香港建築師學會
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

HKIA CPD SEMINAR: "HEALTHY CITY DESIGN"

DATE

16 JANUARY 2014
(THURSDAY)

TIME

6:45pm - 8:15pm

SPEAKER

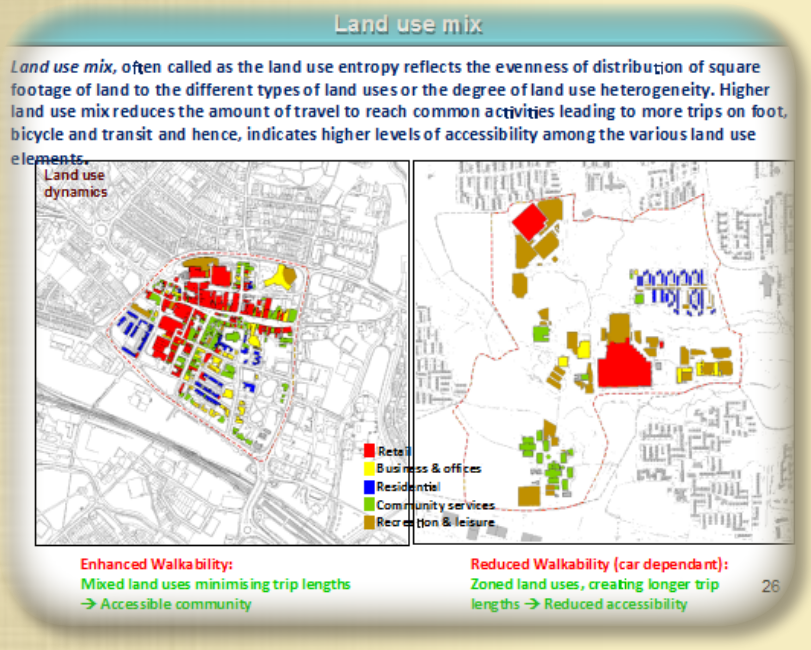
PROFESSOR CHRIS WEBSTER,
DEAN of HKU Faculty of Architecture
(HKUrbanLab)

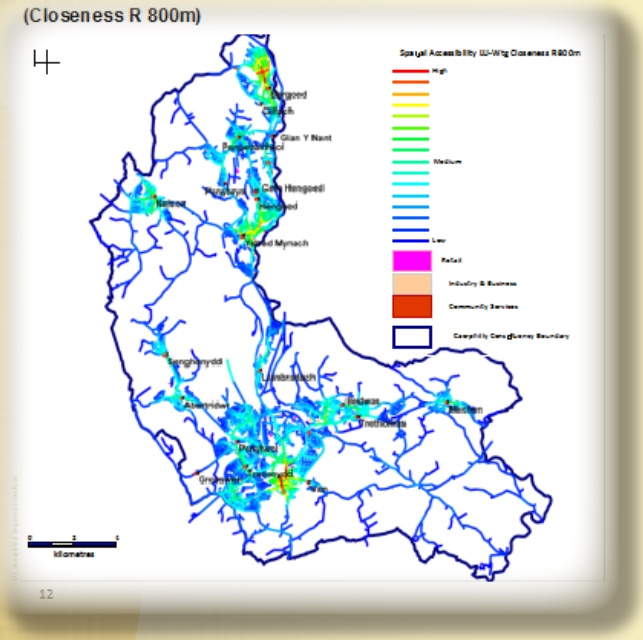
HKIA CPD HOURS

1.5 CPD HOURS

ADMISSION FEE

HK$100 HKIA / AIA-HK MEMBER
HK$200 FOR NON-HKIA MEMBER





ABOUT THE SPEAKER

PROFESSOR CHRIS WEBSTER: SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Professor Chris Webster is Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, HKU. Until January 2013 he headed Cardiff University's School of Planning and Geography, one of Europe's largest planning schools and there built a partnership with Cardiff Medical School to explore the association between spatial environmental configuration and individual health outcomes. He is an urban planner, spatial analyst and urban economist by training and intellectual tradition but was drawn into the science of healthy cities by years of researching Mainland China's phenomenal urban growth; the lack of connect between practicing city-planners and public health scientists; his life-long study of self-organising complex urban systems; and the inspiration and encouragement of epidemiologists to revisit the Public Health roots of Urban Planning. His spatial analysis team has developed sDNA (spatial Domain Network Analysis) a network analysis tool that allows the measurement of an individual's home-based accessibility to health-improving and detracting destinations, measured at multiple spatial scales. He has recently partnered with Professor Gabriel Leung's Public Health group at the University of Hong Kong and with Cambridge University's GIS lab. The expanded Cardiff-Cambridge-HKU team is setting about the task of adding a set of highly discriminating spatial environmental measures to large study cohorts such as the UK Biobank, the Guangzhou Biobank Cohort Study; the Children of 1997 Hong Kong Chinese birth cohort; and the Prospective Chinese Elderly Cohort. As well as several scientific papers, a book has already emerged from this work: Sarkar, Webster and Gallacher (March 2014) Healthy Cities: Public Health Through Urban Planning. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. Professor Webster has five prize-winning academic papers on urban theory. His present professional mission is to change the way cities are planned in China.

LECTURE SYNOPSIS

Healthiness is a desirable but not essential feature of a home. The vast majority of the world's population cannot afford to live in a home designed to minimize health risks. With rising income, however, the dampness that threatens respiratory function and the construction materials and practices that pose risks of traumatic injury start to disappear.

In the clusters of people, work-places and homes that we call cities, the same relationship between health hazard and income exists. As GDP rises, cities generally become healthier places. Modern environmental health, planning and building regulations arose in the last quarter of the 19th century as European and American cities were discovering the health-threatening side effects of industrial-based urbanization and as the financial and organizational capacity to improve the urban environment accelerated.

But public health in cities changes dynamically with urban, economic, technical and social development. The public health crises of early-stage industrialization and urbanization a century ago in Europe and currently in most parts of China include industrial-based diseases and the effects of living in poor quality homes. A different kind of public health crisis now faces cities in advanced economies, however.

The hazards of sedentary, fast and socially fragmented lifestyles mean that obesity, coronary-heart disease and mental health problems are now approaching endemic status in many countries. With a new kind of plague upon us, public health scientists and practitioners have discovered anew, like their predecessors 100 years ago, that architecture, urban design and planning are the most powerful kind of public health intervention.

HKU Faculty of Architecture (from 2014, to be know also as HKUrbanLab), has therefore joined up with HKU faculty of Medicine to develop a Healthy Cities program. In this talk, Professor Webster will introduce the audience to the emerging evidence base behind the healthy city agenda. This rapidly progressing science is throwing up some intriguing findings and professor Webster will talk about some of the results emerging from his study of the health impacts of urban street configuration and design in the UK and his plans for extending this work in Hong Kong. He is looking for government and industry partners to align themselves with the HKUrbanLab Healthy Cities programme in a collaboration that explores ways of putting scientific knowledge to work in guiding the practice of healthy city building. This HKIA CPD talk provides a forum where we can begin to explore such partnerships.