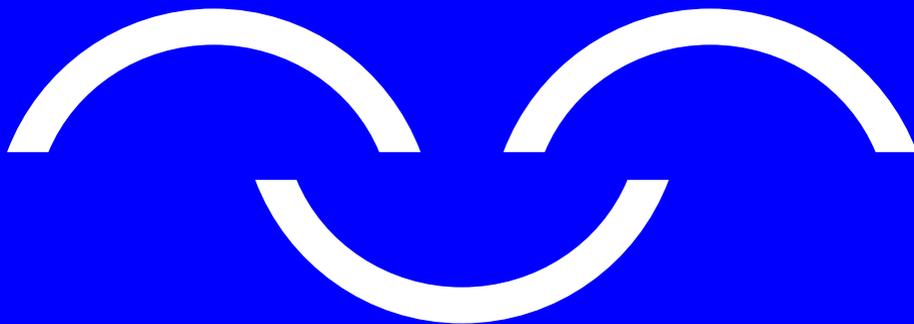


Manifesto. Innovation  
in public space



La Marina de València

## Preamble

1. La Marina de València is the historic harbor of Valencia. It is managed by Consorcio València 2007 - a public institution established as an alliance between the Government of Spain, the Regional Government of València and València City Council. Its strategic Plan 2016-2021 outlines a new vision for the future whereby both tradition and inventiveness drive the transformation of the economy, the urban and cultural environment of La Marina. With this vision in mind, we set ourselves two main goals: convert La Marina into the city's engine for economic development and create sustainable, inclusive and dynamic public spaces.
2. In La Marina we understand the value of co-creation and the importance of including different actors in the design and improvement of our urban environment. This is why we collaborated with Western Sydney University in the process of consolidating La Marina Living Lab, an experimental ecosystem in which systematic practices of participatory design are applied to reimagine inclusive and innovative public spaces. We do this by collaborating with community members, professionals, researchers, and businesses to explore, create and evaluate transformations in public space that promote civic engagement and economic productivity. The Living Lab represents our approach to realizing La Marina's 2 key objectives outlined in part 1.
3. This manifesto was born out of the need to define clearly (a) the concept of public space, innovation and the relationship between the two (b) the core values and principles that should guide the creation of public spaces and (c) the key stakeholders that must be involved in the process. We believe that when public space is designed with these values and principles in mind, it becomes a catalyst for civic engagement and economic activation. The manifesto draws upon our experience and has been further elaborated during a co-creation workshop with 40 experts, practitioners and researchers from 15 countries, which took place in November of 2018.
4. While the principles, framework and stakeholders outlined in this document have been inspired by the specific context of La Marina, they are meant to serve a greater audience of policy-makers, urban planners, architects and community members who face similar challenges in diverse contexts. It has been our intention to create a manifesto rooted in the local, yet useful for the global. We believe that the values and principles we defined collectively can help guide and inspire the creation and proliferation of many diverse and inclusive public spaces around the world which boost economic productivity and embrace innovation.
5. At La Marina we commit to using the framework developed in this manifesto as a guidebook for improving our public space strategy and assessing its robustness. We will also include it in the evaluation of incoming tender proposals. Assessing received proposals against the characteristics of the four domains enables us to make objective and informed decisions about the quality, applicability, and completeness of a given proposal. We encourage communities and policy-makers to consider the value of this document in their specific contexts and in light of their local challenges. We will only see lasting change in our urban environments when the values upheld on paper are internalized and backed by concrete and context-specific actions.
6. This is not an exhaustive or fully comprehensive document. Rather, it is one that is in progress and which requires continuous improvement from both citizens and policy-makers. We believe in the power of co-creation because it instills a sense of shared ownership and shared responsibility. We hope that, by making this Manifesto accessible to a broader public of placemakers, we can continue to collectively rethink and redefine the importance of public space and its role in fostering economic productivity and innovative practices.

## **What is public space**

Regardless of the authority in charge of its management, a public space is accessible to everyone. Its use is not for profit and it respects the surrounding social and natural environment. A public space is filled with memories and emotions, inspiring a sense of belonging in its users.

## **What is innovation**

It is an open, place-based process that generates new ideas, products and services that are relevant to their social, economic and cultural context. Innovation starts with freedom of thinking, creating, experimenting and questioning. It means being open to failure and learning from your missteps. It is human-oriented, allowing every citizen to become an expert, tester, and evaluator.

## **Public space x innovation**

Public space and innovation meet when citizens gather together – in either structured or spontaneous ways – to exchange, share, argue and experiment with imagining new realities. When public space and innovation meet, they produce the unexpected, they dismantle material and imagined fences, they tap into local resources and potential to address broader challenges. The encounter between the two produces not only new ‘products and services’ but also new ‘publics’ - people brought together by a shared set of concerns and interests in addressing them.

## Framework

Public space leads to innovation when it is understood as an ecosystem of different actors, processes and affects (how we feel and are moved by a place). The concept of ecosystem suggests a holistic strategy in which various components of public space interact with each other spontaneously and unexpectedly without necessarily following a rigid or predetermined structure. The following framework looks at four power domains that are instrumental in (re) shaping our common spaces, design, production, use and governance, and defines the key characteristics of each domain that can maximize the potential of public space to serve as a catalyst for innovation. Here, design is understood as the process of reshaping a public space by

integrating new components that enhance its existing physical conditions; use refers to the desired social uses of a common space; production is the outcome of economic and cultural practices, be they for-profit or non-profit; and governance is the process of defining and leading implementation of a public space strategy. In addition, we define a set of overarching preconditions –the pillars of our strategy– which are characteristic of all four domains.

**Preconditions**

To foster innovation, public space should be **sustainable** and **resilient** in cultural, ecological, political and economic terms; accessible, creating the conditions that facilitate access for a diverse group of stakeholders; inclusive, actively challenging inequalities and violence related to gender,

age, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic disparities; designed and governed by multiple actors using transparent, inclusive and participatory processes; embracing technological connectivity as a platform for new ideas and visions; designed by considering its broader social impact on both neighbouring and city-wide areas.

**Design.** Comfortable, Functional, Interactive, Easy-to-navigate, Secure, Permeable, Sensitive

**Production.** Anchored, Creative, Contextualized, Valuable, Need-driven, Prosperous, Diverse

**Use.** Balanced, Agile, Experimental, Convivial, Diverse, Continuous, Spontaneous

**Governance.** Reflexive, Flexible, Collaborative & empowered, Connected, Accountable, Responsive, Effective & efficient,

## DESIGN should be:

**Sensitive.** To the needs of the broadest spectrum of users. **Functional.** Producing an outcome that performs its intended or assigned tasks. **Interactive.** Facilitating the encounter between users, between users and the built environment and between users and the natural environment of a public space. **Easy-to-navigate.** Fostering wayfinding by helping people orient themselves in the public space. **Comfortable.** Evoking a feeling of ease among users. **Permeable.** accommodating urban fluidity and continuity, facilitating spontaneous user appropriation and experimentation in the public realm. **Secure.** Ensuring the safety of users.

## PRODUCTION should be:

**Anchored.** Prioritizing those activities that maximize the benefit for the local economy and increase the overall well-being of the community. **Creative.** Emerging from innovative uses of existing resources. **Diverse.** Involving companies of different type, size and sector and producing a variety of activities, services and products that respond to the needs and interests of a wide range of users. **Contextualized.** Respectful and aligned with the values and identity of the place and its users. **Valuable.** Generating real long-term value for the community through non-speculative practices. **Need-driven.** Delivering relevant services by addressing in a meaningful way the needs of customers and users. **Prosperous.** Generating economic revenue which is not contained or amassed but can be redistributed to increase community welfare.

## USE should be:

**Spontaneous.** Emerging from unconventional and unexpected practices adopted by users in the public space. **Agile.** Evolving and adapting to transformations, while ensuring durability. **Experimental.** Encouraging the conceptualization and application of new visions for the future of the public space. **Convivial.** Facilitating social encounters and interactions, making the use of public space a learning experience. **Diverse.** Fostering a broad range of activities that target different groups. **Balanced.** Between short-term and long-term activity. **Continuous.** Promoting day and night time economy, in order to fully optimise the space available and increase safety.

## GOVERNANCE should be:

**Accountable.** Able to explain and justify its line of action and take responsibility for it. **Reflexive.** Thinking deeply and critically about unforeseen impacts when implementing public space strategies in light of local context and of globalization dynamics. **Responsive.** Listening to the needs of stakeholders and responding promptly and appropriately. **Flexible.** Being able to adapt to local and global political, social and economic transformations. **Connected.** Facilitating communication and the sharing of responsibilities among decision-making actors. **Effective & efficient.** Successfully producing desired outcomes without wasting excessive resources or expenses. **Collaborative & empowered.** Representing stakeholders without a voice (children, future generations, non-human stakeholders, etc.), encouraging PPP partnerships while governing with a clear strategy that can be independently implemented.

## Stakeholders

When implementing a public space strategy, city officials and urban designers should first recognize the key stakeholders that must be involved in the process and understand their own role as well as that of others. The Public space management authority should ensure the safety, accessibility and attractiveness of public space. It should not merely seek occasional consultation from citizens, but strive to work alongside them in managing the public space in a collaborative fashion. Government institutions, local, regional, national and international, should listen to their constituents and respond accordingly by allocating appropriate resources and respecting the interests of all relevant stakeholders. Non-governmental and community organizations should provide an accessible channel of participation for residents who may not otherwise engage in the transformation of the public space. They should educate and provide information about participatory processes while also mobilizing grassroots activity.

Academic practitioners and institutions should generate new knowledge and ideas for improving the quality of public spaces. Residents should use, re-shape and improve the public space, by taking ownership of it, enjoying it, and protecting it, while tourists should use the public space in a way that respects, protects and promotes the local values and culture. Stakeholders with commercial interest should provide products and services that respond to the needs and desires of public space users. The users themselves should detect issues, advocating for change and opposing unwanted developments, intervening directly in the space through grassroots initiatives, providing feedback, innovating and constantly improving our shared spaces.

Aside from the commonly recognized stakeholder groups, city planners should also consider those without a voice. For example - people who are not yet aware of the existence of a certain public space or have never visited it before, but can be turned into potential users. They do not have a direct role to play so it is important to examine closely their interests and introduce changes which appeal to them as well. Similarly, we have to account for future generations – these are the generations that have not yet been born and the generations that are too young to participate in the management of our public spaces. They may not have a spot on the table now, but it is our responsibility to consider and protect their interests. Another important yet frequently overlooked stakeholder is the biophysical environment, which includes all living things that inhabit our common spaces. Nature does not have a seat on the table so it is on us to protect the habitat and well-being of other living beings which make use of our common spaces. And finally – the unexpected – or those stakeholders who have not been previously identified. We should leave space for the unexpected and remain open to the possibility of incorporating new stakeholders in our management practices.

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