

Abstract

Jane Jacobs published *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961, critiquing New York City planners for destroying existing urban fabrics in the name of urban renewal. She drew a correlation between safety and the success of neighbourhoods, arguing that safety is derived through self-policing and eyes on the street. She argued for a dense, walkable, mixed-use neighbourhood with heritage buildings to draw eyes onto the streets. As a proponent of advocacy planning, her legacy is the democratisation of planning. Her concepts and ideas help address climate change and the heritage and intensification debates facing New Zealand planners.

Words: 100

Script:

Hello, my name is Arson, and my presentation is about Jane Jacobs, her work, concepts and ideas, and relevance to contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand planning.

Starting with her biography, Jacobs was born in 1916 and pursued a career in journalism. Early in life, she moved to New York just after the great depression, which meant often, she was unemployed and walked around the city enjoying the urban landscape. In 1961 she authored *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which was primarily a critique of planners in New York around that time.

The context around New York, which sparked *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, was the suburban flight out of the city and into the suburbs, which created urban blight. Mayor La Guardia and chief advisor Moses planning around this time primarily consisted of urban renewal through slum clearance and large infrastructure projects with often a heavy focus on urban motorways, which often segregated neighbourhoods and disrupted the existing urban fabric. The purpose of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was to protest this federal bulldozer approach.

Jacobs's believed that safety is paramount to the success of a neighbourhood and that safety is not achieved through policing but through a sort of self-policing that occurs when there are eyes on the street. She proposed that to have the most significant number of eyes on the street, a neighbourhood should have mixed uses which draw people to them throughout the day and night, meaning the sidewalks are always full. There should be relatively high density,

the blocks should be short, and there should be frequent crossings these are all so it easy for pedestrians to get to where they want by walking. She believed these measures would draw people onto the sidewalks, drawing further eyes to the street as individuals engaged in people-watching. Crucially Jacobs also believed that old buildings must be preserved in neighbourhoods not only so there is visual variation but also as a source of low-income housing.

When we look at Jane Jacobs's legacy, one of the most immediate effects of her advocacy was the rethinking of bulldozer development, which led to the preservation of existing urban fabrics within New York and throughout the world. Arguably, Jacob's most outstanding contribution to planning came in the form of advocacy planning, which led to the democratisation of planning and meant that the people being planned for had an opportunity to have their voices and concerns. However, this also led to populism, with individuals pursuing their self-interests. Furthermore, this advocacy planning drew us away from the make-no-little-plans thinking and led to more corrective instead of pre-emptive planning. Jacobs, at a time when the automobile was becoming increasingly more popular and affordable and with-it motorways and suburbs, put a renewed importance on dense, mixed-use walkable neighbourhoods, which a study found often have lower carbon emission.

Thinking about the relevance of Jacob's legacy and how it applies to contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand planning, we first see that she advocated for heritage buildings and also dense, walkable mixed-use developments, two issues that have been recently debated not only in Auckland but throughout New Zealand and pitted against each other. Whether special character areas and heritage or intensification in response to the National Policy Statement on

Urban Development, looking back to the ideas of Jane Jacobs can help us navigate these issues more effectively. Furthermore, we see the effect of advocacy planning within New Zealand, with residents' concerns rightly being heard. However, we also see inequities in whose voices are heard and who submits to the council for feedback and goes to meetings. This means there are often challenges to proposed changes due to self-serving individuals, which slow our processes down and lead to corrective instead of pre-emptive planning. However disheartening populism within planning might be, we must look back to Jacob's ideals to see how we can better navigate these situations.

Thank you for listening.

References List

- Shih, J. (2021). *Auckland CBD and Rangitoto Island From Sky Tower*. Wikimedia.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auckland CBD and Rangitoto Island From Sky Tower.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auckland_CBD_and_Rangitoto_Island_From_Sky_Tower.jpg)
- Shih, J. (2020). *Auckland CBD From Mount Eden*. Wikimedia.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auckland CBD From Mount Eden.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auckland_CBD_From_Mount_Eden.jpg)
- Golik, K. (2017). *Auckland High Court*. Wikimedia.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auckland High Court.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Auckland_High_Court.jpg)
- Kohlhofer, A. (2005). *Busy New York street*. Flickr.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/plasticshore/129071446>
- Stahlberg, F. (2017). *Greenwich Village*. Wikimedia.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greenwich Village %2827483343909%29.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greenwich_Village_%2827483343909%29.jpg)
- Mohareb, E., Derrible, S., & Peiravian, F. (2016). Intersections of Jane Jacobs' Conditions for Diversity and Low-Carbon Urban Systems: A Look at Four Global Cities. *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, 142(2). [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(asce\)up.1943-5444.0000287](https://doi.org/10.1061/(asce)up.1943-5444.0000287)
- Dreier, P. (2006). Jane Jacob's Legacy. *City & Community*, 5(3), 227–231. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/10.1111/j.1540-6040.2006.00177.x>
- Stanziola, P. (1961). *Jane Jacobs*. Wikimedia.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jane Jacobs.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jane_Jacobs.jpg)
- Campanella, T. J. (2011). Jane Jacobs and the Death and Life of American Planning. *Places—a Forum of Environmental Design*, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.22269/110425>
- Hospers, G. J. (2006). Jane Jacobs: her life and work. *European Planning Studies*, 14(6), 723–732. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654310600779444>

Rudolph, P. (1967). *Lower Manhattan Expressway Map*. Wikimedia.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lower_Manhattan_Expressway_Map.jpg

Kappel, M. (12011). *NAPERVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING COUNCIL CHAMBERS*.

Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/m-i-k-e/5449749085>

Jacobs, J. (2015). The Uses of Sidewalks: Safely. In R. T. LeGates & F. Stout (Eds.), *The City Reader* (6th ed., pp. 149–153). Taylor & Francis Group.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/auckland/reader.action?docID=3569866>