

Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Urban design for developing a sense of community in culturally-diverse neighbourhoods.

- **Format:**

Written paper (3,000 words) and Verbal presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**

Viraji Bandara and Prof David Monteyne

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

University of Calgary

- **Abstract (300 words):**

A sense of community is a fundamental requirement for communities to thrive and prosper. However, in today's multi-ethnic environments developing or maintaining a sense of community is becoming increasingly challenging especially in cities such as Calgary, Canada, which are experiencing rapid population diversification. Thus, there is a growing need for such cities to actively support their diverse populations in building a sense of community.

Nearly a century of scholarship points to the link between the physical environment and social behaviour and recognizes the urban environment as a catalyst in enhancing a sense of community among citizens. However, assessments to identify how urban environments can facilitate a sense of community among diverse populations remain rare in urban planning and design.

The aim of this study was to identify how the physical environments can support building a sense of community among culturally-diverse populations, and thus identify strategies

for making cities more resilient and sustainable in the face of rapid demographic changes. For this research, the Family Housing Complex at the University of Calgary was selected as a case study due to it being a widely- diverse population living in a single neighbourhood. Using a number of observation techniques and interviews, the study focused on the diverse day-to-day encounters among residents to identify opportunities for developing a sense of community among them. Through analysing the data, various design opportunities were identified on different levels-specifically, the city, neighbourhood and housing levels-to improve the urban environment and thereby enhance a sense of community among residents.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Viraji Bandara is a graduate student at the Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary. Her current research focuses on the contribution of urban design in forming intercultural communities. Prior to her graduate studies, Viraji worked as an Architect in Sri Lanka. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. Currently, Viraji also works as a research assistant in a multidisciplinary team focused on integrating infrastructural systems.

David Monteyne is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary, where he is the Director of the research degrees. He teaches courses in the history and theory of architecture, landscape architecture, and urbanism. He is the author of *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*, which came out with the University of Minnesota Press in 2011. Monteyne has held fellowships at CRASSH (Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) and Clare Hall, University of Cambridge, and at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal.