Urban River Restoration: Cities & Water

Conclusions from the 50th ISOCARP Congress and Personal Experience

Ambassador of the International Riverfoundation (IRF, Australia)

General Rapporteur of 50th ISOCARP Congress (International Society of City and Regional Planners) - Poland, September 2014

Manager and Planner of River Restoration Projects

Architecture and Urban & Regional Planning Ltd.
Almost all cities around the world were built along rivers, or along a coast of an ocean, sea or lake.

Waterfronts are actually everywhere! They have a vital urban role and they are a major asset.
Deterioration of Rivers

During the 20th century many of the rivers have been polluted, deteriorated, and they lost their significant roles. The rivers became a nuisance to the urban environment.
Restoration of Rivers

In recent years, major efforts of river restoration have brought many rivers back to life. Not only the big ones.

Before - 1996

After - 2014

Alexander River Cross border river - Collaboration between Israeli and Palestinian neighbors.
Planning and Managing: Arch. Amos Brandeis

Arch. Amos Brandeis www.RestorationPlanning.com
Restoration of Rivers and Urban Waterfronts

River restoration is on the catchment (basin) level. Urban areas are usually just a very small part of the catchment, even in the case of urban rivers.

- Tel Aviv
- Yarqon River catchment (1,800 sqm)

- Wuhan
- Yangtze catchment (1,800,000 sqm)
20 years ago I was very young and naive…

I thought river restoration is like preparing a drawing and a report.
10 years ago I was less young and less naive...

I thought river restoration is like assembling a complicated puzzle

Kishon River Masterplan. Planner: Amos Brandeis

Arch. Amos Brandeis  www.RestorationPlanning.com
Now I am older and more realistic…

I think river restoration is like solving the Rubik’s Cube:

- Complicated
- 3d
- All disciplines
- All scales
- One wrong move…
All understand now the importance of the Rivers & Cities issues

ECRR 2013, Austria

IRS (International River Symposium) 2013, Australia

ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners) 2014, Poland

Urban Waterfronts Panel

World Town Planning Day 2013, Virtual, Q & A

Arch. Amos Brandeis

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Waterfront Planning Marathon
50th ISOCARP Congress, Poland, September 2014

- Antwerp, Fort Lillo, Belgium
- Auckland, New Zealand
- Basel, Switzerland
- Brasilia, Paranoa Lake, Brazil
- Gdansk, Poland
- Kaliningrad, Russia
- Trencin, Slovakia

Best project award: Auckland
Best presentation award: Trencin

Arch. Amos Brandeis
www.RestorationPlanning.com
The challenge is - how we create a real dialogue?

**Sectors:** Academic, Public and Private

**Disciplines:** River restoration planners and managers, Urban planners and designers, Architects, Environmentalists, Sociologists, Economists, Infrastructure planners, Landscape architects, Decision makers, etc.
Restored Rivers and Urban Waterfronts

The rivers flow through both historic and new parts of cities. They can become an “Urban Celebration”

Mersey River, First Winner of the International Riverprize (1999)
Urban Waterfronts

The place in the city for the people to meet and enjoy.
A huge urban potential

Hong Kong Light and Sound Evening Show
What Makes Waterfronts Successful?

Not only beautiful, but also alive. Part of the urban structure and life. What makes places successful?

Hobart Waterfront, Tasmania
How to Plan a Successful Waterfront?

No planning prescriptions. Every place is different. Planning principles can be defined based on analyses of case studies. These should be critically examined when planning a waterfront.
Planning Principles - Urban Planning Scale

Planning must begin on Urban and even Metropolitan scale: Planning, not only Urban Design, Architecture or Landscaping. Definition of the role and vision on a wide scale

Kishon River, Israel

Planning: Arch. Amos Brandeis

Arch. Amos Brandeis  www.RestorationPlanning.com
Floodplains and Building Restrictions

Should be addressed in relation to catchment level, and be integral part of the plan.
Storm Water and Flood Protection

Should be addressed during waterfront redevelopment

Before After

Shantou planning workshop (UPAT) - ISOCARP, 2013. Team Leader - Amos Brandeis

Arch. Amos Brandeis

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Mixed Uses and Variety of Urban Activities

Mixed uses are essential to make a place alive 24/7. Liveable cities are based on the presence of people...

Kishon River, Israel
Planning: Arch. Amos Brandeis
Public versus Private

The waterfront belongs to the public. Open, accessible, free entrance, continuous.

Kishon River, Israel

Planning: Arch. Amos Brandeis
Proportions

Human proportions of buildings, squares, and open spaces

Prague, The Czech Republic

Budapest, Hungary

St. Julian, Malta

Prague, Czech Republic
Public Participation

The best (and actually the only) way to plan an urban waterfront, is with the people who live there and use/will use the place. They can best define what they need and want & what are the key values.
The Water is the Resource

The People should experience and feel the water close as possible

Bangkok, Thailand

Gothenburg, Sweden
Open Views to the Water

The water is the show. Water is always changing. Fascinates people.
People Always Face and Enjoy the Waterfront

Luzern, Switzerland

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“Amphitheatre” with Open View to the Water

The water must be visible from as many buildings and public spaces. The people are the spectators.
Transparent Waterfront

The buildings should be transparent and use the advantages of looking at the water and the promenade. No “sealed” buildings on the water edge.
Promenades

Promenades are for People. Not for cars to ratrun. A place to enjoy, relax, walk, run and cycle.

Northbank - Brisbane, Australia

Southbank - Brisbane, Australia

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Outside Seating

Promenades, terraces, food & view

Freemantle (Perth) Australia

Budapest, Hungary
A Livelihood Promenade

Urban life…
A place to enjoy.
A celebration…

Amsterdam, Netherland

Freemantle, Australia

Bergen, Norway

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24/7

Alive 24/7. Urban celebrations start at night...

Brisbane (Riverfeast), Australia

The Bund, Shanghai, China

Sydney, Australia

Pudong, Shanghai, China
People Friendly

People friendly attitude. This place is for people...
Local & Regional Values - History and local cultures matters!

Respect, preservation and strengthening of local values and atmosphere
Local Flavor

Bergen, Norway
Working Waterfronts

Preservation of activities: fishing, ships & boats, docklands, small businesses, etc.

Maine, USA

Auckland, NZ
Built Heritage

A delicate integration of built heritage and new development

Melbourne, Australia

Bergen, Norway

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Existing Urban Patterns and Buildings

Restoration of urban patterns and buildings, with waterfront orientation, and creation of attractive flavor and sense of entity

Sydney, Australia

Melbourne, Australia

Arch. Amos Brandeis

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Public Institutions

Important public buildings on the waterfront, to attract local people and tourists, and become a lively place.

- NEMO Science Museum, Amsterdam
- Maritime Museum, Perth, Australia
- London
Connections to Built Urban Environment

“Green Fingers” into the depth of the urban surrounding pattern - parks, boulevards, paths, bicycle routes, axis, etc.

Rahat, Israel
Planning: Arch. Amos Brandeis

Freemantle, Australia

Yarkon River, Israel
Planning: Arch. Arie Rahamimoff (Arch. Amos Brandeis - part of the planning team)
Landscaping

High quality and people friendly landscaping. Climate sensitive. Use of local plants. Good maintenance

Wuhan, China

Brisbane, Australia

Gnar Stream, Rahat, Israel

Planning: Arch. Amos Brandeis, Arch. Aliza Braudo, Arch. Liora Meiron, Arch. Yaron Granot

Arch. Amos Brandeis

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Art

Copenhagen, Denmark
Urban Nature

Design of some areas in the middle of a city, where people can feel in nature. A pause from the urban pace

Yarqon River in Tel Aviv
Overcome Challenging Linear Infrastructures

Plan innovative ways to connect cities to their waterfront, despite challenging linear infrastructures (or just not to place them there in the first place…)

Budapest, Hungary

Wuhan, China

Bergen, Norway

Spain

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Overcome Challenging Linear Infrastructures

Plan innovative ways to connect cities to their waterfront, despite challenging linear infrastructures

The Bund, Shanghai
Uniqueness

Riverfestival - world known international river city
1. Urban River Restoration issues are relevant to all planners of all disciplines, and all regions. Real continuous dialogue and integration is essential!

2. Urban rivers and waterfronts are globally undergoing restoration to gain accessibility, recreation and aesthetic values

3. Crucial both in areas blessed with sustainable water resources, and in areas which suffer from severe water shortage or floods

4. Cities and water issues are:
   global, but also local
   cross-border and cross-region
   multilevel and multiscale
   comprehensive, inter and trans-disciplinary
   very complicated and challenging
Conclusions

5. Urban rivers and Waterfronts are an extremely important urban asset - they can become an “Urban Celebration”.

6. Successful case studies champion urban development, economic growth, environmental and ecological sensitivity, integration of drainage issues, and contribute to a liveable and sustainable cities.

7. Most successful examples of waterfronts represent: Good planning, Creativity, Innovation, Comprehensiveness, Sense of Place, Delicate balance, Uniqueness, and… Patience.

8. Principles for successful planning of waterfronts can be defined, but should be critically examined, as every place is different.
9. This congress will hopefully provide us with:
   awareness
   knowledge
   knowhow and tools
   sensitivity
   passion
   to face the challenges in our daily professional life, and
   improve dialogue and collaboration between all disciplines.

10. This issue proves again: Planning can make a difference!
    But…

"Dreaming about the future can be exciting,
but in planning, good execution is everything."
Finally…

11. River Restoration projects require:
   Optimism
   Leadership
   Cooperation

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Cooperation is better than conflict.

Quaker Tapestry, Kendal, England

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Thank you!