

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN

ADAPTIVE CITIES: TEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS & FLEXIBLE STREET FURNITURE DESIGN.

Péter István Varga*^a

a VPI Concrete Ltd., Budapest, Hungary

* vpi@vpi.hu

DOI: 10.63442/DDRR5773

**KEYWORDS | STREET FURNITURE DESIGN, PUBLIC SPACE, TEMPORARY URBAN INTERVENTIONS,
TACTICAL URBANISM**

ABSTRACT | If we examine the processes defining the city from the perspective of activities taking place in the city (such as transportation, public space use, leisure, tourism, etc.) and not from the physical characteristics (building stock, road network, terrain, etc.), we get an extremely variable, fluid picture that changes quickly in time and space. In the city, we see an ocean of fluctuating activities. This fluctuation and change can often be very fast, activities intensify, appear, or even disappear within a few years. A few years ago, the electric scooter was almost unknown, today, it is a defining part of the micro-mobility toolkit. But the same is true for the increasing presence of urban sports activities or the change in the intensity of cycling according to the seasons and the weather. The change in tourism due to climate change can be included here. Change is constantly present, and the needs associated with it also arise with constantly changing intensity. How can we respond to this? What can be expected in the future?

Currently, about 57% of the world's population is urban, meaning that for every second person, the majority of their daily activities are related to some city. The city has become our way of life, our "natural" habitat. And we rightly expect our habitat to be adaptable to our needs, to adapt to activities, needs, or even changes in seasons and climate. What tools do we have for this?

In my presentation, I focus on temporary urban interventions and flexible street furniture, deliberately narrowing down the topic of adaptive cities. Through the examples of temporary interventions, the changing needs of urban activities can be well examined while also presenting the possibilities and tasks of design in street furniture design in an environment where changing usage needs appear. These changing needs are increasingly colliding with inflexible urban systems and infrastructures, often generating strong conflicts (cycling vs car driving vs. pedestrian traffic; parking vs. green space; weekday/weekend vs. working time/leisure time; tourism vs. locality, etc.). In my presentation, through a current case study (Valyó Quay project in Budapest) along with a few examples from the international context (Supermanzana Barcelona), I present the city-shaping possibilities of temporary interventions and the changing needs appearing in cities. Among these, highlighting cycling, I present street furniture systems from our design studio, where the basic principle of the design concept was adaptability to changing needs (VELÓ and MONÓ bicycle storage systems; LENA bicycle lane separator). These products were invited to the Dutch Design Week in 2023, where they made a successful debut in the Mobility Expo section.

The message of my presentation is dual:

1. Traditional urban planning tools are now inadequate for handling the rapidly changing needs and phenomena that arise in cities. We need tools and systems that allow space for dynamically changing activities in the city, i.e., they are flexible and adaptable.
2. This also poses new challenges for street furniture design: we need a design mindset and public furniture solutions that can handle the rapid changes in needs and uses in public spaces.

The question of liveable cities

55% of the world's population resides in urban areas in 2018
and expected to increase to 68% by 2050*

The city is our "natural" habitat

Should we adapt to the cities
or the city should adapt to us?

* Published by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), 2018

Elements of Urban Design

FIXED STRUCTURES

topography
building density
street network
greenery
public means
...

static
slowly / gradually changing

PROCESSES & ACTIVITIES

transportation
public space usage
commuting
leisure
tourism
events
...

turbulent
changing by time, season, usage etc.

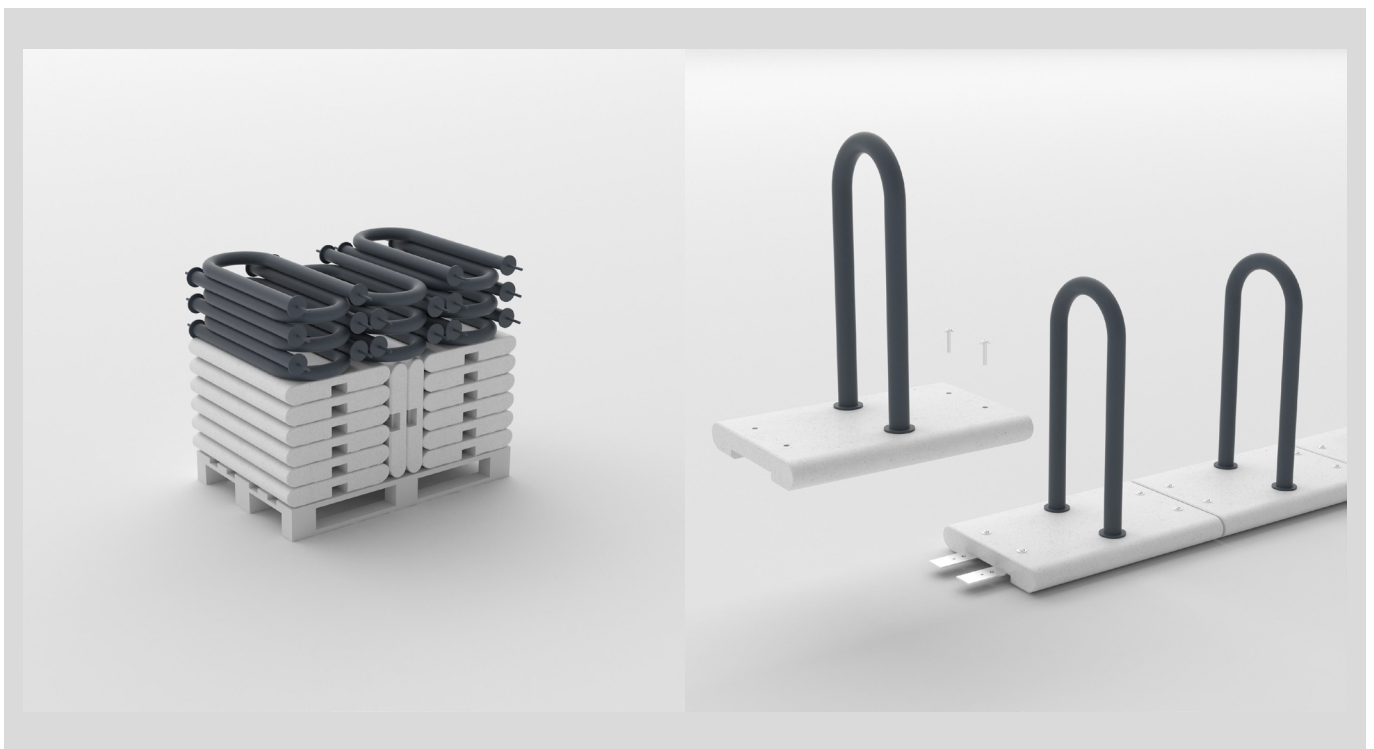
ADAPTIVE CITY

Interventions and systems based on constantly evolving urban processes and activities, which are temporary and/or flexible

ADAPTIVE DESIGN OF URBAN FURNITURE

**WHAT IF the outdoor furniture could be rearranged
just like the chairs in your living room?**





VELŐ mobile bicycle rack

IF Design Award 2023

temporary usage and exhibition at Dutch Design Week 2023, Mobility Expo

temporary usage at the World Athletics Championship Budapest 2023

temporary usage at Rakpart project Budapest 2023, 2024







CONCLUSION

1. Traditional urban planning tools are inadequate for handling rapid changes. Flexible and adaptive tools needed.
2. New challenges for street furniture design.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR STREET FURNITURE DESIGN

- based on urban processes and activities
- temporary and/or periodic usage
- adaptability and flexibility
- quick to change

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN

This contribution was presented at Cumulus Budapest 2024: P/References of Design conference, hosted by the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, Hungary between May 15-17, 2024.

Conference Website

cumulusbudapest2024.mome.hu

Conference Tracks

Centres and Peripheries
Converging Bodies of Knowledge
Redefining Data Boundaries
Bridging Design and Economics
Speculative Perspectives
The Power of Immersion
The Future of Well-being
Taming Entropy: Systems Design for Climate and Change
Ways of Living Together
Cumulus PhD Network

Full Conference Proceedings

<https://cumulusbudapest2024.mome.hu/proceedings>

ISBN Volume 1: 978-952-7549-02-5 (PDF)

ISBN Volume 2: 978-952-7549-03-2 (PDF)

DOI Volume 1: <https://doi.org/10.63442/IZUP8898>

DOI Volume 2: <https://doi.org/10.63442/TADX4016>

Conference Organisers

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME)

mome.hu

Cumulus Association

cumulusassociation.org