

TRANSFORMCITY MODULE 3 – SUGGESTED TIMELINE ‘SPEEDY LEARNING’

Duration: 3 weeks

Time investment: 1 day per week

You are busy, but you also have a concrete urban transformation project that requires a different approach from what you are used to. Although your project already has targets and deadlines, you also need to bring in new knowledge, insights and practical tips and tools for yourself to be able to realise better results in the project. Carve out one day a week during three weeks and equip yourself while also making direct improvements to your project strategy. Learning by doing.

Week 1: Analysis & stakeholder input

Morning

Content: Chapter 1 (Intro) & 2

Assignments: explore the strategic context and power of your hardware activities

1. Make a rough sketch for yourself of the complexity, external dependency and unpredictability in your area. List all the themes, challenges and transitions that you need to address in the area: on the left those in the short term, in the middle the medium term and on the right the long term. Start with the themes that are important to your project team and then add those that you suspect are important to other stakeholders. Under each theme, enter which stakeholders are affected. Also list here any different departments in your own organization. Below that, add what the biggest goals and interests are in addressing this theme. Finally, add where the main risks, dependencies and uncertainties lie in tackling this theme.
2. Look at the list you created. How is the whole project currently organised within the complete project team: is there close collaboration between for example the spatial planners and designers and the communications and financial and project managers? Do you work on one integral strategy to address all these themes or do you all have your own project lines, plannings and targets? Can you spot parts of the project that belong to your department but where you feel other team members can play a much larger role?
3. Double check with yourself to what extent your spatial plans and visions already have a temporal component to them? Are they strategic paths or final images? And how do they incorporate the complexities, dependencies and unpredictabilities you mapped before?

Content: Chapter 3

Assignments:

1. Think about the different stakeholders you need to engage and try to imagine what matters to them and what inspires them. How can you use spatial design as conversation starters to trigger their imagination, collect input from them and awaken their appetite to join in on the larger transformation mission for the area. Think about reference images, simple sketches or photoshop collages. Also think about different options or scenarios you can sketch to really rapidly test the response among different stakeholders. Also think about how to document all this input in your database.

Afternoon

Content: Chapter 4

Assignments:

Can you already make a first energy map of your area? This can be a rough sketch with post-its or hand-written ideas and quotes, but it can give you an idea about tactical places or themes where many interests come together and where the physical transformation of the whole area could start.

Write down how you would approach the first three co-creation sessions in the area. Who would you invite, what would you put on the agenda and how would you organize it (sample program and setting)? Do you already see outlines of coalitions of the willing emerging? How can you give those a place in your sessions?

Content: Chapter 5

Assignments:

1. Have a look at the onepager back- and forecasting from the download section and check to what extent you use both forecasting and backcasting in your project. Are the current situation and the future situation structurally connected and blended into one ongoing trajectory or are they organised separately (for example placemakers for small actions in the here and now and urban planners for the big future vision)? Can you think of improvements here?

Week 2: Shared vision & transformation path

Morning

Content: Chapter 6

Assignments:

1. Sketch out a co-design trajectory engaging the different stakeholders in your area. What types of activities can you organise? You can use the checklist co-design workshops for help.

Afternoon

Content: Chapter 7

Assignments:

1. In a few quick drawings (e.g., using a sketch roller over an area map), sketch how your area could strategically transform itself over time. For example, take as a starting point the energy map with existing initiatives and priorities from the previous chapter and think about how you can keep building on that. Also consider where you ultimately want to go in order to achieve all the different goals, challenges and transitions and switch back and forth. Utilize both the layer and spark approaches in doing so:

a) How can you smartly put a first quality layer in the area, e.g. in upgrade greenery or walking routes?

b) What are the crucial places in the area that you want to tackle as the first spark (e.g. area entrance, station square, public space around your property, etc)?

c) Where is the energy in the area that you can stimulate others to light the sparks (e.g. an owner with a redevelopment plan can already do something temporary with the public space and/or the empty plinths)?

Note: these are thought exercises for yourself or your own team, the actual vision and transformation path are of course made in co-creation with all the different stakeholders in the area.

You can use the manual transformation paths for help.

Content: Chapter 8 & 9

Assignments:

1. Look at the transformation path you just sketched. Do a critical check: Are there fundamental vulnerabilities in your vision that could really go wrong spatially if the future goes differently than planned? Pay particular attention to large gestures that require many parties to take action, such as large ensembles, city streets, elevated ground levels, large continuous building lines and sight lines, etcetera. Consider the example of the closed building block from the video. Make adjustments to your transformation path where necessary. You can also use the checklist for adaptive future visions.

Week 3: Get into action mode

Morning

Content: Chapter 10 & 11**Assignments:**

Have a look at the transformation path you made last week. Can you distill the top 5 of first actions you can start with straightaway with minimal resources to create visible results and positive impact straightaway? You can use our checklist for effective placemaking for help here.

Afternoon**Content: Review whole course****Assignment: Sharpen your strategy and action plan and get ready to start**

1. Based on everything you've learned, refine your own strategy, plans and visions one more time. Double-check your adaptivity and resilience to the different internal and external threats, uncertainties and dependencies. Consider it a stress test for your spatial vision and strategy.
2. Now refine your top five very first actions you defined last week and turn them into five concrete plans (one-pagers) plus design sketches. Make sure that these are actions that you should be able to start right away, tomorrow morning at nine o'clock so to speak, so that you don't need any additional budget, permit, support, or other permission. These actions can in themselves be very light with zero risk of failure, but they are aimed at giving your process an optimal kickstart and setting in motion as many other actions as possible in your strategy and action plan. Make sure that at least one of these first actions has a festive and optimistic tinge and gives you the opportunity to meet the various stakeholders without putting too much serious content on the agenda immediately.
5. Take a moment to realise you just finished this module and redesigned your complete hardware strategy while also being busy with your regular work and projects. This is no small achievement in these busy times, and you should definitely celebrate this. Whether you pop open the champagne or plan something nice for yourself, enjoy – and congratulations!