Public Transportation and Public Life

Tuesday September 27, 2016

NACTO
Designing Cities Conference
Seattle, WA

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Our mission is to transform the way cities are shaped by making public life (social activity in public space, everyday life in the public realm, and civic life) an intentional driver for design, policy, and governance.

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What matters: people, life + space

Life

How + who moves through space and interacts with one another

Individual

Intercept Survey
In-depth Interviews

Group

Pedestrians & Cyclists
Stationary Activities
Age & Gender
Group Activity

Networks

Census for City Streets

Form

The conditions that support people moving through space and interacting with one another

Streetscape

Furnishing
Landscape
Program Analysis

Blocks

Quality Criteria
Neighborhood Price Variety
Entries & Building Facade Activation

Urban Form

Neighborhood
Socioeconomic mix
Urban Connectivity

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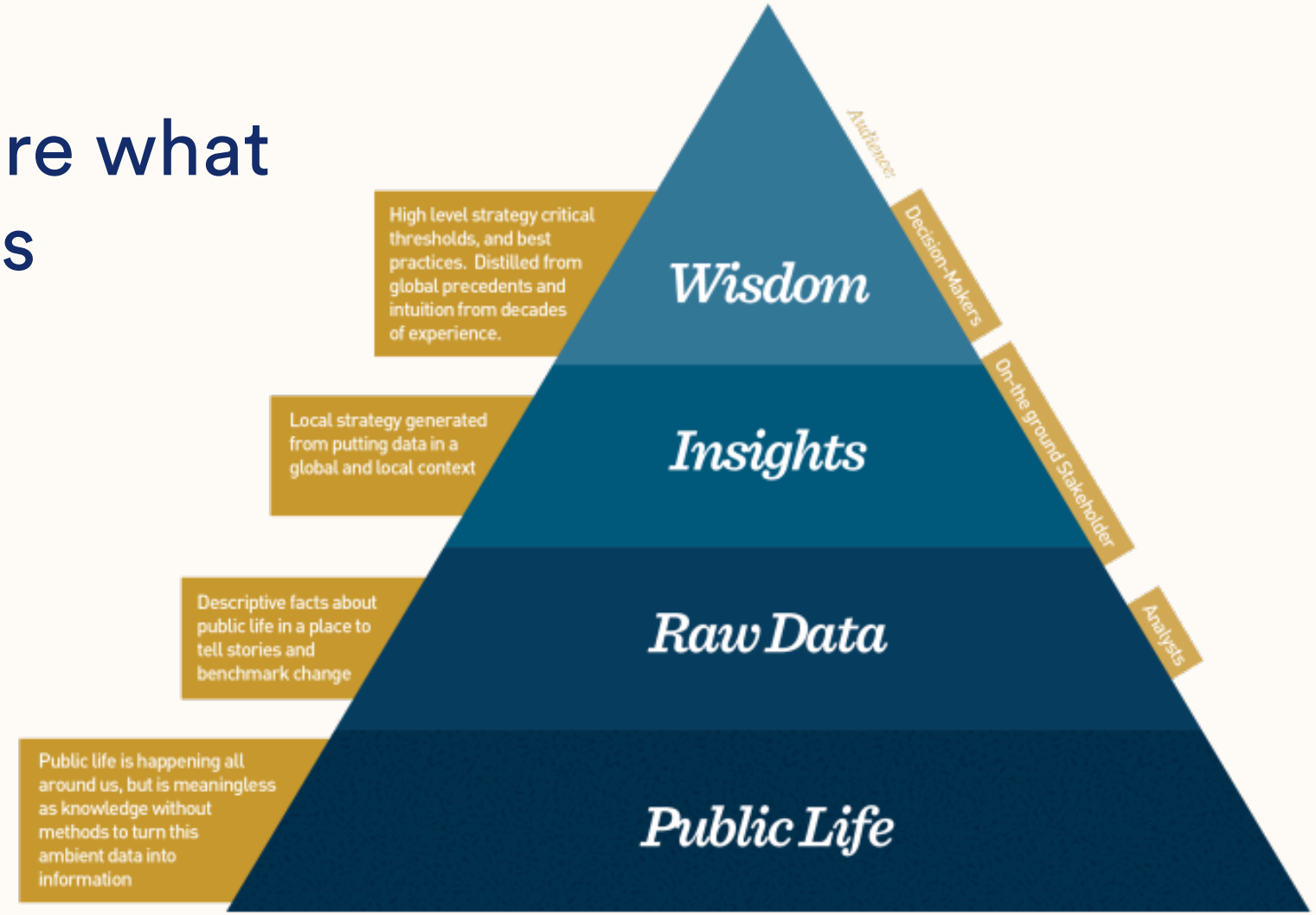
Measure what matters



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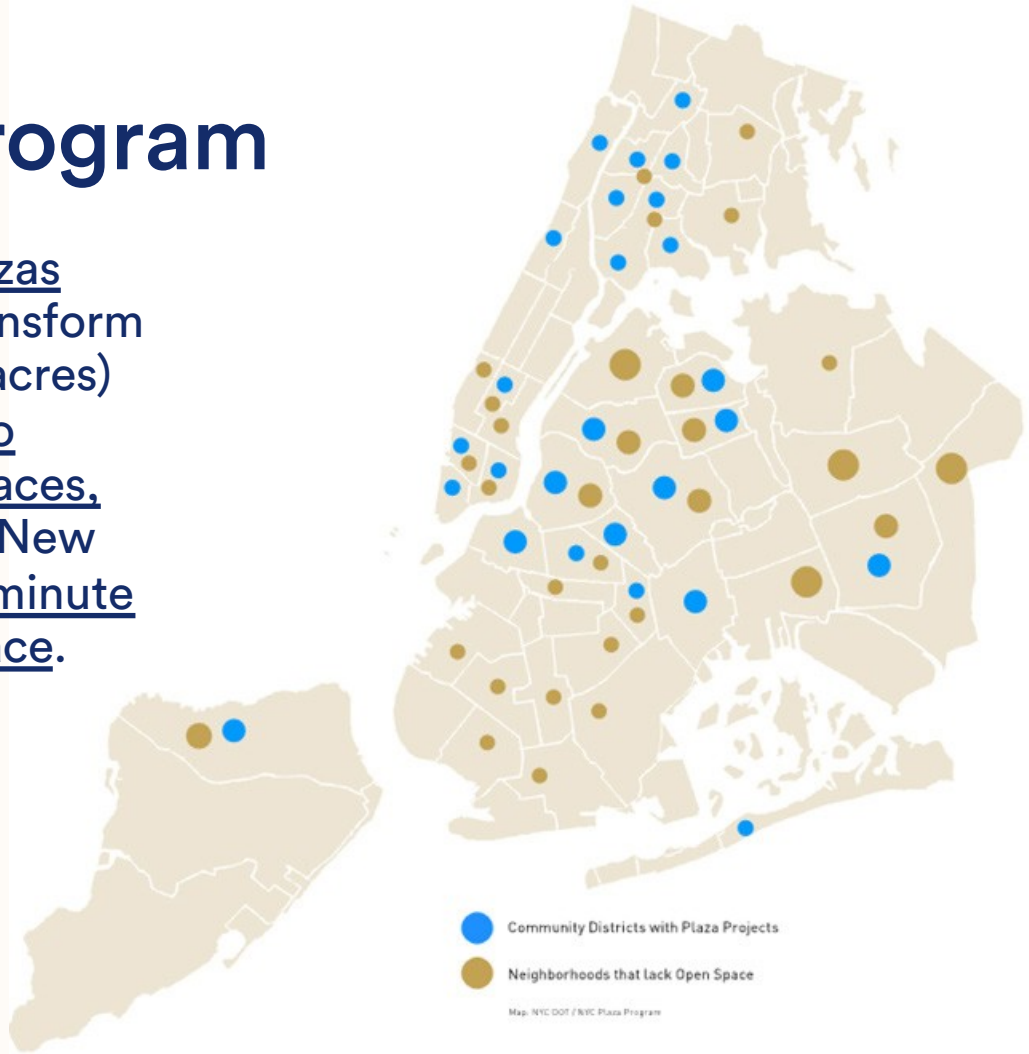
NYC Plaza Program

In the past 7 years 61 plazas have been created to transform 750,000 square feet (17 acres) of underused streets into vibrant, social public spaces, and help ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of quality open space.



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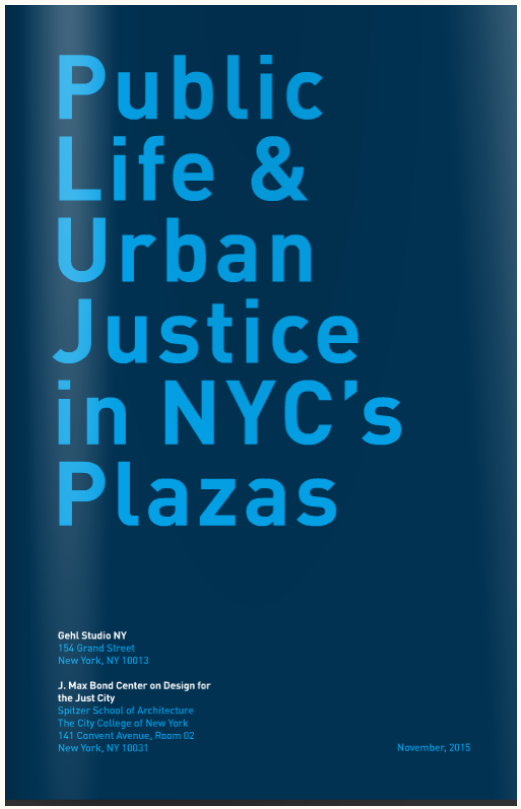

Gehl / JMBC Combined Indicator Framework

Intercept Survey *Interviews* *See Appendix A for full list of metrics.*

Desktop Research *Observational Survey*

EQUITY
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Distribution of Open Space
- Access and Use of Human and Funding Capital
- Demographics
- Design

CHOICE
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Design Flexibility and Adaptability
- Program Choice: Informal and Formal Activities

ACCESS
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Accessible Design
- User Accessibility: # of People with Convenient Access
- Pedestrian Accessibility
- Access and Adjacency to Other Land Uses

CONNECTIVITY
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Transportation Connectivity
- Interpersonal Connectivity

DIVERSITY
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Demographic Diversity
- Design Diversity

OWNERSHIP
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Neighborhood Ownership
- Formal and Informal Plaza Ownership

PARTICIPATION
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- User Activity
- Participation in Operations
- Design Facilitating Active Engagement
- Rate of Visitors that Stay in Plaza: "Stickiness"

INCLUSION & BELONGING
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Demographic Inclusion & Belonging
- Design Facilitating Inclusion & Belonging
- Public Safety

BEAUTY
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Design Features
- Appearance

CREATIVE INNOVATION
- Individual's Perception of Urban Justice Value
- Impact

HEALTH & WELLNESS
- Time Spent Outdoors
- Plaza Activity
- Human Health

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How do the plazas perform?

- public life
- public space
- socio-demographic mixing

Corona had the **highest peak number of pedestrians walking through** the plaza.

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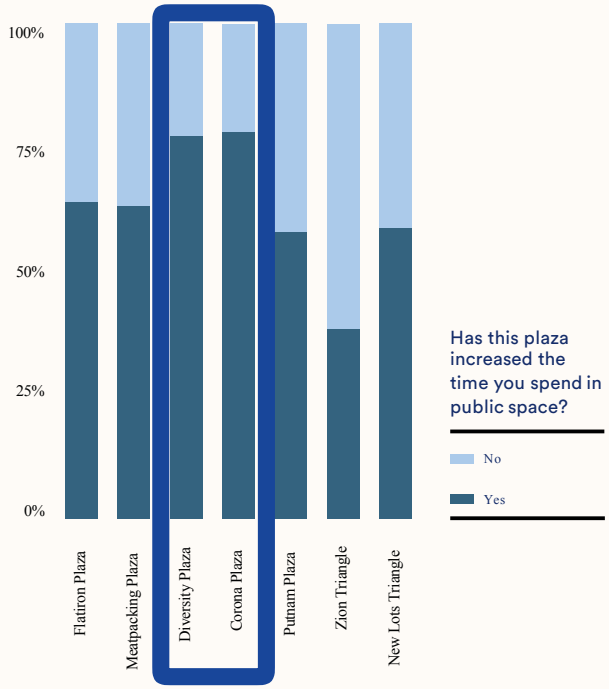
Neighborhoods that lack open space the most report a greater increase in time spent outside



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Plazas foster **social connections.**

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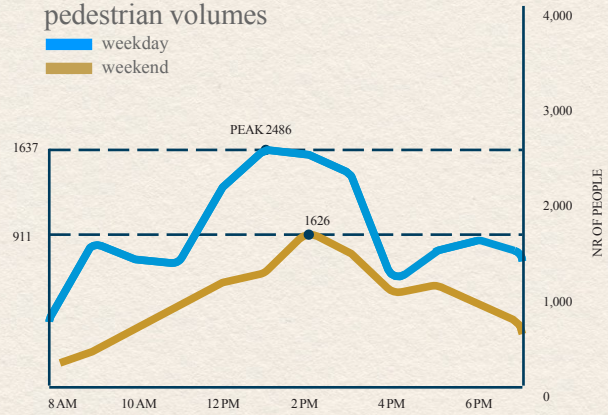
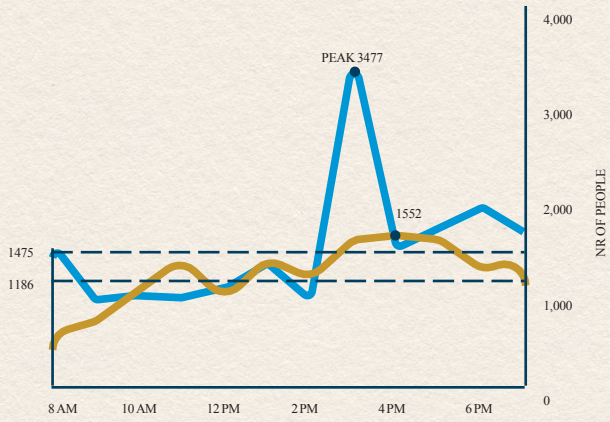
Operational budgets and pedestrian volumes do not correlated



Flatiron
45,000 sq ft.
Operations Budget
(2014)
$375,000

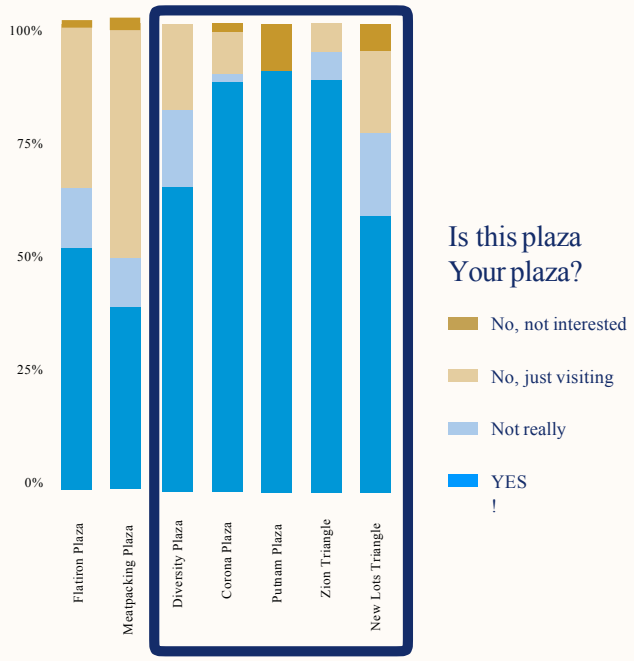
3X the space. 6X the budget.



Corona
13,500 sq. ft.
Operations Budget
(2014)
$65,000

Corona does a lot for a little

Respondents in outer- borough plazas reported a stronger sense of ownership



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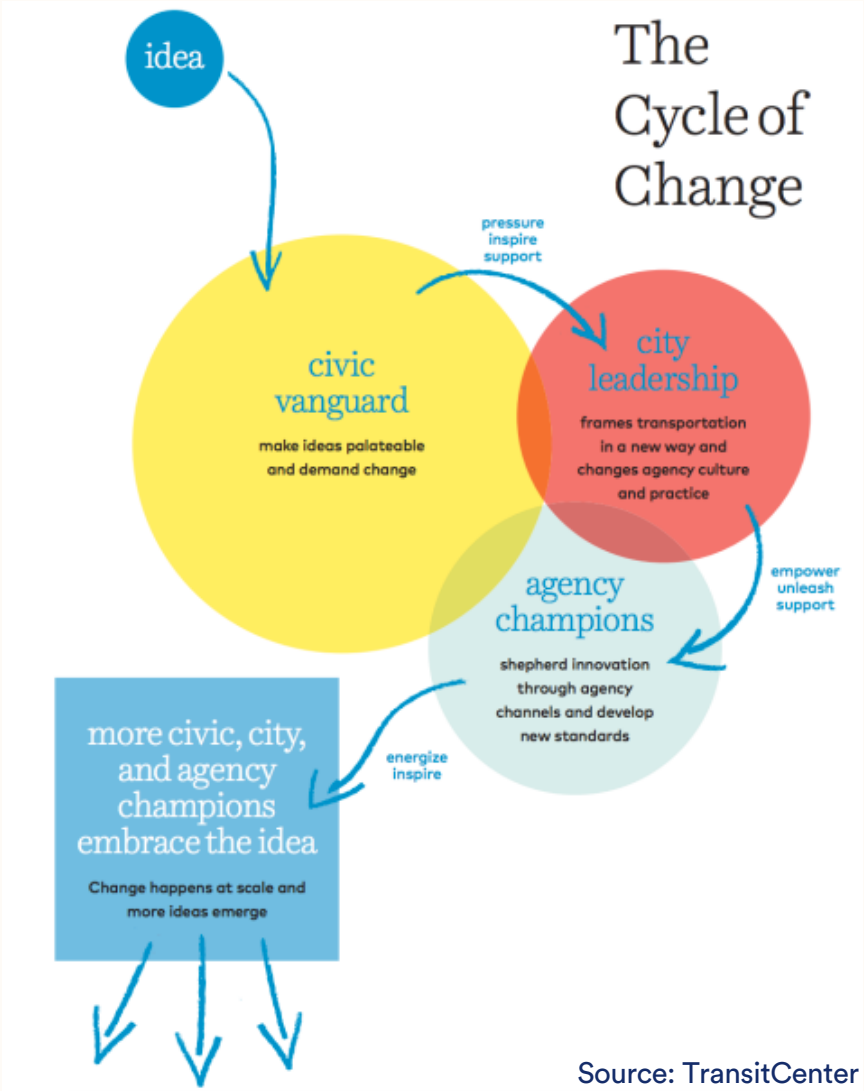
Do by trying: experiment, prototype, measure what matters, improve



Source: TransitCenter

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San Jose

In a central civic plaza adjacent to a future BART/CalTran station, how does the design of the intervention impact activities, who is there, and how they interact?

- Where are the barriers?
- What would strengthen invitations for people?
- What kind of stickiness, what would increase it?

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Lexington

In a public space at the gateway to the Downtown, how does the design of the intervention impact activities and who is there?

- Diversity of visitors
- Rates and types of social interaction
- Sense of belonging
- Activity in the space

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Field-building – join us!

- A Case for Public Life - for Mayors (forthcoming) + others
- Public Life Database – data, tools, and analysis
- Urban Interventions: prototypes and experiments
- Public Life, Public Space, Social Impacts:
  collaborations and training

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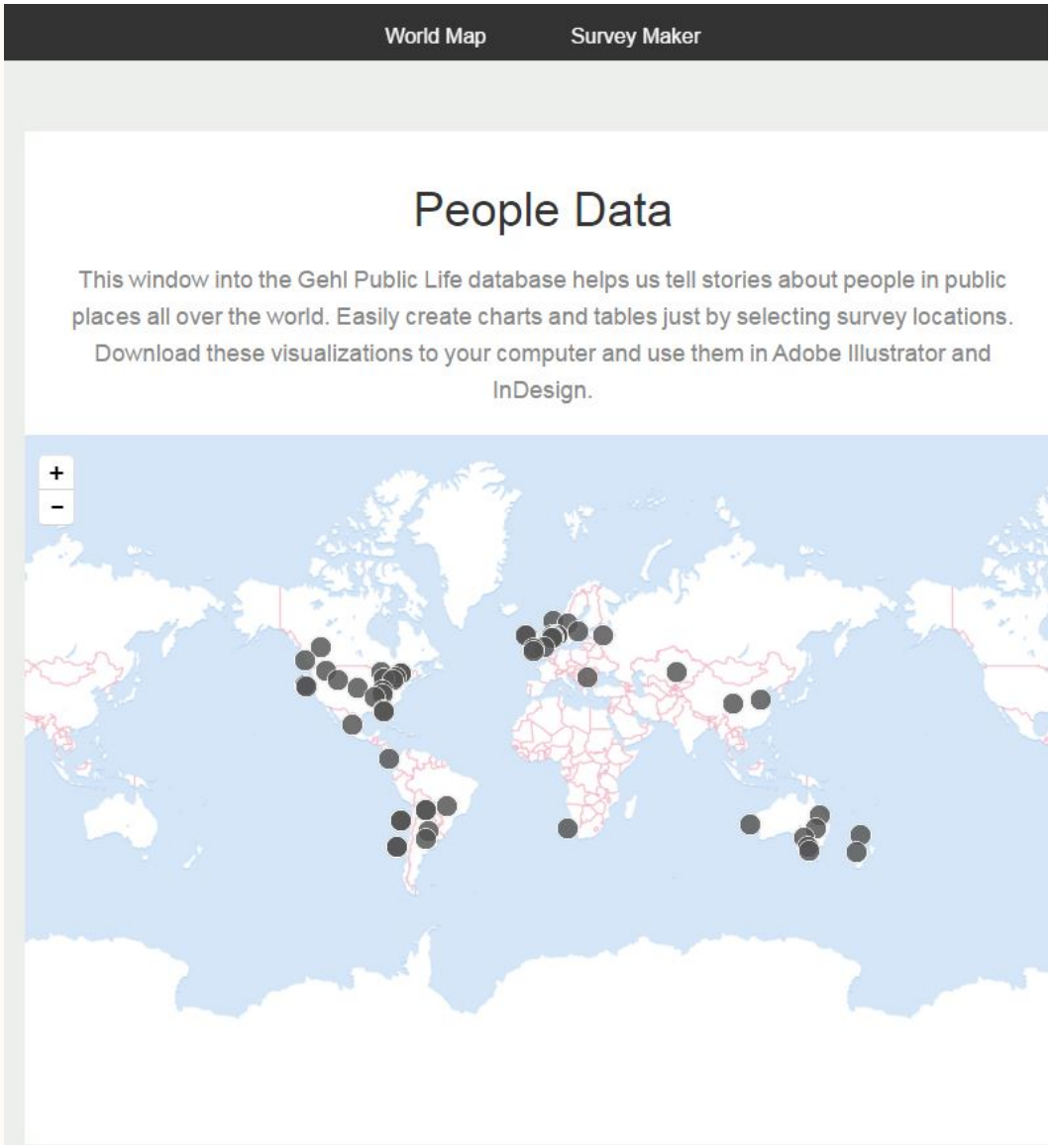

Thank you

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