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GOT NIGHTLIFE?

Manage Sociability
As an Economic Engine

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Manage Sociability
As an Economic Engine



By Jim Peters and
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How well does your community plan for the social interaction needs of each generation?

For almost two decades, the transition from suburban development to investment of public and private resources in city and county infrastructure has demonstrated the power of the New Urbanism and smart growth movements. Housing has grown denser, public transportation has been enhanced and streamlined, and improvements to public space design and landscaping have increased the aesthetic appeal of communities.

Yet when people with rapidly changing social demands and lifestyles are added to the space created for them, local government managers are forced to reevaluate these traditional pillars of development. A focus on planning for people and their need to socialize is an emerging challenge for managers as dining and entertainment venues as well as later hours are integrated into residential areas.

The Rise of Nightlife in Mixed-Use Communities

Many communities have experienced a transition from an industry-based economy to one that is primarily services based. Abandoned factories and warehouses have been replaced with lofts and such nightlife venues as bars, clubs, lounges, and restaurants.

To tap into the revitalization catalyzed by the development of hospitality venues, boutique businesses and start-up companies often relocate to districts with these social amenities. Convention centers draw association business, filling up hotels and nearby restaurants. Downtown sport stadiums and arenas have reclaimed abandoned districts. Communities that offer these “live, work, and play” experiences can host tens of thousands of people in a single evening.

Anticipating people’s need for social interaction at different times of the day, and particularly at night, is critical for the success of a mixed-use community. Properly planned and managed, hospitality zones where people gather to share food, drink, music, and dancing can be a prosperous investment, centralizing both attractions and services.

Unplanned hospitality zones can be costly, lead to conflicts, and produce an excessive burden on police and demands for appointed and elected officials to manage safety and quality-

TAKEAWAYS:

- › Properly planned and managed, hospitality zones where people gather to share food, drink, music, and dancing can be a prosperous investment, centralizing both attractions and services.
- › Unplanned hospitality zones are costly, lead to conflicts, place excessive burden on police departments, and place increased demands on managers and elected officials to manage safety and quality-of-life impacts.
- › Baby boomers and millennials, the two largest demographic groups in the nation, are shaping downtown development through their growing demand for places to socialize.
- › Time transitions (day, evening, late night) must be considered for weekdays and weekends when allocating police, parking enforcement, traffic, and waste management resources.

of-life impacts. Considerations include transportation, parking, utilities (water, energy, sewerage), and trash management to ensure that a high standard of living is met for both visitors and residents. An expansive network of stakeholders is required to create a comprehensive system for district development and management.

This article will introduce demographic trends, establish a framework for action, define terminology, and highlight the six core elements of a hospitality zone—entertainment, public safety, multi-use sidewalks, venue safety, late-night transportation, and quality of life.

Trends and the Social Economy

Understanding the nature of people to cluster into groups, often seeking space conducive to their life stage or lifestyle, leads to insights on better zoning for the intensity of activity in an area. In addition to the critical aspects of physical planning of a community's core, it is necessary to plan for social interaction. Whether dealing with such public spaces as parks and plazas or commercial venues providing dining and entertainment, policymakers and planners need to consider different social generations' need for interaction.

Media of the last decade, including television shows like *Seinfeld*, *Friends*, and *Sex and the City*, inspired a new culture of urban living among friends, which redefined socializing in stark contrast to the family-oriented environments depicted in the earlier television shows like *Father Knows Best*, *Leave It to Beaver*, and *Ozzie and Harriet*.

Demographics

Birthrate data can often provide clues to the past and present and also serve as a barometer of the future patterns in a community's evolution. Age is often a factor in the frequency that people go out to meet and socialize. Two of the critical ages are 18 and 50. The age of 18 is a transition into adulthood; 18-year-olds often go away to college or enter the workforce. The age of 50 is a time when

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children are grown and sometimes move away; it is also usually a peak earning period of an adult's life.

The chart on this page is based on U.S. birthrate data, and it shows patterns of the U.S. population turning 18 and 50 since the 1970s, when the rise in the number of young adults led to the expansion of the disco nightlife scene. Meanwhile, the past decade shows a merging of the two age groups' growth rates.

This simultaneous growth in the two population groups corresponds with the competing demands of these two groups for the vitality and amenities of the urban community. Conflicts can arise from the two different times of day during which they patronize dining and entertainment districts—the 50+ market tends to enjoy hospitality before 10 p.m., while the 18+ market only begins to arrive at 10 p.m. or later.

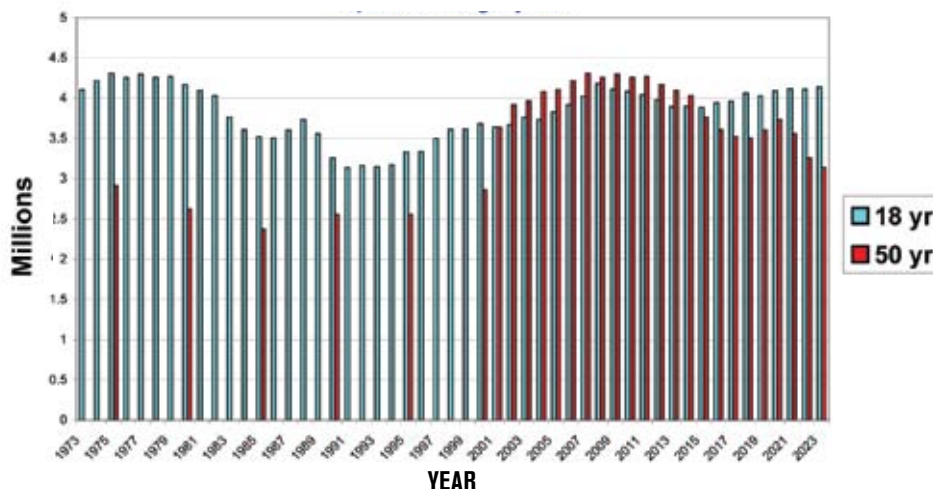
Social Generations

Lifestyles and social interaction can often be correlated with age and life stage. While this represents a broad generalization, understanding the essential needs of people and the demographics of your local government, district, or the markets you are trying to build can determine the best mix of dining, entertainment, and events.

Integrating potential social interaction into revitalization and development planning can result in a stronger and more vibrant social economy, with less impact on city and county resources for management. The major question then is: How well does your community meet the needs of each generation?

Assessing Your Community's Sociability. Conducting an economic assessment of dining and entertainment businesses

NUMBER OF 18 AND 50 YEARS OLDS POPULATION CHANGE BY YEAR



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - U.S. Birth Rates



DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE NIGHTLIFE 2.0

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, REORIENTED its entertainment zone policing model to improve safety budgets that had been surpassing \$1 million and introduce more visitor-friendly policing tactics. Businesses share in policing costs that are used for roving foot and bike patrols. Results have included reductions in policing costs, assaults, and gang presence as well as greater civility among patrons.

Background

During the past 20 years, San Jose's downtown core has emerged into a vibrant destination with a high concentration of dining and entertainment establishments catering to the 21- to 25-year-old demographic. Entertainment zone police officers worked overtime hours to monitor the district, respond to incidents, and generally ensure the safety of large crowds of late-night patrons—up to 12,000 people—as they made their way home.

In 1997, the city council approved the city's first entertainment zone policing model to address public safety downtown during the evening and late-night hours. In 2005, a downtown working group was formed to address issues related to nightlife. In 2006, the police department instituted initiatives to deter cruising, address youth curfew, actively enforce public nuisance laws, and regulate entertainment permits more closely.

Although it is consistently ranked

as one of the safest large cities in the nation, San Jose is still seeking to overcome lingering perceptions surrounding safety downtown and to minimize police costs further.

Initiatives Undertaken

Downtown coordinator. In 2008, the city allocated a position in the city manager's office to serve as liaison between city government departments, downtown businesses, and residents. The downtown coordinator position is responsible for analyzing current policies and ordinances and recommending areas for change and improvement. The objective of this position is to strengthen the city's capacity to address key operational issues and opportunities in the downtown that involve several city departments that are responsible for nightclubs, zoning overlay, and successful high-rise housing.

City manager's downtown advisory committee. Recognizing that accomplishing the city's goals would require successful partnerships, the city manager established a downtown advisory committee to guide this process. The committee is charged with facilitating implementation of action items recommended in a report generated by a hospitality zone assessment.

Further, the committee, with staff support from the downtown coordinator, reviews and evaluates new and existing policies. The composition

of the committee encompasses all stakeholders in the downtown community and those who participated in the assessment outreach process.

New entertainment zone policing model (EZPM). In 2009, the city began to reevaluate the way police patrolled downtown. The city's downtown coordinator led a small working group consisting of the police department, city attorney's office, downtown businesses, and an outside consultant to facilitate interviews, observations, and community meetings on what would help downtown businesses succeed.

EZPM is focused on attitude, training, and collaboration. The police department's downtown services unit uses bikes and plainclothes officers to work with businesses in the early part of the night. The city requires all nightlife business employees to attend Alcoholic Beverage Control LEAD (Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs) server training, and security staff members are required to attend 16 hours of security training. Police officers who work downtown are also required to attend specialized training.

This new model has helped the police department and downtown businesses to collaborate to address new and ongoing issues.

*—Leland Wilcox, downtown coordinator, San Jose, California
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SINGLES



Individuals in their late teens and early twenties who are exploring relationships.

MINGLES



Older singles, couples, and social groups of any age with a common interest.

FAMILIES



Introduction of children into couple relationships requires adjustment to going out.

JINGLES



Business travelers on expense accounts, vacationers, and empty nesters.

is the first step in strategic planning by local government for issuing permits and licenses and allocating resources for an active nightlife.

Hospitality Zone Development. The terms mixed-use district and multiuse district traditionally describe the blend of residential, commercial, and retail development within a particular location. A hospitality zone, meanwhile, is an area of mixed or multiple uses that is distinguished by a high concentration of dining and entertainment businesses such as restaurants, pubs, taverns, cafes, and nightclubs. A hospitality zone often has an active street life and may serve as a center for community fairs, festivals, and events.

Recognizing that hospitality zones evolve and change over time is also key to proper planning of the social economy. Emerging zones where creative culinary entrepreneurs seek low-rents in deserted warehouse districts can be nurtured with infrastructure improvements, expedited permitting and licensing, and zoning updates for the new development.

Integrating dining and entertainment venues into mixed-use districts can be coordinated strategically. Questions to ask include:

- What are current and potential areas for growth and development in your community?
- Where is there overconcentration?
- What systems exist for maintaining

a balance of businesses to meet day, evening, and late-night economies?

At the same time, a declining district with an overconcentration of businesses engaging in risky practices and promotions requires a tightening of permits, higher standards for new businesses, and more dedicated resources for increasing compliance.

Sociable communities provide spaces to socialize that appeal to all four social groups' interests and also address the stages of development and six core elements of a safe and vibrant hospitality zone.

1. Entertainment. Progressive communities nurture dining and entertainment opportunities for diverse ages, lifestyles, and cultures with incentives for business development and talent retention.

What barriers to dining and entertainment exist and how can they be minimized? What support systems—for example, subsidized housing and health care for musicians—are in place, need to be enhanced, or need to be developed? What education and training are available for talent development—for musicians, chefs, bartenders, servers, management?

2. Public safety. A continuum of collaborative partnerships—ranging from business associations, to neighborhood organizations, to licensing, permitting,

STEPS TO MANAGING THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY

CONDUCT AN ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT: To strategically allocate resources to an active nightlife and determine how many permits and licenses to issue, take an inventory of existing social amenities, occupancy totals and revenue generated within the hospitality zone.

IDENTIFY GAPS AND RESOURCES: Assess how well your community currently meets the social needs of each generation by identifying strengths, gaps and resources in the following areas – entertainment, multiuse sidewalks, quality of life, late-night transportation, venue safety and public safety.

DEDICATE STAFF: Select a neutral individual as a nightlife coordinator who will oversee planning and management of your hospitality zone. They will serve as a liaison among key stakeholders to communicate key information, resolve conflicts and facilitate implementation of next steps.

enforcement, and regulatory agencies—is required to manage hospitality zones.

What resources exist or need improvement in the licensing and permitting process? How can safety and compliance agencies in your city and county work together to streamline initiatives?

3. Multiuse sidewalks. Vitality and vibrancy extend outside of buildings to the streets and sidewalks, and they encompass such experiences as sidewalk café dining, kiosks, food vendors, street entertainers, and public markets.

What is your vision to enhance vitality and minimize chaos on your hospitality zone's streets and sidewalks? What systems, tools, resources, and people will you need to initiate desired changes?

4. Venue safety. There is increased pressure for licensed beverage businesses to prevent sales and service to underage and intoxicated persons as well as assure the safety of patrons both inside the venues and as they exit.

What impediments exist for venues to access qualified labor and educational training? How can your community assist businesses in the creation of a safety plan and connect business owners to mentors?

5. Late-night transportation. Providing safe and efficient access to and exit from hospitality zones can enhance the visitor experience, reduce alcohol-related accidents, and expedite clearing the zone at bar-closing time.

What challenges does your community face in providing safe rides to and from the hospitality zone? How can impaired driving and disorderly conduct be addressed through multiple transit options?

6. Quality of life. Mixed-use districts place residents and commercial businesses in close proximity, often resulting in conflicts about noise, trash, vandalism, fights, and public urination.

What resources and partners need to be engaged to update codes and to define community standards that address sound management and undesired behaviors?

Contrary to common belief, the key component for each element's success is not infrastructure or system changes. It is *people*. In the end, it is people who will enjoy a hospitality zone's vibrancy, and it is the communication and cooperation among various stakeholders who will facilitate implementation of necessary changes and ensure sustainability.

Planning for People

The “people factor” creates dynamically different impacts in a bookstore and a restaurant, even though each might take up the same square footage. While the bookstore may have 10 to 15 customers and three to four employees present at any one time, the restaurant may host 100 customers with 10 to 20 employees.

Contemporary planning usually specifies in great detail the physical space and the structures, but it only implies the addition of people. Highlighting the 3,000 housing units to be built can be translated to approximately 7,000 people located in this concentrated residential area. Showcasing 100,000 square feet of retail space can include reference to 20 new dining and entertainment venues, with total seating capacity (occupancy) of 15,000 people, many in the area in the evening and after 10 p.m.

For these reasons, planning for a concentrated hospitality zone requires involvement of many diverse and often adversarial stakeholders, including business owners; residents; police; fire personnel; and staff who regulate alcohol sales, public works, planning, health, and more. The late-night and weekend hours mean that adaptation of such local government services as trash removal, transportation, traffic and parking control, and safety compliance inspections is required.

This may require staff dedicated to manage the nighttime economy. Seattle, Washington; San Jose, California; and Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, are among those cities with a downtown or nightlife coordinator serving as a liaison among the key stakeholders, identifying gaps in service, resolving conflicts, and setting

proactive schedules for planning. (See the accompanying case study about San Jose, California.)

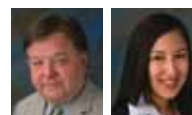
Finally, with changing demographics, it is important for local government managers to consider time and generational continuums as well as use of office, retail, and residential space. The inherent value of smart growth planning is that less time is spent commuting. In turn, with efficient public transportation and less distance traveled, this time savings can be translated to more community time, which is often spent socializing with coworkers, families, and friends, and thus more demand for nightlife.

Adapting traditional zoning, licensing, and permitting systems to the smaller, more flexible, and consumer-oriented businesses is one way local government managers can enhance this industry sector. A new form of concierge governance designed with streamlined systems presenting a “how can we help you succeed” attitude can facilitate progress.

Final Thoughts

Every community has buildings, streets, sidewalks, lights, and parks. What distinguishes one community from another are the people and the opportunity to share food, drink, music, and dance in safe and convenient venues. It is the social connectivity and relationships that make life worth living and that define a vibrant community.

Sociable cities attract conventions, tourists, residents, and a creative class of talented professionals who provide an economic base that helps emerging industries that are clean and sustainable. Planning for people in a 24/7 economy requires adaptation and efficient management of resources through common vision, communication, and collaboration. **PM**



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