

Urban Planning for Social Resilience in Urban Neighborhoods. Transformative Change through Civic Engagement

UPRUN

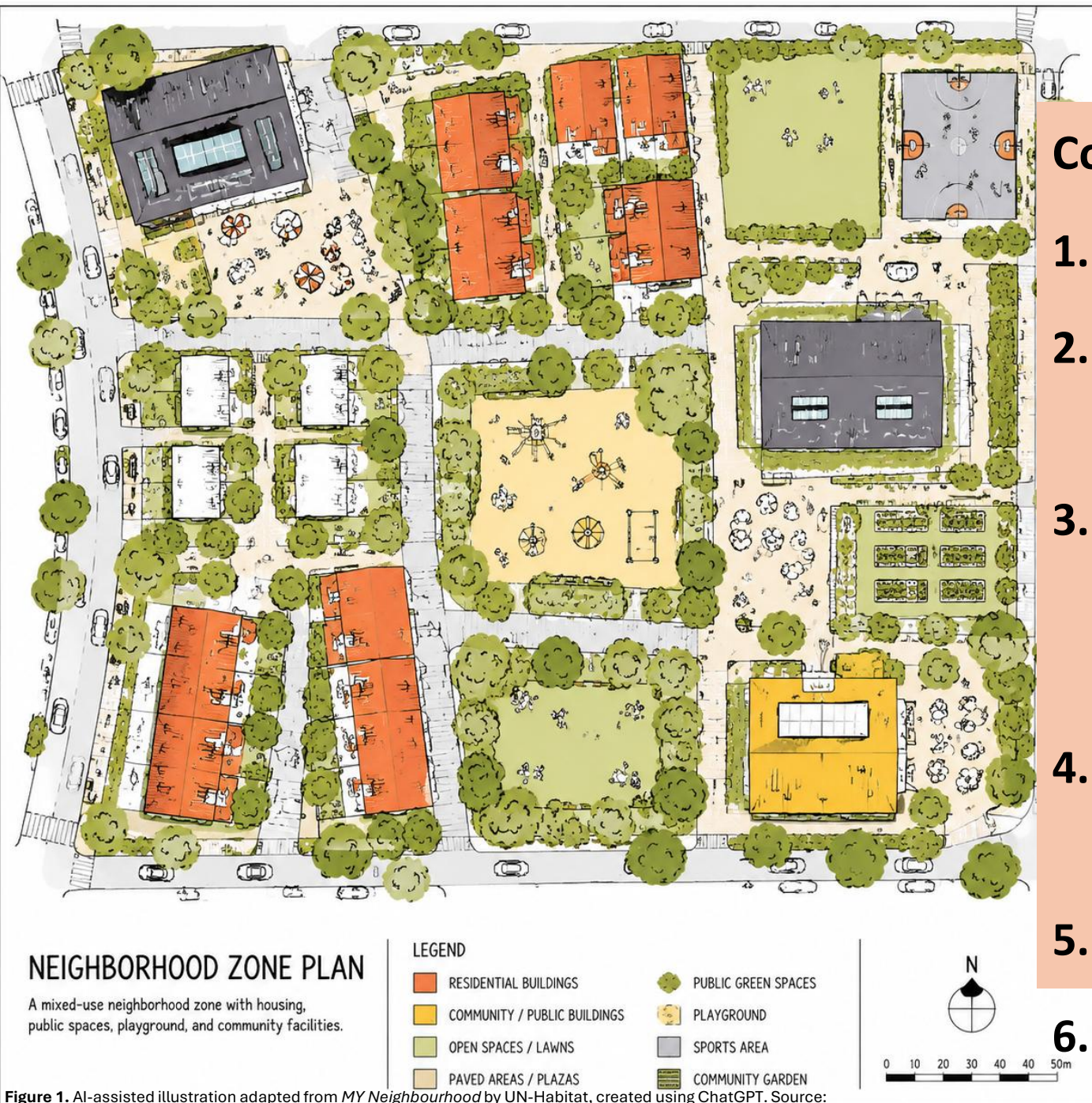


Teaching Unit 14

Designing social infrastructure:
enhancing community resilience through
collaborative creation of
public spaces and third places

Conceptual illustration – AI-assisted design process

<https://www.artwithaheart.net/portfolio-items/abell-foundation-mosaic/>



Content

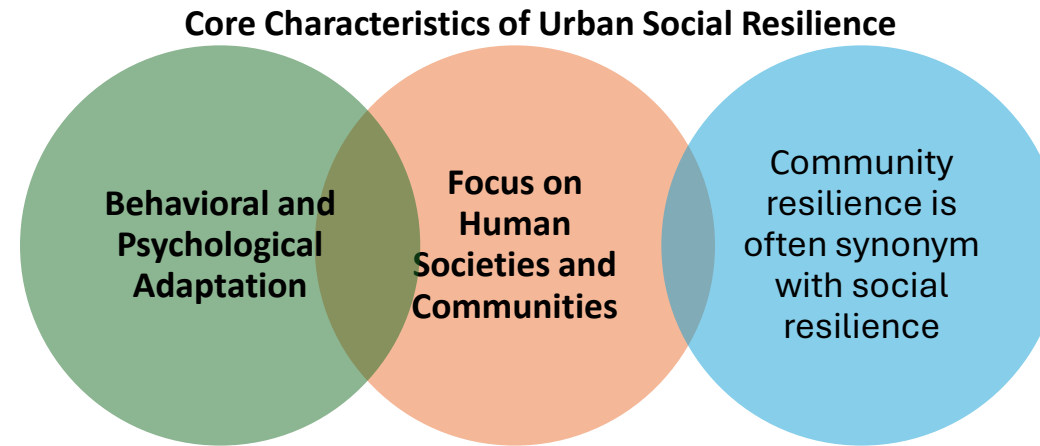
1. What we know about "social resilience"?
2. What do we mean by "Social infrastructures"?
3. What is their contribution to "socially resilient neighborhood"?the Power of Six.
4. What are the categories of social infrastructure in action?
5. Who brings social infrastructure to life?
6. What is the role of Urban Planner and Urban Designers?

Figure 1. AI-assisted illustration adapted from *MY Neighbourhood* by UN-Habitat, created using ChatGPT. Source: adapted from United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2024, p. 7

1. What we know about " social resilience"?

S

ocial resilience in an urban context refers to the capacity of a **city's human systems**—including its societies, communities, institutions, and individuals—to adapt, respond to, and grow from various shocks and stresses. Therefore, is not limited to adaptation; communities can actively and strategically address intended changes to **enhance people's well-being** in the face of present and future risks(1).



1. Social resilience is fundamentally about the **behavioral reactions of societies**. In a city, this means the system must support the "**behavioral adaptation of people to change**". Urban systems need to be resilient not just physically, but also "**psychologically and socially**," ensuring that the city's inhabitants are adaptable and resilient(2)
2. A resilient city is described as a "**sustainable network of physical systems and human societies**". During a crisis, these communities must be able to rescue people and perform effectively in critical situations(3)
3. **Community resilience** is often used synonymously with social resilience, as both relate directly to the role of communities in urban development(1).

2. What do we mean by “Social infrastructures”?

Fostering social resilience at the neighborhood level necessitates a supportive foundation of infrastructures^(1,4,5), but!

Which one do you think **Infrastructure** defines!

Conventional physical basic facilities and spaces like water, sanitation, and energy systems, schools, hospitals, roads, highways, and bridges,... serving a country, region, or neighborhood !



Public spaces that support social connection

Examples include libraries, Public open and close spaces such as parks, sidewalks, cafes, community halls, gardens, and stores

Physical infrastructure facilitates transport or communication, and overall are a driving force and vehicle for delivering a resilient urban environment

But, Social infrastructure

facilitates and supports social activity, thereby lessening the burden on individuals and increasing a city's ability to

support collective life!

They are striving for social inclusion and promotion of full participation of all inhabitants

(1,4,5,6)

**Social
Infrastructure**

**Physical
Infrastructure**

The Both , BUT !

Social infrastructures discourse

- It is the social which matters in social infrastructure-that is ,it is **interaction *between community facilities*** and the ***community population*** which create social infrastructure(4)
- It constitutes the **places and spaces** - such as libraries, pubs, and community gardens - that help build and maintain **social capital and trust** (7).
- Social infrastructure has a measurably positive influence on resilience outcomes, including mental and physical health and community connectedness(5).
- Social infrastructure refers to the physical places and institutions that facilitate the social life of citizens, supporting social connections and sociality (14).
- Good social Infrastructure creat **places** that **support community life**(9).
- Social Infrastructures have a vital role at **neighborhood level** by enhancing the value of **neighborhood interaction**(4).
- Social Infrastructure **create opportunities** for people to **build critical relationships within and across differences** in their communities (6).
- They are **assets** that **accomodate social services and connection**(4).
- They are categorized into four main types: parks (including linear reserves, dog walks, community gardens, and arboretums), social businesses known as Third places, (such as cafes, restaurants, arcades, bowling alleys, and karaoke bars), community spaces (such as town halls, neighborhood houses, and meeting spaces), and places of worship (including mosques, synagogues, churches, gurdwaras, temples, and shrines)(8).
- When done right,**social infrastructure** generate outcomes **beyond relationship alone** to address other crises; **climate action,economic mobilty,racial justice,creative expression, and finally civic engagment** (6).

Not a one-off place or program, but an intentional, connected, well-resourced system that adopts over time

What this looks like depends on context! It could be Parks, community centers, barber, shops, Markets, and more

More than just a place, it's an ecosystem of programs and organizations that bring places to life and people together

Social infrastructure is the **network** of a **physical** and **social** structures that build **relationships** and foster **thriving communities** ⁽⁶⁾

Bonding and bridging across lines of differences - in service of social cohesion and civic trust

Best understood and activated at the neighborhood or cross-neighborhood scaled for sustained local impact



Conceptual illustration – AI-assisted design process, ChatGPT/Canva

3. What is contribution of social infrastructures to "socially resilient neighborhood"?

Social infrastructures in "socially resilient neighborhood" concept

From the functionalist perspective to neighborhood/city:

- public space plays role as the component part of the social structure
- Society can be seen as a functioning system, in which public spaces perform their function, contributing to the strength and continuity of this system

Public space as the space of connection and interaction can be considered to lie at core of social system, as one of the basic structural elements (10).

Public spaces are instrumental in building the social bonds necessary for community resilience(1).

- Third places (accessible to all, aimed at informal conversations in a comfortable setting, familiar, perhaps because there are often familiar faces a non-compulsory stop – visitors are there because they want to be important for the social life of the neighbourhood)
- They offer residents the opportunity to discuss community issues, exchange opinions, learn from each other etc., which can lead to relationships and actions(11).

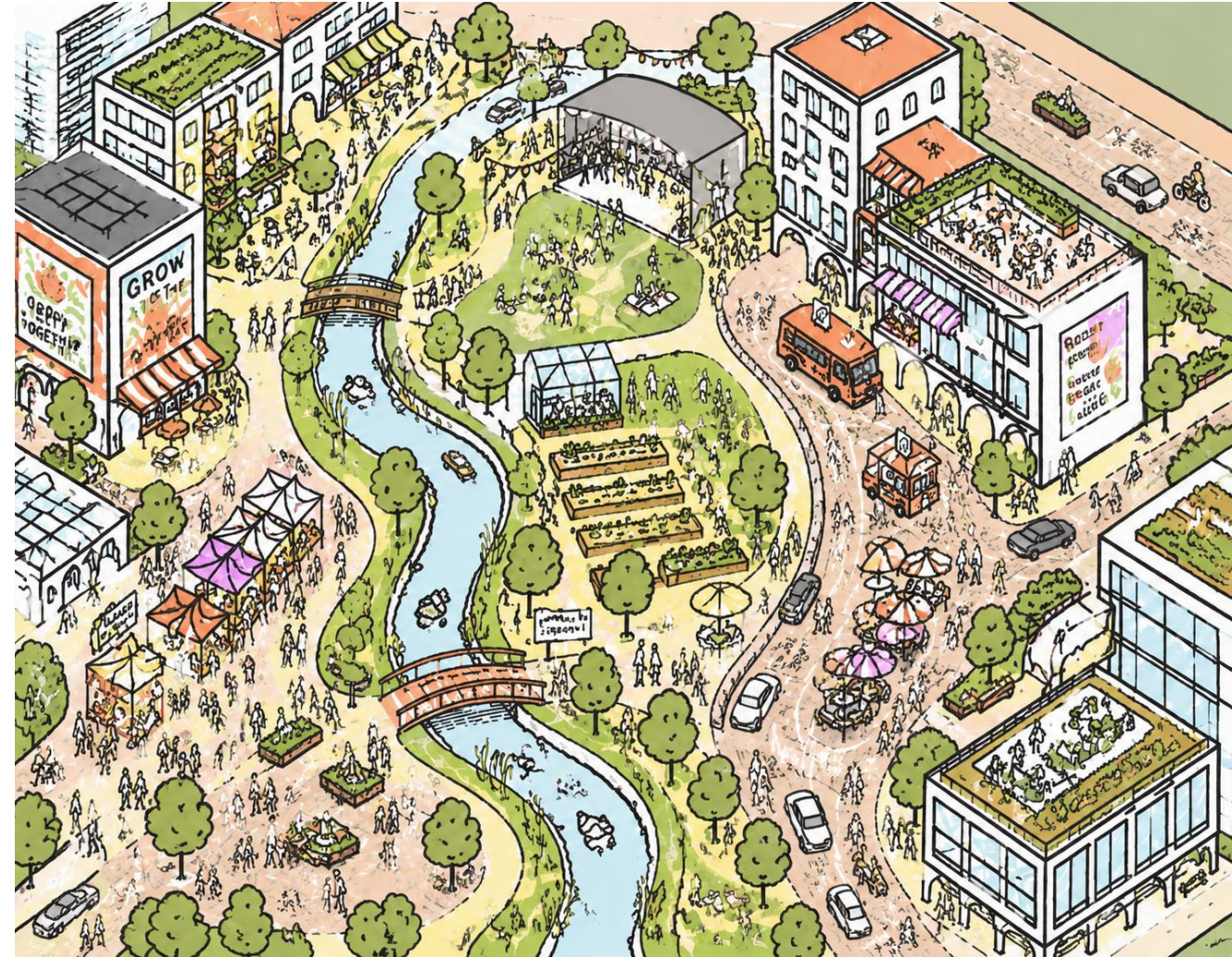


Figure 2. AI-assisted illustration adapted from *MY Neighbourhood* by UN-Habitat, created using ChatGPT/Canva. Source: adapted from United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2024, p. 1.

The power of 6 : Social infrastructures in community resilience⁽¹⁾

06 - Engaged Governance

Public spaces are the physical context where citizens exercise their decision-making power and self-organize, demonstrating engaged governance

05 - A Diverse and Innovative Economy

Public spaces act as sites for experimentation and localized activities that support economic self-sufficiency and innovation

04 - Community Infrastructure

Public space constitutes part of the physical and social infrastructure that communities leverage to build resilience



01 - Knowledge, Skills, and Learning

Public spaces function as living laboratories and meeting grounds where practical knowledge is shared and acquired

02 - Community Networks

Public spaces are crucial for sustaining and strengthening the social relationships and bonds that underpin community networks

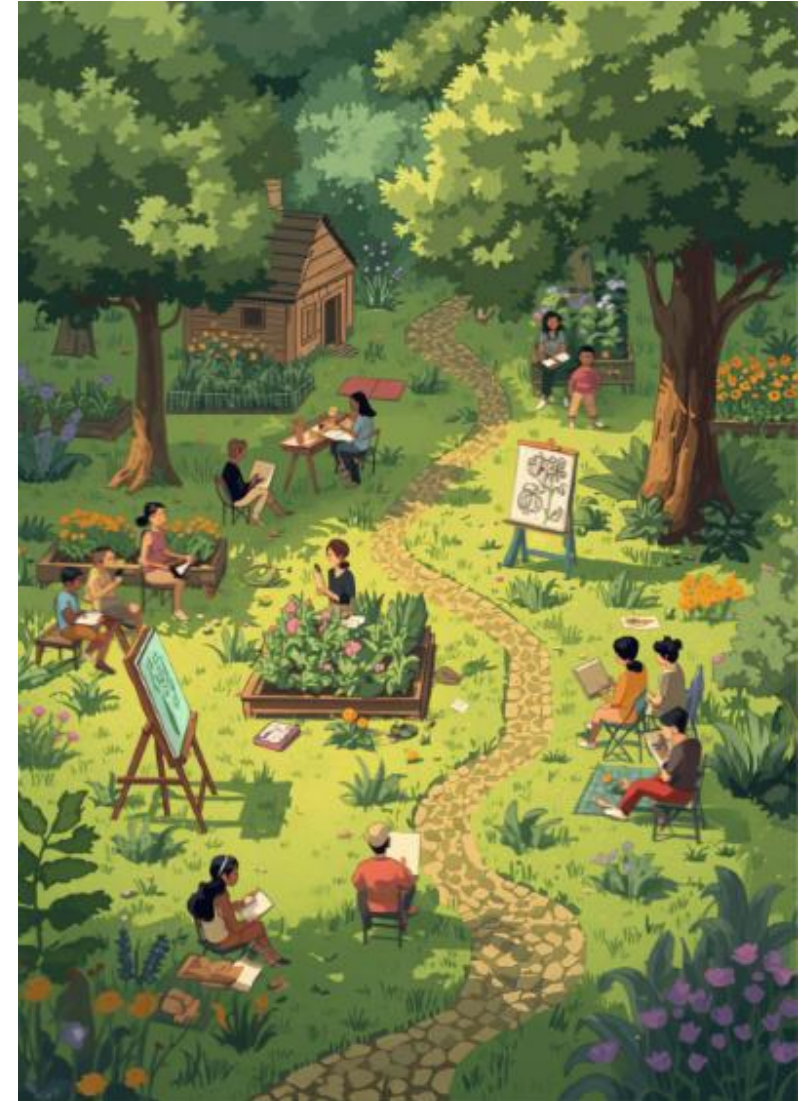
03 - People-Place Connections

Public space is the physical object of planning and development that solidifies the identity and intrinsic relationship between residents and their neighborhood
Placemaking and Identity

Power 01 - Knowledge, Skills, and Learning

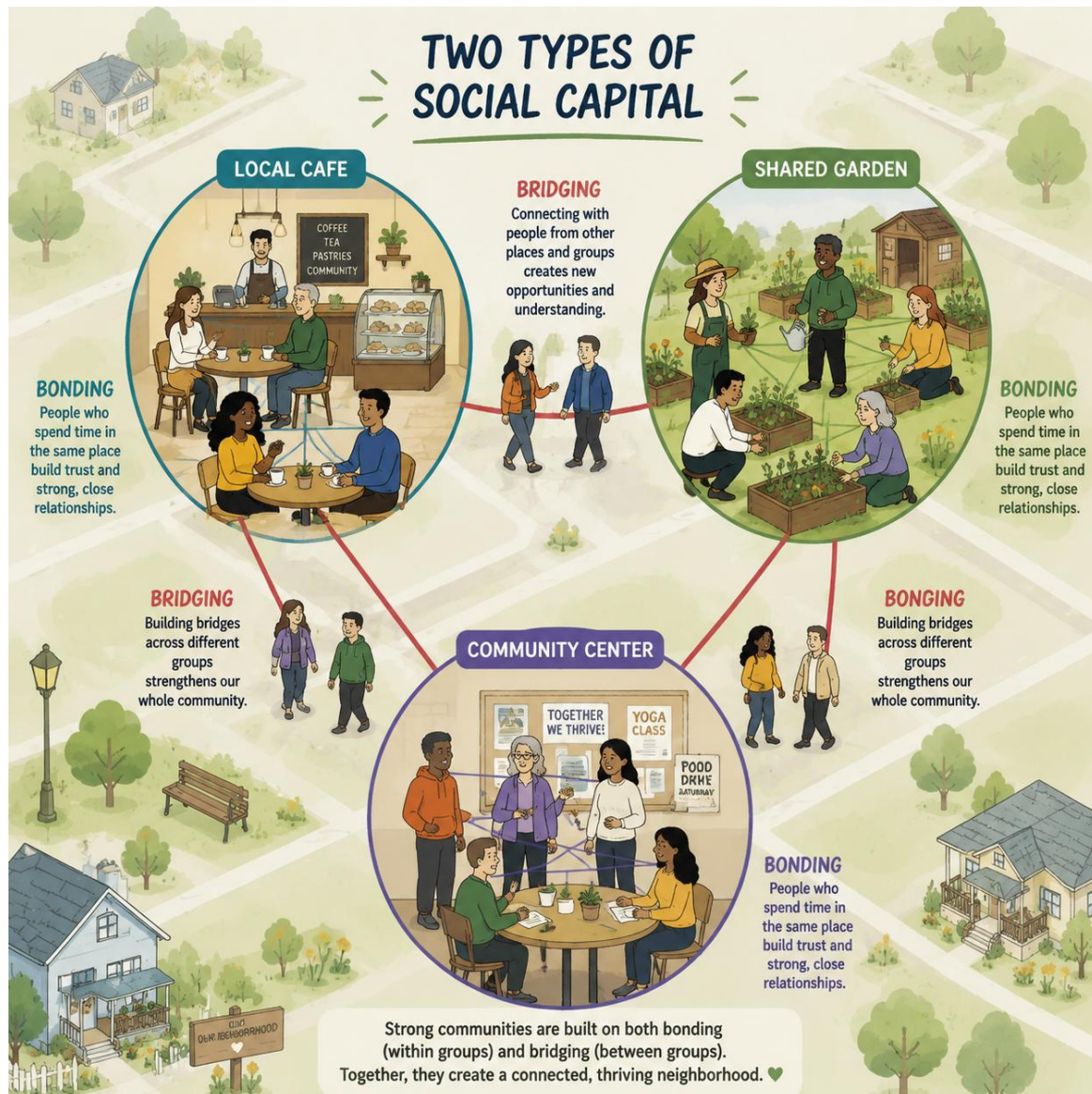
Public spaces function as living laboratories and meeting grounds where practical knowledge is shared and acquired

- **Learning through Practice:** Public spaces, such as those used for community gardens, provide locations for residents to engage in local practices and **practical experimentation**. These activities result in advanced levels of community learning
- **Capacity Building:** inspiring and enabling people to get involved through **events, courses, and training**. These learning activities often take place in, or are centered around, accessible public venues.
- **Shared Understanding:** Utilizing public spaces for collective action helps stakeholders structure their knowledge base and develop a **shared understanding** of complex urban problems.



Conceptual illustration – AI-assisted design process

Power 02 - Community Networks (Bonding and bridging)



Conceptual illustration – AI-assisted design process

Public spaces are crucial for sustaining and strengthening the social relationships and bonds that underpin community networks:

Fostering Interaction: The establishment of community initiatives in shared spaces, such as community gardens, allows residents to actively interact and strengthen their social bonds

expanding Reach: By providing accessible and visible sites for involvement, **Public spaces/Third places** help in "widening" the community network dimension, which aims at expanding the reach of networks by involving further people, **places**, and contexts

Building Cohesion: Promoting cohesive and engaged communities, which is key to achieving social resilience, requires building **social networks** and providing a **safe space**. Public spaces provide the physical site for these relationships to form and endure.

Power 03 - People–Place Connections

Public space is the physical object of planning and development that solidifies the identity and intrinsic relationship between residents and their neighborhood

- **Placemaking and Identity:** Public space is central to **placemaking**, which emphasizes community engagement and decision-making to foster an **intrinsic connection and sense of identity** between the community and the place where they live
- **Improved Identification:** When residents actively participate in planning processes concerning public spaces, such as the **design of public green spaces**, their **identification with their neighborhood** is improved, alongside increasing the acceptance of public planning projects
- **Fostering Stewardship:** This strengthened people–place connection is important because it **empowers communities** to pursue future changes and fosters **community stewardship** for the environment



Park(ing) Day ,Integrating structured and inclusive civic engagement into urban planning processes.
Cyprus Energy Agency | Facebook

Power 04 - Community Infrastructure

Public space constitutes **part of the physical and social infrastructure** that communities leverage to build resilience

- **Provision of Public Goods:** Public spaces are utilized by citizen initiatives to implement collective actions aimed at **providing public goods or services** for their community or neighborhood, often in response to state or market failures
- **Design Improvement:** Citizen participation in urban planning directly improves the design of urban areas with regard to elements such as **social infrastructures** and the design of public green spaces
- **Resource Development:** Community resilience relies on utilizing and developing **community resources and infrastructures**. Initiatives in public spaces (like community gardens) are examples of collective actions that produce goods needed in the community, acting as a form of community infrastructure



Committed people in Neubeckum in tactical urbanism settings
©Mathias Kolta 2021

Power 05 - A Diverse and Innovative Economy!

Public spaces act as sites for experimentation and localized activities that support economic self-sufficiency and innovation:

- **Experimentation and Solutions:** Community-led sustainability initiatives utilize public spaces for **(temporary) interventions and experimentation.**

This experimentation involves developing new and **innovative solutions** to urban challenges

- **Local Production:** Activities in shared spaces, such as community gardening, allow residents to interact and, at the same time, **produce goods needed in the community**, suggesting a localized contribution to resources outside of traditional markets.



Top & Bottom-right:
©LutherLAB e.V. –
Garden Group
Bottom-left: ©
Kerstin Meyer



LutherLAB e.V. – Garden Group
<https://www.lutherlab.de/project/garten-ag/>

Power 06 - Engaged Governance!

Public spaces are the physical context where citizens exercise their decision-making power and self-organize, demonstrating engaged governance:

- **Active Design Participation:** Citizens actively participate in the **design of urban spaces and spatial processes** as initiators, advisers, or implementers. This participation represents a move toward collaboration and empowerment
- **Self-Organization and Leadership:** Citizen initiatives operating within public spaces are defined as a special form of participation where they **independently and self-responsibly determine the goals and means** for their neighborhood and implement and control their activities
- **Co-creation and Empowerment:** Public space projects facilitate **co-creation** and empowering, where residents lead a project, are fully in charge of policy and managerial aspects, and are able to implement their decisions in practice. This demonstrates the system's capacity for **self-organization** and collaborative governance

4.What are the categories of social infrastructure in action?

Haven

Havens are spaces *for people to gather around shared identity*.

Havens **build bonds within groups** that need a safe ,communal space-such as **people from historically marginalized** background who have lacked space to gather(6,p35).



(©Jens Paul Taubert 2021;
<https://www.farbkueche.org/2020/01/stadt-gemeinsam-gestalten/>)

Streetscape in Altenburg is a place for neighbors to **work ,socialize and transform their neighborhoods**

Hub

Hubs are spaces *for people to connect across different backgrounds*. Hubs encourage contact across diverse groups that may not otherwise interact such as people of different races,ages or neighborhoods.Hubs can not be so general ,flexible or multipurpose that lack specific appeal,in order to bring people together around shared interest (6,p37).



https://www.verve-neubeckum.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/IMG_2220701_203620-1152x1536.jpg

Neubeckum

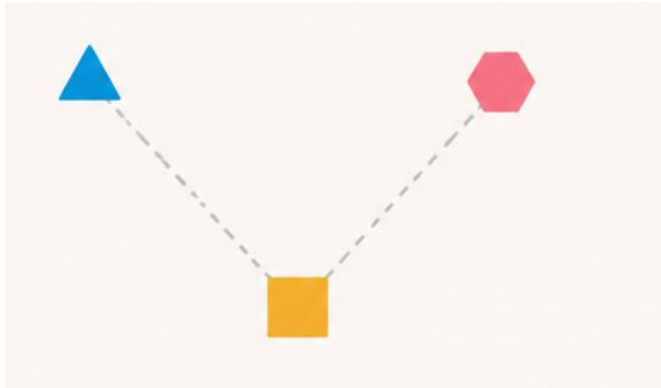
Verve **neighborhood living room** in Neubeckum was planned,designed and implemented by civil society providing opportunity for **personal connection, social exchange , collaboration ,cultural and recreational activities**

Hangout

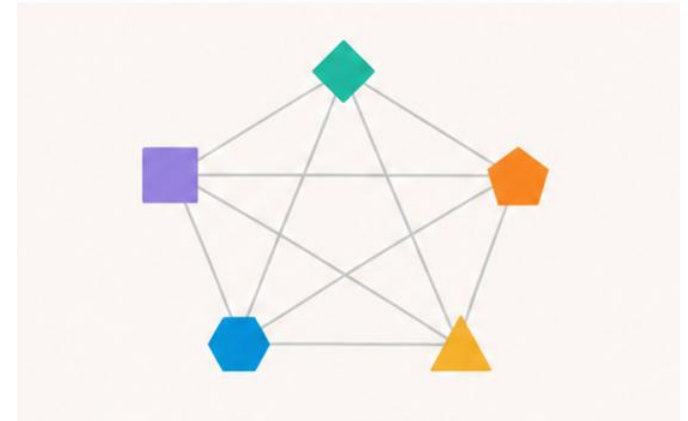
Hangout are spaces for people of all background to just be.They work well when they are near attractions,such as havens and hubs,and when they stitch together different communities as part of a community (6,p39).

Main characters of social infrastructures!

**Characterized by
loose, inter-group
ties**



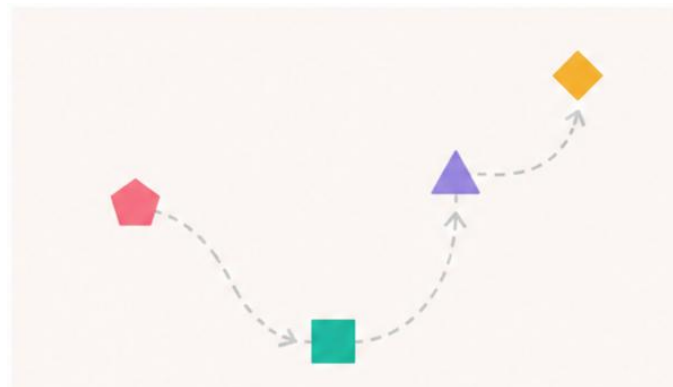
Hubs



Havens

**Characterized by strong, intra-
group ties**

**Characterized by inclusive
public life**



Hangout

5. Who brings social infrastructure to life?

A place where everybody can come

Hangout



<https://www.engagiert-in-nrw.de/sta>
https://www.verve-neubeckum.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/IMG_20220708_190749_200.jpg; <https://www.verve-neubeckum.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/pixelsaint-fotografie-verve-65-1536x1024.jpg>
dtteilwohnzimmer-fuer-neubeckum-mit-neuem-schwung-gegen-den-stillstand

Support bonding and bridging through programmes in Haven and Hub



Programs and organizations

A multi use community center In Neubeckum

Hub



https://www.verve-neubeckum.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/IMG_20220701_203620-1152x1536

A network of physical and social infrastructures can amplify social resilience at the neighborhood level

But who brings them? communities? cities? urban planner and designers?

- **Civil society** is born, natured, and matured within **social infrastructure**, bringing those infrastructures vividly to life at **socially resilient neighborhoods**, meaning that a neighborhood can only be socially resilient if its social infrastructure is supported through a democratic decision making environment, but also supports its community (UPRUN)
- There is an increasing contribution to what is called **“Community-based initiative”** to Social infrastructures at neighborhoods. Research cross European countries shows that neighborhood initiatives, ranging from grassroots initiatives to public-based initiatives aiming at fostering social inclusion at neighborhood level, in response to barriers of social resilience relied mostly on social infrastructures (UPRUN)
- Whether such initiatives can achieve their goals in the long term, however, often depends on their ability “to access assets and assistance from the wider socio-political arena (i.e. from governmental organizations and so-called civil society), to participate in decision-making processes, and to craft institutions that both improve their individual welfare and foster societal robustness toward future crises” (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013, p. 11)

➤ *Social infrastructures at neighborhoods are not tangible Buildings with One-Type users!*

➤ *Social infrastructures at neighborhoods are not buildings that planner and designer or cities creat using their formal and informal tools and standards.They do not involve precised of intrests!*

➤ *It requires :
a decision making environment including
Programing,designing,implementing
within dose not work the convetional planning and
design roles*

What role will an urban planner or designer play?

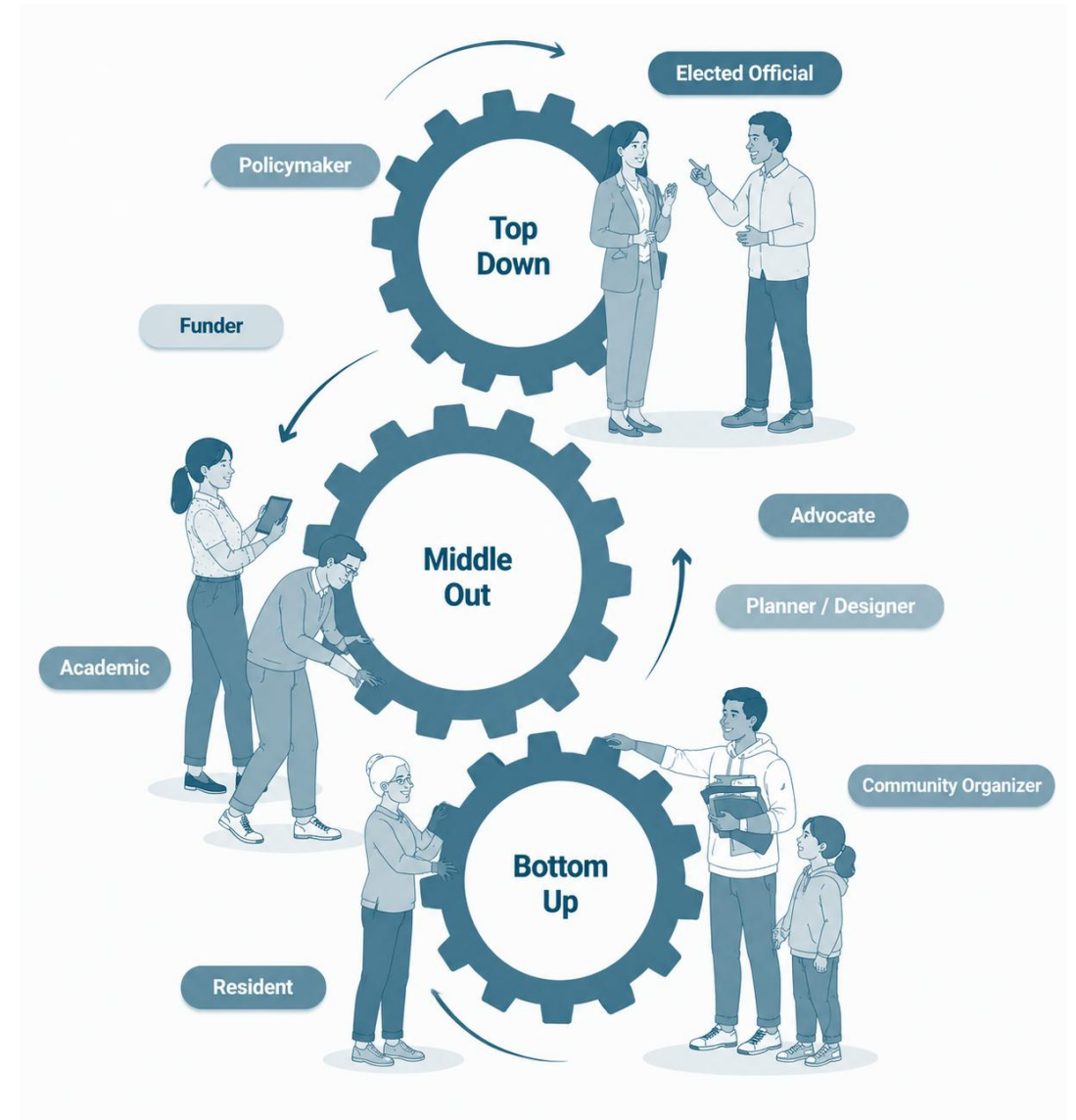


Figure 14. AI-assisted illustration adapted from Social infrastructure: Connecting people and places for thriving communities, recrillustration using ChatGPT/Canva. Source: adapted from 6-Gehl. (2024). Social infrastructure: Connecting people and places for thriving communities,P,67

Variety of roles, which can manifest itself in multiple ways at each level



Public Level/Top-down actors

- Public civic persons possess both expertise in issues of cooperative neighborhood development and contribute personal commitment¹
- Champions within major institutions connect people and organizations with hard-reach departments and resource needed to sustain social infrastructures, these people often sit within governments but could also be major private or public-private organisations that shape community developments.²
- A democratic leadership approach that imply broadening out the decision-making structure to include a wider range of stakeholders and organisations representing different development interests.³

5,6,12

Middle Level/Middle out actors

- These people know how the system works and advocate for community needs among the decision-makers who make policy or manage funds. They keep a close ear to needs on the ground- collecting data and engaging community members, and use that information to secure resources.²

Neighborhood Level/Bottom up actors

- These people are highly effective mobilizers and organizers who can listen to, understand and translate community needs into improved social infrastructure. They often lead formal or informal community groups, deliver essential services, and build local power to boost visibility to middle out and top down actors. Bottom up actors are especially key to success to havens, which require strong, authentic local leaders.²



Altenburg

Encouraging people to make the space their own without regulation. **Support Hangouts through programming, Street**(as a Hangout)

Renovating industrial hall at neighborhood(as Haven) to become a work and event space at neighborhood for the urban development workshop also including public spaces and social infrastructures, **Support Bonding through design**



Berlin, Rathausblock

Enabling collaboration among shared interest

Support Bridging through programming

Local community, experts, municipal planners and designers, academics, developers,..., all come to this center(as a Hub) to engage neighborhood development ideas



Bochum, Germany

Enabling collaboration among shared interest
Support Bonding through programming, Group garden(as a Haven)



Neubeckum, Germany

Supporting community based initiatives in programming and design, simultaneously let public sector lead on funding

Support Bridging through Operation and Implementation

Are you curious to learn more about the techniques, tools, and methods you can use, as an urban planner or designer, for programming, designing, and implementing social infrastructure? We recommend exploring the UPRUN teaching units listed below for more learning!

- *Co-Creation, Co-Production, and Community-Driven Neighbourhood Development*
- *Tactical urbanism as approach of citizen initiatives*
- *Civil society and civic engagement*



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