

CULVER CITY SPEAKER SERIES 7.17.19

INNOVATION IN URBAN DESIGN

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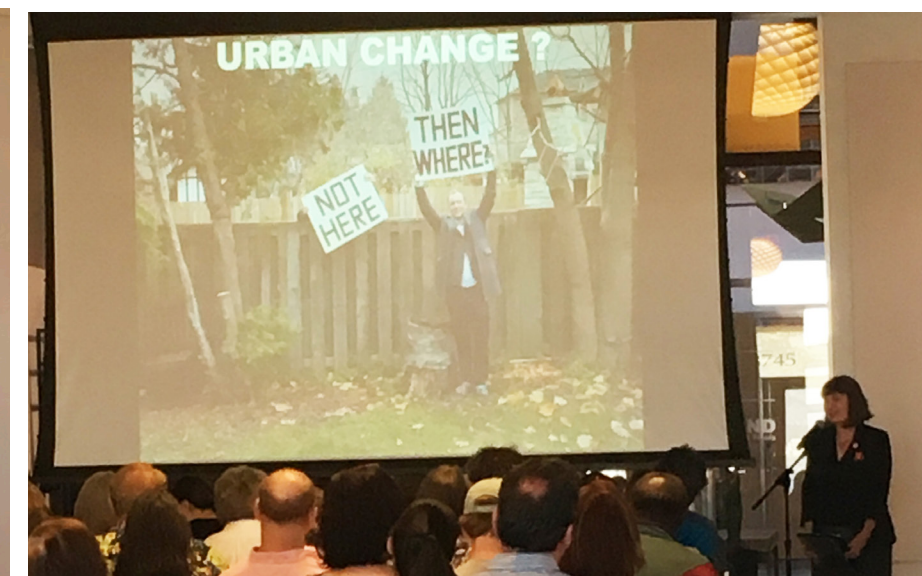
The City of Culver City is hosting an exciting Speaker Series on critical issues affecting the City, the region, and beyond. Culver City's [General Plan Update](#) will set a vision, goals, and policies around topics such as mobility, urban design, social equity, housing affordability, emergency preparedness, parking pricing, healthy communities, and much more. The entire community is invited to join in the discussion! [Access a written summary and video link for past events on the Speaker Series page.](#)

On July 17, 2019, the City of Culver City welcomed [Gerhard Mayer, AIA, LEED AP](#) for a presentation on 'Innovation in Urban Design.' Mayer, an architect, urbanist, and Principal of the Los Angeles office of [GGLO](#), spoke on two separate but interrelated topics: rapid urban change and urban parking history and opportunities. The first half of his presentation focused on the ways in which U.S. cities need to change to become both more enjoyable and more sustainable, the obstacles cities face to accomplishing change, and the mechanisms by which change could be accelerated. The second half of his presentation provided a history of urban parking and details on the opportunities presented by new parking technologies to increase efficiency and free up more space for the public realm.

Mayer attributed one common obstacle to urban change, opposition to development, to both a fear of density and a dissatisfaction with the types of buildings that tend to be built. According to Mayer, urban development in our region is dominated by three building types: single, detached homes; 5-story apartment buildings over 2 stories of parking; and high-rise apartment buildings raised on podiums. Most often, these building types do not contribute to a vibrant and welcoming urban fabric or an engaging public realm. Mayer provided a range of alternatives and asked the question: what if we could build a city people would actually like? His talk covered the history of how U.S. cities developed to favor the car and the ways in which cities elsewhere in the world have evolved to prioritize the needs of people above the needs of cars and to create inviting places.

According to Mayer, another major hurdle we face in creating cities that are more enjoyable for people is the vast number of elements that need to be addressed, including zoning models, mobility options, building types, street design, among many others. He pointed out the great urgency to change our cities in order to reduce their carbon impact and noted that the speed of urban change needs to accelerate. One mechanism Mayer discussed for rapidly advancing innovation in urban development is the IBA, or International Building Exhibit. There is a long history in Europe - and more recently in Asia - of using the IBA as an instrument for experimenting with zoning, inventing new urban forms, and developing new building typologies. According to Mayer, IBAs promote the development of social, cultural, economic, and ecological innovation in cities. They embody 'design thinking' and offer an effective alternative to the linear process of incremental change employed in contemporary city planning in the U.S.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the [Helms Design Center](#) for hosting and [Sprouts](#) for feeding everyone. We are looking forward to continuing the Speaker Series in the Fall with more events. Subscribe to email updates on the [Speaker Series page](#) to receive notification as events are scheduled!



Stay informed at
culvercity.org/speakerseries