhoods, called the Sesquicentennial Celebratory Walking Tours. Toronto celebrated its 150th anniversary called its Sesquicentennial in 1984. I proposed a 32-week set of walking tours throughout its key neighborhoods employing hundreds of local, national, and even internationally recognized Canadian celebrities to lead and contribute their stories about each neighborhood. The celebrities included all former living Toronto mayors, provincial premiers, sports and entertainment celebrities, well-known authors, artists, and business executives, and even a former Governor General of Canada who had a connection with a specific neighborhood in Toronto. The walking tours, coordinated by the city's planners connected to these neighborhoods, exposed them to greater awareness by large numbers of people who attended the weekly tours. It also initiated the development of a significant number of tourism and walking tour endeavors in future years. While it predated the "walking cities" and "15-minute cities" phenomenon, it helped to solidify the value of neighborhoods, their main streets, and special neighborhood features.

Once I became engaged with the WTC through several of its committees and joined the Board of the WTA, I was fortunate to be able to travel extensively. I met global and iconic thought leaders at that time, such as Vinton Cerf, Nicholas Negroponte, and Moshe Safdie. I also participated in projects of importance in the life of cities and communities. Accordingly, throughout the 1980s, I was exposed to opportunities through these organizations in some of the world's biggest, busiest, and most remarkable cities, towns, and regions.

Through this work, I eventually formed my thinking around creating an institute or forum for dialogue among cities that could be encouraged to create the best cities, towns, and regions for their citizens and to share their learning with others around the world. After joining the Board of the WTA at a meeting in Seville, Spain in 1992, I committed to organizing the WTA's global summit in Toronto in 1995. Subsequently, the first bombing of the World Trade Center took place in 1993. WTA's offices were located there and were seriously affected. After moving to the other tower, we sought and hired a new WTA office administrator, Robert Bell. Later he brought his colleague, Louis Zacharilla to join as WTA's Director of Marketing. With this new WTA staff, I formed an amazing relationship with them that eventually evolved into the initial stages of the Intelligent Community Forum. In collaboration with WTA, we organized and hosted the world's first "smart cities" conference in Toronto in 1995, called SMART'95.


Smart '95
The Eleventh Annual
General Assembly of the
World Teleport Association

STOP

Images 3-5: Smart'95 was the world's first gathering in Toronto in 1995 to explore Smart Cities. Cover of the Report. Conference exhibits highlighted advanced smart city applications and solutions available in 1995.

Following this extraordinarily successful event, my colleagues, Robert Bell, Louis Zacharilla, and I co-founded what eventually became known as the Intelligent Community Forum. Robert brought the management discipline and research capabilities to ICF. He also wrote most of the material on the ICF website, developed the ICF reports, and curated and edited the books that all of the co-founders collaborated on. He also produced the Accelerator training series and is an excellent speaker and workshop leader. Lou brought his incredible marketing expertise and has been a major force behind the ICF awards programs and virtual initiatives, especially his successful podcast series and stimulating keynote addresses. And I brought my experience in city development and economic development to ICF. I also had experience in developing strategic plans, leading global delegations, providing expertise on city development and economic development, and skillsets in sourcing funds to help develop new organizations such as ICF and ICF Canada and the institute and national organization in Taiwan and the ICF Institute in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. All of us contributed to the evolving ideas and overall thought leadership in ICF. However, each of our independently written articles and blogs on ICF's Website and in other media represented our individual thoughts and perspectives.

With funding that I secured from the Province of Ontario in 1999, we developed the first research on creating the best cities, towns, and regions