Futuring Perspectives and Practices for Urban Extension

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Presenter Introductions
Past Perspective and Current Context

What can we learn?

National Urban Extension Timeline

Extension in Big Cities: Increasing Values for Urban Residents
April 25-28, 1988

St. Paul, Minnesota. The Extension in Big Cities Conference, which was approved by the North Central Region Extension Directors, would become the National Urban Extension Conference.
More information here: goo.gl/QzcFc1
Futuring Literature & Practice

What can we learn?

Futurists

Extension

Urban
The Evolution of **Futuring**

- Early manifestos – *courage and audacity*
- Organizational **foresight**
- Overwhelming complexity
- The speed of change
- The value of *learning, unlearning, and relearning*
- The role of **Technology** in futuring

Similar to the Great Explorers
Futuring Practices

Imagine and shape the future through analytical, generative, and group decision-making approaches.

A few examples
• Game theory
• Drama theory
• Delphi model
• ERRC (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, Create)
  *Blue Ocean Shift*
• Forecasting / Backcasting / Bouncecasting
Emerging **Urban Perspective on the Future**

**Diverse Sources**

**Common Themes**

- Addressing complex challenges
- Improving quality of life
- Understanding diversity
- Innovating for social equity and environmental sustainability
- Fostering conditions for a healthy community
Futuring Practices for Urban Extension

- Developing futuring literacy and capacity
- Experimenting with contemporary futuring methods
- Managing decision-making as Extension creates the future
- Entrepreneurially addressing change throughout the futuring process
Futuring Literacy

**Innovation**
- FL makes it easier to innovate and to take advantage of innovations
- Agility

**Discovery**
- FL makes it easier to detect and make sense of novelty, shocks and surprises
- Confidence

**Choice**
- FL makes it easier to build choice menus that are more diverse
- Capability

**Leadership**
- FL diffuses initiative and experimentation throughout the community
- Knowing

**Strategy**
- FL makes it easier to see genuinely distinct strategic alternatives
- Resilience

**FL enhances the speed with which changes are perceived and choices are made**

Futures Literacy (UNESCO) [https://en.unesco.org/futuresliteracy/about]
Experiment with Contemporary Futuring Approaches

Urban Context
• Scale
• Diversity
• Complexity

Urban Strategy
• Positioning
• Programs
• Personnel
• Partnerships
Positioning
Programs
Personnel
Partnerships
Manage Decision-Making as Extension Creates the Future

Cynefin Framework for Situational Awareness and Decision Making
https://thecynefin.co (Snowden, 2021)
Entrepreneurially Address Change Throughout the Futuring Process
Conclusion & Discussion

How to continuously co-align university Extension with the dynamic urban environment using A National Framework for Urban Extension?
Conclusion & Discussion

How to **invest** financial, social, and political **capital** in urban communities to fulfill the Extension mission?
Conclusion & Discussion

How to blend familiar planning paradigms with a more emergent model in which distributed leadership is agile and change is continuous?
Conclusion & Discussion

How to integrate urban context into the fabric of Extension using futuring approaches in support of rural, suburban, and urban residents and workforce?