Urban choreographers can shape the world they inhabit

The art of influencing the agenda, structuring proceedings, and directing creative and intellectual efforts toward effective change.

städtisch choreographie - stedelijk choreografie - coreografia urbano - chorégraphie urbain

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Many planners feel trapped

Many planners feel trapped by other people's agendas, either serving the vested interests of the private sector, or defending planning rules they don't necessarily agree with. Despite the depth of their professional knowledge they seldom get to meaningfully shape the world they inhabit. They are keenly aware that the clock is ticking and that this generation isn't doing that well. Daunted by the scale and complexity of the many global challenges they don't know where to start.

This need not be the case as planners, at all levels, *are* capable of delivering remarkable change with durable outcomes. These may be modest, singular initiatives to start with, which if they are value-based and combined with good professional and business practices, will make a meaningful long term difference.

For this they need to learn how to influence the agenda, structure proceedings, and direct creative and intellectual efforts toward more sustainable outcomes - a sort of *urban choreography*. Urban choreography however needs to be set within a larger approach which involves motives, values, and skills. This is a question of whether a planner, in addition to making it, also wants to make a difference.

I feel that a lifetime's worth of effort and reflection would amount to little if I couldn't at least offer some direction, or shed some light. Here therefore, are my early thoughts on the possible approaches and attributes for urban professionals aiming to shape the world they inhabit. It is a framework which is meant to be disposable, with readers keeping that which resonates and gradually replacing the balance as dictated by their experience and values. My hope is that this will help build a sense of clarity, purpose and confidence with which to face future enthusiastically, or in other words be 'future-ready'.
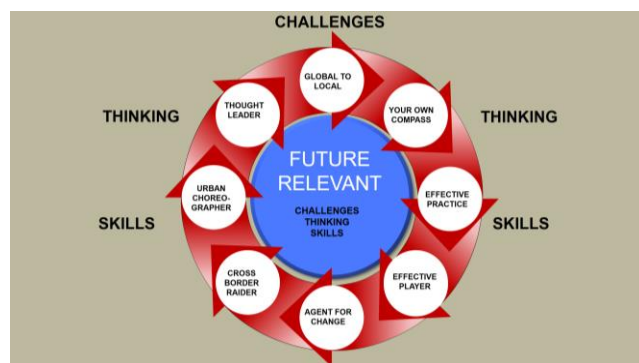
Future-ready

Being 'future-ready' is difficult because looking into the future is rarely like standing at the top of a mountain and staring at the pathways and choices ahead. More often it is like being in a low flying jet weaving its way through the landscape. Decisions have to be made fast, often intuitively, and without much certainty of what's around the corner. Clarity of thought and dexterity of skills are paramount and the need for preparedness is obvious. You need to know precisely where you are and have the utmost confidence in the tools at your disposal. The parallels for the planner, or other urban professional, facing an unknown future are strong. A developed sense of anticipation is required. What could be around the corner, am I best positioned to deal with it? Am I 'future-ready'?

Challenges, thinking and skills

Your 'future-readiness' will be determined by the *relevance* of the challenges, you chose to engage with, the thinking you adopt and the skills you develop. These may be structured as follows:

• Future-relevant challenges: convert global challenges into local opportunities.

- Future-relevant thinking: develop your own compass.
- Future-relevant skills: understand best practice, be an effective player, be an agent for change, be a cross border raider, be an urban choreographer, and be a thought leader.

FUTURE-RELEVANT CHALLENGES

While the precise pathway ahead is unknown you do have a choice regarding the general direction you are heading towards, are you flying into a rising sun or a setting sun? Are you schooling yourself to address the issues that will matter the most to the future of our planet and its people? Are you, therefore, engaging in 'future-relevant challenges'?

'It's not the journey down the wrong path that is tedious, it's the long journey back!' This Matabele wisdom cautions us to think carefully on the field, sector or disciplines we chose to operate in, and whether it, in our judgement, will increasingly become part of the solution and not the problem. A wrong, or uncorrected choice could result in a tedious long journey back, or worse still, a lifetime of disappointment. Actually, the most important part of the journey is where you set out from and how 'future-relevant' the field of professional endeavour you choose to engage with is.
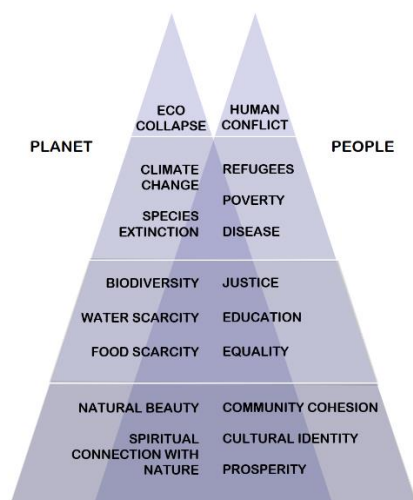
We all have our own notions of what the most pressing global challenges are. I visualise them as two overlapping peaks representing 'people' issues and 'planet' issues. There is no science to the hierarchy, it's only my view, and the list isn't static either. Thirty years ago, when there was worldwide focus on how CFC's were destroying the ozone layer no one spoke about sea level rise, global warming, climate change, or the digital divide. Poverty has had a welcome improvement but an emerging class of working poor, or 'precariat' is worrisome. Viewed like this these peaks seem unsurmountable.

However, as you formulate approaches that are more *impactful*, *efficient*, *balanced,* and/or *enriching,* your awareness of making a meaningful difference will grow - and the peaks will seem less daunting.

The pace at which slums are growing, mammals and birds are being threatened with extinction, and languages disappearing demands we act with urgency and with *impact*. While these issues seem remote, some can be impacted locally due to the *interconnectedness* of the world.

Globally middle class consumption is expected to triple by 2030, if European standards were applied this would require three planets to live on! This profoundly illustrates the need for us to find *efficient* solutions which require less space and resource.

Due to rapid urbanisation, many cities are building to higher densities, and some are adding jobs (agglomeration) to their central business areas to increase productivity. *Balanced* solutions are required that resolve the tensions between the economic benefits and the loss of amenity and increased environmental degradation. With sprawl the tensions are often the other way around, and different tensions arise in areas which must re-invent their economies while facing population decline.

Universally initiatives that *enrich* are required to help connect communities, respect cultural traditions, enable citizens, assist the poor and protect the vulnerable. The public realm, often 'the glue that holds communities together', in many places is in need of *enrichment* as it is under threat of being diminished in terms of its amenity, size, 'publicness', and safety. Remember bad places can 'impoverish, exclude and demoralise, while good places can 'celebrate, involve and inspire'.

We are all implicated in the downside of the new global interconnectedness
The consequences of global interconnectedness is evident even in the innocent purchase of a mobile phone. Developing countries are often the sources for raw materials, place of manufacture, and sometimes the destination for waste. They often carry the burden of habitat destruction associated with mining, the health and safety effects of poor working conditions, and contamination associated with waste and recycling.

Other examples are plentiful. In Brazil approximately 70 percent of deforestation in 2007 was accounted for by the rapidly expanding cattle ranches in Latin America, much of which was due to the increasing hamburger consumption in the USA.

The diversion of food crops to biofuel were partly responsible for world food prices increasing by 140% between 2002 and 2007, by 2008 an additional 100 million people in the world were undernourished. The wasteful consumption or use of energy in one place could literally mean children going hungry in a slum on the other side of the globe. We are all implicated, even here in New Zealand, personally and professionally.

**The upside of global interconnectedness is that it can also be run in reverse**
However as most global problems generally have their origins at a local level, such as deforestation which occurs one tree at a time, it follows that at least some of the solutions are to be found at a local level such as initiatives to consume less energy, produce less waste less and consume less which can bring global benefits resulting in less pressure elsewhere on the environment, carbon sinks and threatened species. Even the restoration and expansion of local natural habitats can help migratory birds and if bio mass is increased, contribute to the global carbon issue.

At their most local, these actions start at the individual or community group level or, equally importantly, they can be processes, policies and projects delivered by urban professionals at local government, central government, or corporate level.

From global challenges to local opportunities
By developing the right understanding and approaches, global challenges can be converted into local opportunities.

To do this we need to be mindful that most global challenges are multifaceted and comprise of several contributing factors. Social wellbeing, for instance, is often linked to the available quality of education, health provision, housing, social support policy and employment. Some challenges are best addressed indirectly, focussing on a catalyst initiative. Some solutions offer benefits to more than one challenge, while others compete directly with equally legitimate solutions which benefit another cause. These tensions are explored further under the 'Balancing triple tensions' section.
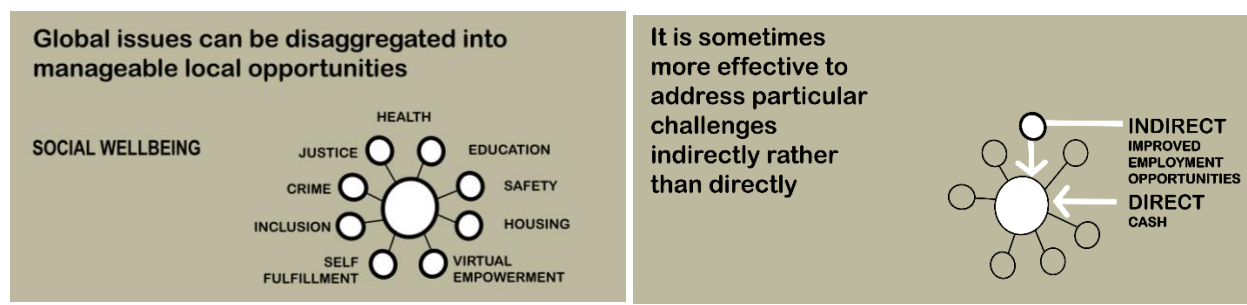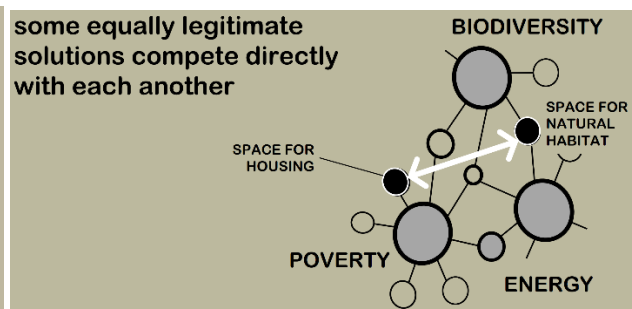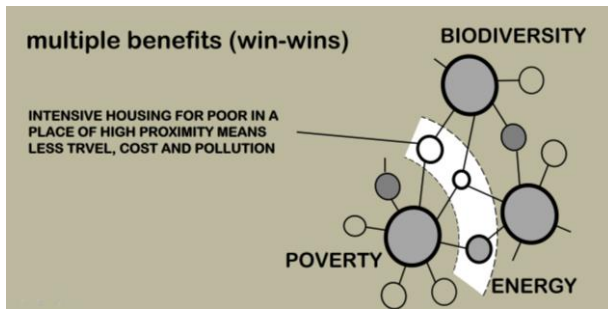
FUTURE-RELEVANT THINKING

On your professional journey you will face numerous directional choices, many will be signposted as the most sustainable. The competing array of trends, movements and principles can be bewildering.

'Future-relevant thinking' suggests you navigate with your own compass, underpinned by your own values and principles, rather than a borrowed dogma formulated under different conditions by others. It recognises that your actions stem from personal values and motives, such as where you sit on the continuum of benevolence, to enlightened self-interest, to moderated ambition, to outright greed. It demands an alignment between the 'citizen-self' and the "professional-self". No longer can the world afford to be a victim of this ambiguity. Personal values can no longer be left at the door, they need to be carried into the workplace and the board room.

Politics

Personal values flow into professional values, and both impact on your political values.
The urban environment is at once a political system and a product of politics. Different political approaches will deliver different urban outcomes. These may vary on a continuum from socialist (command economy with highly regulated central planning) to libertarian (unfettered free enterprise with minimal planning and regulation). The emphasis on the roles of the private and public sectors will differ accordingly. Where the private sector is often best at innovation, efficiency, and capital attraction, it struggles to operate outside its boundaries. The public sector is best at setting a framework for development that coordinates, connects, integrates, and helps enable a vision that reflects the wider public interest.
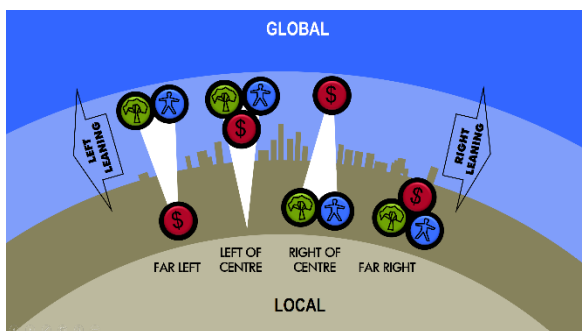
It is important to understand political parties' attitudes toward global challenges, and their local policy implications, which issues they treat as global and which as local. This will help at two levels, how you vote, and how you communicate to a multi-party audience. Even if it is just to avoid topic areas that are not central to the issue at hand.

Former premier Paul Keating's commentary of Australian political groupings, adapted and extended to include environmental policy, suggests four groups. The extreme right who want to isolate both the economy and the society from the outside world, the environment is a local issue and climate change is questioned directly. The Centre Right are in favour of an internationalised free market economy, see social policy as a local issue and resist the influences of foreigners and international bodies like the UN. The environment is also a local issue and climate change is questioned indirectly. The Centre Left promote economic openness, social inclusiveness and engagement with the outside world. The environment, especially climate change, is also a global issue. The Extreme Left also see the environment and climate change as global issues alongside social issues such as the plight of the poor, women, children and refugees, yet they generally prefer the nationalisation of sectors of the economy and are somewhat anti-globalisation (Megalogenis, George (November 2011) "The Book for Paul: Lessons in Leadership" The Monthly: 28-34).

This global/local dynamic is further complicated by the relationship between national, regional and local government policies and politics, which are often at odds. Ideally local governance should be independent of national politics, otherwise the nationwide agenda will override decision making at local level where contextual conditions may require a different outcome.

Value-based
Many professionals operate in areas which are essential to the functioning of society but have little bearing on the global challenges. They deserve our respect providing they are effective and adhere to good social and environmental norms.

Many more, however, have to decide whether they do, or don't, take an ethical position which actively addresses these challenges beyond the minimum requirements of the law. For some the definition of ethical equates to what you can get away with legally, an equation which has greatly contributed to the current state of affairs. Unfortunately, laws are often the products of vested interests and may not contain the values required for a better world.

Urban professionals who are intent on delivering change through their choice of career also have to decide which philosophical position within that discipline they wish to pursue. Lawyers may seek out practices which apply value-based criteria around the causes or cases that they take on. Increasing numbers of developers pursue social, environmental and energy outcomes beyond the minimum market requirements. Some architects, landscape architects and other designers employ their creativity to effect change through integrated approaches, in contrast to those who use design as vehicle for trend-based self-indulgence. Even marketing consultancies are being urged to consider the consequences of the indiscriminate consumption they are promoting. Many accountants and financial experts operate outside the realms of perpetuating wealth for wealth sake.

Urban planners can also, if they chose to, make similar value-based choices. In the private sector they can chose to work with firms who are value-based and selective their jobs and clients accordingly. These choices are seldom simple, and often conflicted. To some a new road may mean unnecessary support for the car, for others it may be a lifeline to greater economic opportunities and social connections. It gets murkier when a project is borderline questionable and you have to decide whether to participate, in which case the following decision tree may be of consideration.
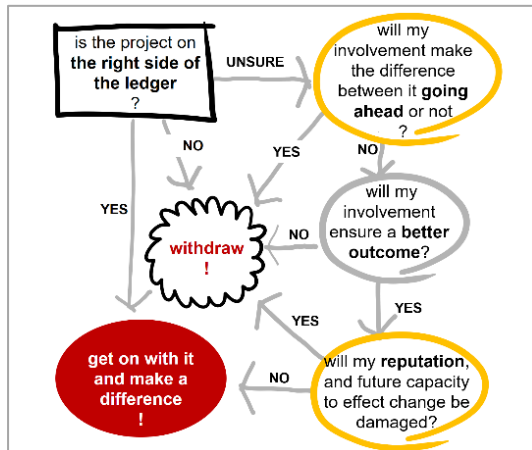

Planners in the public sector, or at a more junior level in the private sector, may not be able to make these choices so readily, hence further in this article, a series of approaches are discussed under *urban choreography* aimed at influencing, convincing, and even coercing, good outcomes through informal methods when the formal structures (planning rules or company policy) are heading in the wrong direction.

Triple Bottom Line
The term 'sustainability' has almost become devoid of meaning… an empty 'signifier' as it has become the trend to call any approach a 'sustainable approach'. Most movements will in some way or another claim that their approach is the most sustainable. But what is true sustainability?

A favorite signifier of sustainability is the triple-bottom-line (TBL) approach, with the aim to apply solutions which deliver benefits in more than one (if not all) of the three categories. The TBL relationships are typically expressed in simple Venn diagrams, sometimes adding 'equitable', 'bearable' and 'viable' where adjacent categories overlap as seen below.
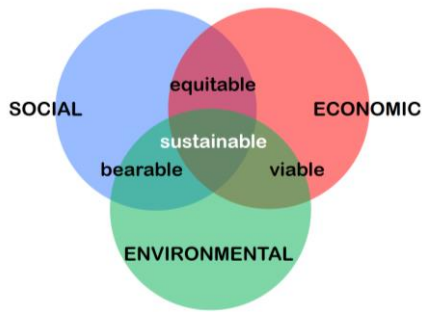
Adams, W.M. (2006). "The Future of Sustainability: Re-thinking Environment and Development in the Twenty-first Century." Report of the IUCN Renowned Thinkers Meeting, 29–31 January 2006. Retrieved on: 2009-02-16

Aggressive sustainability approaches will work diligently to increase the areas of overlap between categories so that more of the initiatives have offer win-wins, as illustrated below.
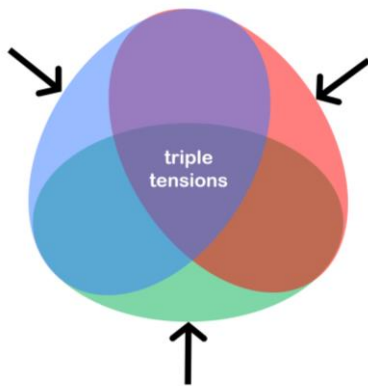

Balancing triple tensions
However, even with more aggressive approaches, Venn diagrams can be open to misuse and being watered down by a post-rationalising, tick-box exercise. Conflicts aren't identified within the same category. Carbon production and biodiversity are, for instance, both environmental issues. Yet the carbon generated from travel suggests that we live at higher densities, thus reducing open spaces in cities, while, on the other hand, to increase biodiversity we will need more open space. Conflicts between categories complicate the picture even further. If the 'higher density' contained a component of housing for the poor this would introduce a social issue now also in tension with biodiversity, an environmental issue. Another example is wind farms which while producing environmental and economic benefits through reducing the use of fossil fuels can induce social harm through visual and noise effects.

These 'triple tensions' (could be more) can be expressed in the form of 'tripod' diagrams which depict Social (Sc), Environmental (En), and Economic (Ec) issues. Lighter circles depict beneficial outcomes and the darker ones negative outcomes, and the size of the circle depicts the scale of the impact.

Social and economic issues gang up against the environment
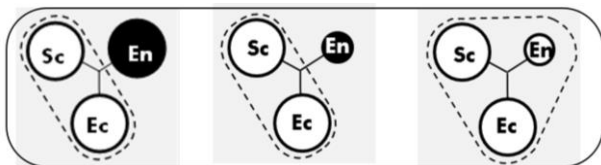
The first diagram depicts President Obama's predicament when faced with having to bail out the car manufacturing companies during the 2008 global financial crisis. There was the obvious economic (Ec) advantage of avoiding bankruptcy in these industries and the social advantage of avoiding large scale blue collar unemployment (Sc). More questionable was subsidising an industry that substantially contributes to carbon emissions (En). Obama somewhat addressed this dilemma (middle diagram) by linking the subsidy to new cars that are cleaner and with less emissions. Future challenges are to reduce the need for travel and evolve transportation solutions to a point where there impact on the environment is minimal.

Climate Change measures pits the global environment against local environment
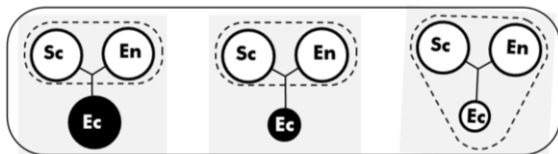
The diagram on the left depicts the dilemma when applying climate change interventions, while they benefit the environment (En) and those humans (Sc) threatened by severe weather events and sea level change they are difficult to justify in the short term. Infrastructure interventions such as sea walls are costly and low carbon policies damage businesses' short term economic performance. The challenge is to gain wider consensus on the validity of climate change and the long term economic risks. Then more investment and innovation will result in less harmful technologies and practices, which in the long term should become viable in their own right.

Addressing the tensions as illustrated here are central to the 'balanced' principle discussed below.

Ordering imperatives

While many sustainability-based principles and guidelines exist few are structured in order of importance, this can again lead to a watered-down approach which gives less effective initiatives equal ranking with ones which are crucial. If we are serious about change to address the global changes we face we have to promote the more serious initiatives that will induce change, even if they are less popular.

I have characterised these as *ordering imperatives.* They are, in order of significance, impact, efficiency, balance, and enriching. They are meant as a framework against which to assist when inventing, evaluating, or prioritising initiatives.

Imperative 1: Impactful
Is the most important or *core* test. Will the initiative make a significant difference or is it merely lip service, 'greenwash' or trivial. *Impact* is be achieved by change that is either:
- transformational in social, economic, or environmental terms
- of significant scale, or
- systemic

Imperative 2: Efficient
The second most important test is *efficiency* which is achieved by initiatives that:
- use less space and resources, and lower consumption
- use less energy during and after construction or manufacture
- create less waste
- are doing the right thing in the right place

Imperative 3: Balanced
The next test is sustainability *balance*, which is achieved by:
- by resolving triple tensions and meeting triple-bottom-line objectives
- achieving win-wins outcomes, or alternatively mitigating or compensating for effects

Imperative 4: Enriching
The fourth test is how *enriching.* One that adds to people's quality of life through initiatives that:

- transcend the ordinary
- enrich, celebrate, inspire, and
- bring joy

The best initiatives qualify for all the categories. Initiatives that qualify only at the lower levels can be equally important providing they are not put ahead of more *impactful* or *efficient* options.

FUTURE RELEVANT SKILLS
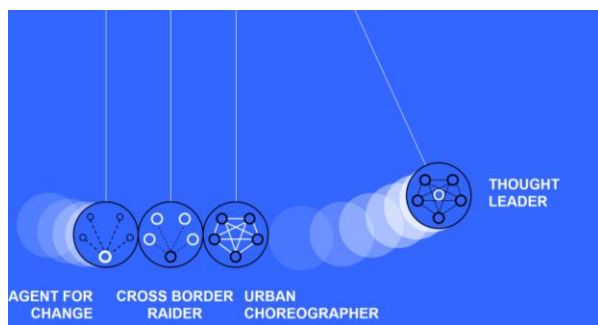
Selecting the appropriate 'future-relevant' challenges to engage with, and applying the 'future-relevant' thinking will amount to little if you don't have the right skills to deliver effective outcomes.

The first prerequisite is that you are motivated and effective at the basics (an effective player) this requires sober self-analysis, followed by improving your weaknesses and building up your strengths. The second is that you master your own discipline and focus on the elements that, according to your value-based thinking, will contribute to positive change (an agent for change). This is followed by expanding your knowledge, as knowledge is power, of other disciplines (be a cross border raider). With enough confidence, you will be enabled to choreograph events and coordinate other disciplines (urban choreographer). Finally, champion and invent new directions, agendas, methods and ways of thinking in the interests of our global challenges (thought leader).

This paper is only focusing on the skill of *urban choreography.*

An urban choreographer
As young planners grow in their effectiveness and gain more knowledge of other disciplines, they will increasingly be in a position to exert influence over a wider range of disciplines. Initially this may be done subtly from within project teams through suggestions of how more integrated outcomes may be delivered.

They should work toward leading multi-disciplinary teams influencing outcomes of substantial consequence. In effect this will be setting the agenda and shaping the outcomes in the interests of sustainability. The role at this stage will in many ways resemble that of a choreographer, arranging the framework within which the project is conducted, directing the proceedings, and delivering intellectual and creative leadership.

The role of the urban choreographer should not be confused with the conventional role of the project manager where the focus is generally more on risk management, coordination, budgets and meeting deadlines. Whilst these obligations have to be met, the choreographer has to strive for objectives that transcend the brief and achieve more transformational sustainability-based outcomes.

Complex projects requiring high degrees of integration will necessitate collaborative processes, and if time is of the essence, this is likely to be some form of workshop as this will allow issues and solutions to be developed concurrently, not sequentially. Choreographing these will require the ability to overcome the interpersonal, mastery of the technical issues and ideas, and remaining in command of the process.

The 16 essential attributes of an urban choreographer
Urban choreography is the art of influencing the agenda, structuring proceedings, and directing creative and intellectual efforts toward effective change.
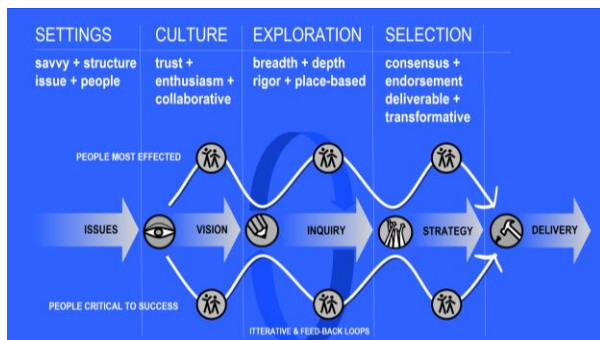
Most initiatives or projects are characterised by four elements. Their _settings_, how the process is structured, who is involved and what their roles are, what the objectives and scope are, the sequence of events, and so on. This is followed by the project _culture,_ whether there is trust, enthusiasm and collaboration. Getting this wrong can result in the ultimate unravelling of the outcomes. The _exploration_ phase is the one that ensures the problems and solutions have been explored in breadth and depth, and with rigor. Wherever applicable the exploration should also be place-based to ensure that the on-the-ground possibilities and consequences are understood. The _selection_ phase drives the process toward a tangible proposition, if handled well, this will carry a high degree of stakeholder consensus and endorsement from the implementing entity. The optimum outcome is a solution that finds the best combination of being deliverable, so that is realised, and transformative, so that it makes a difference.

The specific attributes of an urban choreographer and the initiatives or projects they facilitate are:

1.   Become savvy at reading your landscape
Learn how to quickly read, and effectively engage with the technical, organisational and political landscapes. Think as much of the psychologies and politics of the organisations and stakeholders involved as the process and technical matters. Is the timing right?

2.   Structure sound process structures
This entails structuring effective processes that have the right sequence, deciding when to consult and to what level, engaging the right people and skills, facilitating consensus and eliciting endorsement. This is the most important part of the endeavour, get this wrong and you are on the back foot for the duration.

3.   Target the issues that matter most
In complex projects such as town centre regeneration the scope cannot be fully defined at the outset as the process and the cause and effect relationships are not yet understood. It often needs to be a creative process in itself, with problems to be solved being unearthed in an inquiry-by-design workshop process. There is a balance to be had, if issues are defined too tightly, you may miss out on achieving a wider reaching solution, defined too widely, and the number of solutions becomes unwieldy or watered down. One option is to define a tight area of focus and a wide area of influence so the core problem (e.g. regeneration) is focussed on while identifying the external influences that have to be addressed. An example is the regeneration of a town centre needing to be assisted by external changes such as the district-wide development contributions regime. Lismore City in New South Wales made such changes and almost immediately had new high quality restaurants emerge downtown.

4.   Connect with the people who matter
A good start is to identify the people who are most affected by the project, for equity reasons it is essential they get special attention, the degree that the pool of people gets widened is a matter of judgement, and somewhat dependent on the scale and complexity of the project, whether the implementing entity already has a mandate or the rights to proceed. Don't avoid difficult players if they have an important role or voice, they usually tend not to go away. Best to work through the issues early, if agreement is not reached at least you can demonstrate you have tried.

Equally important is to identify those critical to the delivery of the project, whether it will be approved, endorsed, funded, or blocked. Engage with them early on and let them share and 'own' the process. For a local authority, this may mean involving central government earlier than the norm, if they later will be seeking taxpayer funding. Many good projects have failed at the post because pride got in the way.

5.   Build trust
Now and then trust is an issue. This may be between competing authorities or between the public and private sector generally. It helps to use transparent processes where knowledge is shared openly, and a fair and agreed decision making process is applied. Where pre-existing prejudices exist, including earlier proposals, it helps to discuss these candidly at the outset to clear the air.

In the late 2000's Whittlesea Council, a Labour-led council, was adamant that the University Hill site (previously Janefield) on the fringe of Melbourne be solely developed for jobs in their efforts to reverse their dormitory city status. They insisted on no housing, as well as no retail in order to protect an adjacent centre. The implication was that it would be an industrial park. The well regarded developers, MAB, pursued an open book process, where in a workshop process they divulged all the feasibility outcomes of a range of design options, including a mixed use option which has housing and retail. The latter proved to deliver more jobs, and of higher value, than all the other options. The openness won the Council over, the project now substantially complete, has some 25-30% more jobs than the norm and won the 'Best Master Planned Community in Australia' award in 2011.

6. Engender enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is engendered by articulating the benefits of a project compellingly. A good place to start is by getting the stakeholders to articulate their own aspirations, translating and crystallising these into workable initiatives to be tested and supplementing them with good relevant examples from elsewhere. Enthusiasm is maintained by reiterating the benefits as the process rolls on.

7. Facilitate collaboration

Outcomes tend to be longer lasting when produced collaboratively. More people have ownership of the ideas, and generally a wider range of issues have been worked through and resolved.

Auckland's recent Transport for Future Urban Growth (TFUG) process is an excellent example of collaboration as well as building enthusiasm and trust. The project prioritises $8 billion in transport infrastructure for 30 years of growth, including new town centres, rail stations and rapid transit networks. It has achieved a step-change in public transport provision and ensuring land-use, the environment, employment and transport are equal partners.

The collaboration has been exceptional between partners; Auckland Transport, Auckland Council, and the NZ Transport Agency. Jointly they have delivered and received endorsement for the Programme Business Case supported strategy. This is remarkable considering the diverse objectives of the three institutions. Trust was built through the sharing of knowledge and by jointly constructing the methodology and evaluation criteria, as well as working hand in hand with outside consultants to deliver the strategy.

8. Widen the breadth of participating disciplines

Rather consider a wider range of disciplines than too few at the outset. Some disciplines may only have to make a small input to match the relevance of their area to the issues at hand. In some cases, if the issues are not complex, one specialist can cover several discipline areas.

9. Investigate in depth

Some processes commence the integration process before achieving a reasonable degree of depth in their understanding of individual specialist areas. This results in 'shallow integration' and can do more harm than good, especially if the process gets tripped up by unforeseen constraints or uncalculated consequences.

Allow single disciplines time to fully understand constraints and opportunities in the given context, before giving consideration to other disciplines.

10. Apply rigor

Where possible apply evidence-based techniques. These may comprise of complex studies prepared in advance of the project, or they may be in real-time such as the feasibility calculations of options. Apply both public sector and private sector knowledge.

In the TFUG process complex traffic models were run of each option in-between workshops, in other instances these were run overnight, allowing for traffic considerations to be viewed alongside social and environmental ones.

11. Promote place-based considerations

Locate strategies, designs and networks in their spatial locations so on-the-ground opportunities as well as consequences are readily understood. Even high level strategies need to be verified on the ground: Does it fit? Can it be built? Can the connection be made?

Many elements are easily mapped such as uses, zones, movement, open space linkages, and so on. Others are more difficult but doable such as street edge vitality, proximity, and community wellbeing, health and accessibility.

12. Stimulate innovation

Good processes combine creative (left field) and analytical (left brain) processes (left-field, and left-brain) in a manner that generates innovation which is deliverable. Arthur Koestler perceptively said: 'artists treat facts as stimuli for imagination, whereas scientists use imagination to coordinate facts'.

Processes that are only analytical will deliver narrow outcomes and are likely to be 'functional but boring'. Those that are mostly creative run the risk of being 'a good idea that functions poorly'. A balanced process produces 'good ideas that work'. Typically these start with strong fundamentals (breadth and depth) and go through iterations of developing creative ideas and testing them.

At Lismore an open-ended ideas workshop brought together a series of ideas which resulted in some unexpected but productive initiatives. This included the 'Buy Local Project', a partnership to develop an online noticeboard for Northern NSW Local Health District and University Centre for Rural Health to easily source products and services locally, which was enabled by Lismore City Council facilitating the website development. In just the past month the website has allowed local businesses to directly access 50 tenders, with an expected contract value of AUD$30 to 50 million.

Lismore City Council was recently awarded the 'Excellence in Innovation' at the Northern Rivers Business Awards for Partnerships in Growth.

13. Enable integration

Good integration, at its simplest, means ending up with 'the right stuff in the right place'. The process of getting there can be more torturous. In many ways this attribute is the culmination of most of the previous ones. Starting with single disciplines gaining a depth of understanding, then sharing their 'ideal' scenario, an analysis of complementing and competing elements across all the disciplines, the joint generation of multi-discipline scenarios, testing them, developing new or hybrid options, and then through evaluation the selection of the preferred strategy. The complexity can range from a handful of disciplines up to some 40 at TFUG, the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy involved some 70 discipline representatives, as did the Melbourne 2030 Growth Strategy.

The latter was an outstanding example of integration. Signed agreements were negotiated between five city councils and four state ministries which determined commitments to minimum densities, intensification around rail stations and city centres, new rail and bus infrastructure, employment land, and strategies to reduce travel, as well as biodiversity corridors and a raft of environmental outcomes. When independently measured benefits were astounding, including AUD$25-43 billion savings to the Victorian economy, 14% less travel, and up to 23% less travel time. The consequential environmental savings are extensive.

While many of the strategy's attributes remain intact, aspects such as the all-important urban growth boundaries have been subsequently undermined due to politicians succumbing to pressure from vested interests, highlighting the importance of the relationship between local governance and implementation.

14. Achieve consensus

Achieve consensus by listening, testing all options, providing a compelling logic for the proposed solution, and by collaboratively producing objectives and win-wins outcomes which resolve competing objectives and ensure every dollar spent achieves multiple benefits.

Aim for win-wins, if not possible, mitigate effects on others, or in extreme cases compensate, if none of these are possible - say sorry!

15. Secure endorsement

Dunedin City's 'Warehouse Precinct' is an example of securing endorsement and funding for $500,000 from a council then challenged with debt and division. The project saved numerous character buildings from demolition, and attracted new businesses, cafes, shops, a hotel, apartments, a parking building, and a pop-up theatre. Glen Hazelton and Anna Johnson, staff at Dunedin City Council and true urban choreographers, initiated the project, then with further assistance, achieved endorsement from council and the community, achieved through a high quality public engagement process which built trust and offered integrated solutions.

16. Facilitate deliverable and transformational outcomes

With some wit Joseph Joubert said 'he who has imagination without wings has no feet' the implication being that good ideas that aren't deliverable aren't going anywhere. Ideas that are transformational also have to be deliverable. The ideal is to generate initiatives that find the best combination of being transformative and deliverable as indicated in the diagram below.
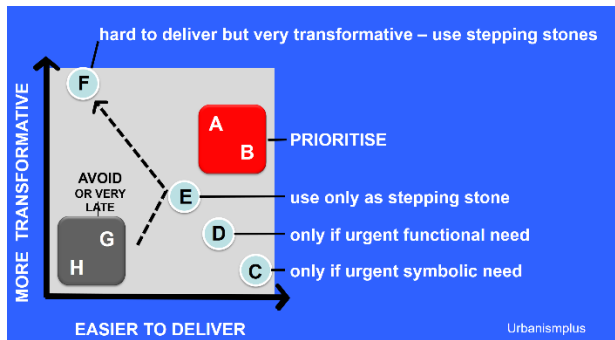
Conclusion

The proposition offered here is predicated on the experiences and reflections of one person, and is therefore, highly subjective. The hope is that young professionals will reflect on these issues and forge their own pathways, borrowing that which resonates, and discarding that which doesn't – defining, for themselves, the challenges, thinking and skills they deem relevant to *their* future.

If they do acquire the skills to influence the agenda, structure proceedings, and direct creative and intellectual efforts toward more sustainable outcomes - I believe they will, in time, deliver remarkable change with durable outcomes.

And, in this way, meaningfully shape the world they inhabit.