

Towards the “UX Urban Design”

UX Urban Design is a new urban design approach that is user-centred and which focuses on designing our cities by and for better users experience.



Most of our contemporary cities have to face simultaneously a public participation demand, a better urban life quality need and smart city ideal. Urban design and urban planning fields have to renew their methods and processes in order to include the inhabitants as a proper stakeholder and to also deal with lower public investment.

UX Urban Design is a vision about **city making** based on an urban design & planning **shift** from the space and & technically based approach of the XXth century to a people centred approach of the XXIth century. It is clearly the recognition of the expertise of the USERS.

The concept of UX Urban Design comes from the Design field where UX means “Users Experience” and is applied in the city-making world. The idea behind the concept is basically to make the city **by** and **for** the users experience. The users are the core of the UX Urban Design project, from the diagnosis phase, to the project design itself and during the management phase. Which also means that the UX Urban Design approach can be applied at any step of the project.

UX Urban Design deals with placemaking and also community planning. It aims to be an efficient approach for improving the quality of life and takes into account the concepts of walkability, public spaces, quality of life, citizen-friendly, bottom-up and cost effective governance.

The main tool used for UX Urban Design is **Subjective Mapping**, which is a tool for analysing the urban users experiences. The idea is to add a “users layer” to urban diagnosis and analysis. The data collected can be people’s feelings, perceptions or imagination and the outputs can be [maps](#), [stories](#) or [interactive maps](#). For having such an approach technology can be used... but is not required. The most important is to have a deep site analysis and to collect informations from the perspective of the human eyes.

Some methods can be suggested for applying this vision :

1- Make a **people’s survey** at the district scale.

Ask citizens for example about people’s urban landmarks, places people like, places people dislike (and why), and ask them what they consider as heritage. The result can influence the urban master plan drawing and/or the urban design guideline. ([example](#))



Map showing the results of a people’s survey made in the Greater Paris area showing people’s landmarks, like, dislike and heritage places. [LINK](#)

2- Consider the city through the **kid's lenses**.

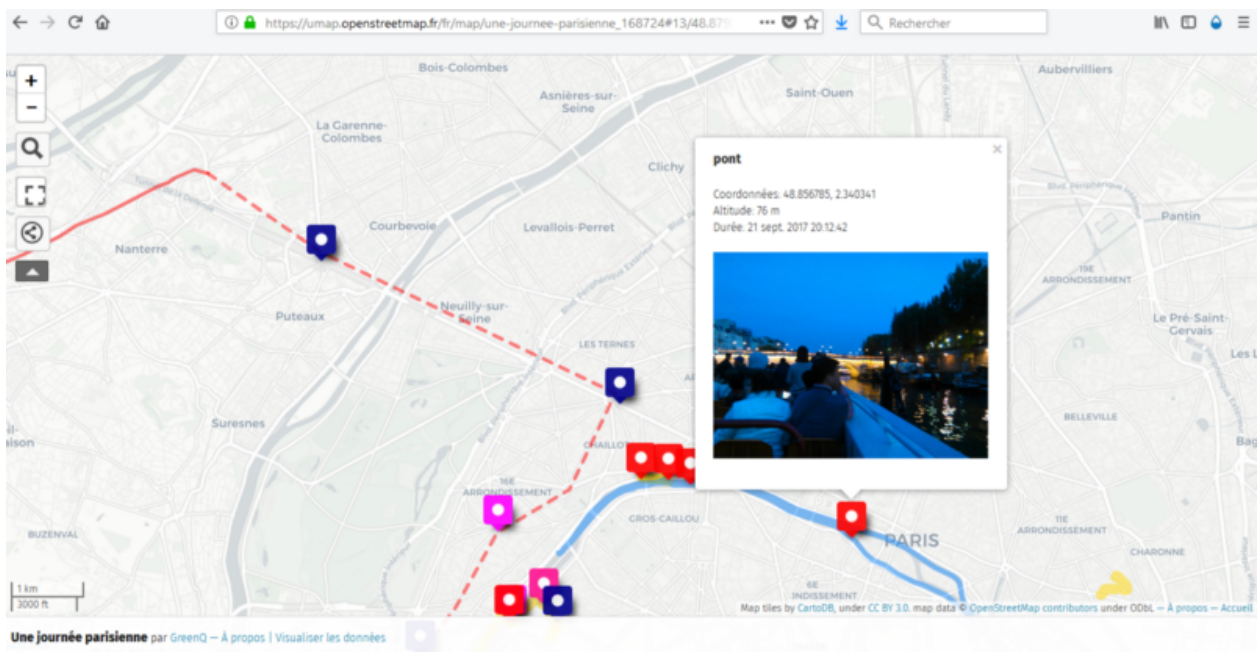
A great example is given by [ACE](#) (Action for Children Environment) a New Delhi based NGO working with kids living in slums. It is relevant to consider the children's perspective because they are considered as "weaker users", as elders or disable people can be. So if the city is more pleasant for them, it is going to be more comfortable for everyone ! ([example](#))



Workshop organized with a group of children for collecting a set of data related to their perception of their urban environment. [LINK](#)

3- Producing **interactive maps** as urban analysis reports.

This work can be based on community “subjective walks” with the aim to report on-site insights and collect multimedia data such as pictures, videos or writings. Then the content is aggregated in on-line interactive maps that are open to the public. Interactive maps are particularly interesting because they are open to multimedia data and because they are a multi-scale report document.



Example of interactive map based on a user's journey in Paris area. [LINK](#) (more examples [HERE](#))

As a conclusion UX Urban Design approach aims to consider the urban experience in a **multi-places, user-based and relational perspective**. It also considers the urban experience as a **continuum** of quality of life, from house to transportation, to work place.

Then being SMART is not so a matter of technology but above all applying a sustainable city making process and result and dealing with governance which means working together and especially with the people who are concerned.

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Paris, July 2018