

Design framework for neighbourhood resilience

combining human and other-than-human perspectives into an integrated approach

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Design Framework for Neighbourhood Resilience: Combining human and other-than-human perspectives into an integrated approach

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The current Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of urban public spaces in achieving health and social well-being (Dobson, 2021; Poortinga et al., 2021), prompting policymakers and urban planners to rethink their approach to the design of these spaces. They now propagate adapting urban public spaces more directly to human needs (Suurenbroek et al., 2019), often at a neighbourhood level, while also embracing a more-than-human perspective that includes the well-being of the natural ecosystem at large (Maller, 2020; Houston et al., 2018). The latter becomes imperative as other shocks and stressors, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, are impending, straining urban spaces and their residents to show resilience in times of complex challenges. “Learning from Covid-19”, a need emerged for new design approaches for public spaces, contributing both to social and ecological resilience.

This paper presents results from the research project "From Prevention to Resilience". It moves beyond merely responding to the pandemic by designing social and physical barriers in public space to prevent the virus from spreading. Instead, it seizes the opportunity to explore how an integrated design approach to public space could contribute to social and ecological resilience (Boon et al., 2021). The project, funded by the Dutch organization for health research and care innovation, is a collaboration between the chairs of Spatial Urban Transformation and Civic Interaction Design (AUAS) and an international partner consortium.

This paper builds on our compiled database of design strategies addressing the Covid-crisis, expert sessions with a Community of Practitioners, and interviews with Dutch spatial design firms and municipalities. It first introduces a "Design Framework for Neighbourhood Resilience" and its core concepts. Next, it validates this framework through a research-by-design approach. Spatial and social design agencies applied the framework in real-life design cases in Amsterdam and allowed for its empirical grounding and practice-based development. Ultimately, the paper defines a design framework that builds resilience for the well-being of all urban inhabitants and initiates a dialogue between disciplines to address resilience integrally when designing public spaces and forms of civic engagement.

Keywords: Design Framework, Social Resilience, Ecological Resilience, Other-than-human Residents, Well-being, Covid-19 Pandemic

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