

Streetscape - March 2013

This Month

Public Spaces Are Important

OMG: Getting Inside the Millennial Mind

What's Important to Millennials

Transportation Plazas as Public Spaces

This month, we continue the discussion on why public spaces are so important? Public spaces are important because they are a visual representation of our identity. If the visual representation is negative, it cascades into other area of our communities and neighborhoods. There's an old adage that you have 30 seconds to make a favorable impression when you first meet someone. Based on that adage, public spaces are always on stage.

You have probably notices that all of the food and beverage commercials on television, contain large groups of people who are always smiling, laughing and having fun. Why? Because the ad agencies know that those experience help to sell whatever they're offering. Our public space can have the same impact.

In the past, we were content to provide [places to sit](#) in public spaces. But today, we're starting to understand that just providing a places to sit isn't good enough anymore. Let's take a look at the Millennials for a moment to put this in context - according to [Scarborough](#), a consumer insights firm - 69% of Millennials or GenYers consider themselves to be very [sociable](#). 62% [recycle glass, paper or plastic](#). 30% drive less or use [alternative transportation](#). Scarborough also reports that Millennial's are also more likely than any other generation to have diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. A free copy of the research article - [OMG: Getting inside the Millennial Mind](#) is available.

Most cities understand that millennials are the future generator of economic development and If your goal is to attract and keep millennials - you must have [social spaces](#), [recycling container](#) should be highly visible and [bicycle parking](#) should a priority. Otherwise, you've lost your opportunity to make an impression.

Incidentally, public transportation supports both millennials and boomer. Over the years, we have shifted from providing a public commodity to creating public spaces that creates favorable experiences. Like any other product in the marketplace, we are competing against other cities, neighborhoods and business district for attention.

One other note of importance - Millennials want to live in urban areas or close to public transportation. They are also willing to live in denser spaces and smaller apartments and homes which intensifies the need for quality [outdoor spaces and parks](#).

Equally important in this equation is the opportunity for our cities, neighborhoods and shopping districts to create some branding differences between the way our public spaces look and feel compared to our neighbors and competitors. Whether we want to believe it or not, we are in competition with our neighbors and competitors for the same people and same dollars. If we blend it with everyone else, we've lost an opportunity to create a competitive advantage.

Interested in more conversation about engaging public spaces, give us a telephone call or [send us an email](#) to get the conversation started.