

Soundscape Design for Urban Parks

New Partners for Smart Growth
Denver, Colorado
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Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc.



Three Questions:

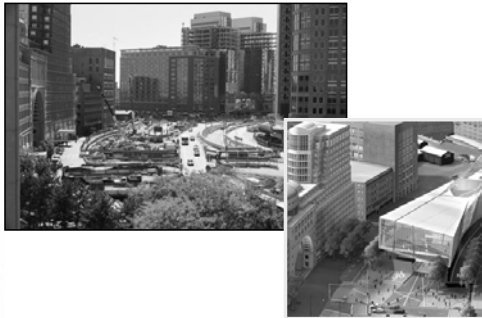
<http://www.hmm.com>

1. What affects the visitors' experiences in every park but seldom is included in the planning process?
2. Why is this?
3. What can we do about it?



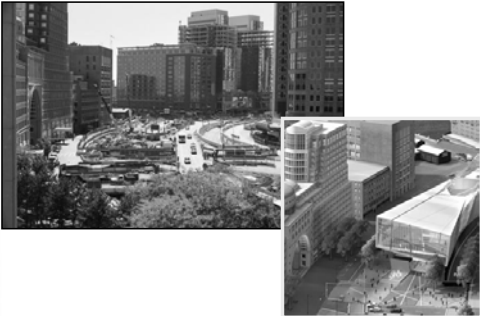
What's missing from this picture?
Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston, MA

<http://www.hmm.com>



What's missing from this picture?
Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston, MA

<http://www.hmhk.com/>



City Square Park
Charlestown, Massachusetts

<http://www.hmhk.com/>



City Square Park
Charlestown, Massachusetts

<http://www.hmhk.com/>



Paul Revere Park
Charlestown, Massachusetts

<http://www.hmhk.com/>



Paul Revere Park
Charlestown, Massachusetts

<http://www.hmhk.com/>



City Square and Paul Revere Parks
Charlestown, Massachusetts

<http://www.hmhk.com/>



What has been overlooked?

<http://www.bnmh.com>

Soundscape:

- All aspects of an acoustic environment
- The way it is perceived
- The way it affects the intended use

(R.M. Schafer, *The New Soundscape*, Toronto, 1969)



Why is this?



History of reaction to noise has been regulatory

<http://www.bnmh.com/>



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- Policies and criteria established by federal agencies during 1970s: HUD, FAA, FHWA, FRA, FTA



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What's wrong with this approach?

<http://www.bnmh.com/>

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 - Soundscape's effect on visitor experience
 - Suitability of soundscape for planned uses



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- Follows rather than assists planning process
- Impact criteria seldom consider:
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 - Suitability of soundscape for planned uses
- May result in "band-aid" solutions



Blank slide

National Parks Overflights Act of 1987

<http://www.bnmh.com/>



- Preservation of natural soundscape
- Air tours, snowmobiles, personal watercraft



"Natural sounds are part of the special places we preserve. Rustling winds in the canyons and the rush of water in the rivers are the heartbeat and breath of some of our most valuable resources."
Robert Stanton, NPS Director 1997-2001



Soundscape in National Parks



Soundscape – not just for natural areas

<http://www.bnmh.com/>



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<http://www.bnmh.com/>



www

**What can we do
about it?**

www

What can we do about it?

<http://www.bnmh.com/>

Soundscape Design:

- An integrated process to evaluate, plan, and improve an acoustic environment

www

Soundscape Design

<http://www.bnmh.com/>

- Occurs during a project's planning phase



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Soundscape Design

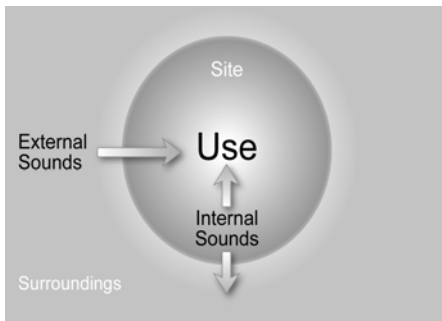
<http://www.henrich.com>

- Occurs during a project's planning phase
- Emphasis is on compatibility of uses with environment
- Addresses subjective and aesthetic aspects
- Integrated approach to answer the question: "What should this space sound like?"



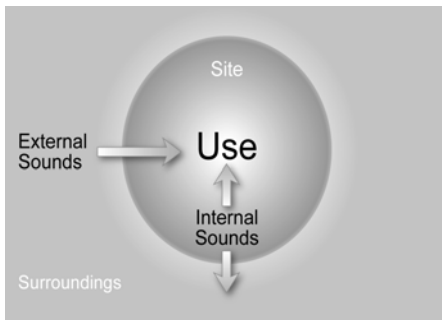
Soundscape Design: Site and Surroundings

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Soundscape Design Process: 1. Existing Soundscape (Surroundings)

<http://www.henrich.com>



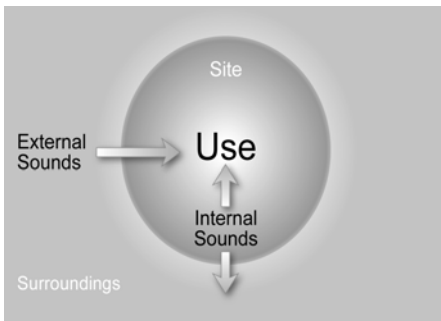
Soundscape Design Process: 1. Existing Soundscape (Surroundings)

<http://www.bnmh.com/>



Soundscape Design Process: 2. Other External Sounds (Intrusions)

<http://www.bnmh.com/>

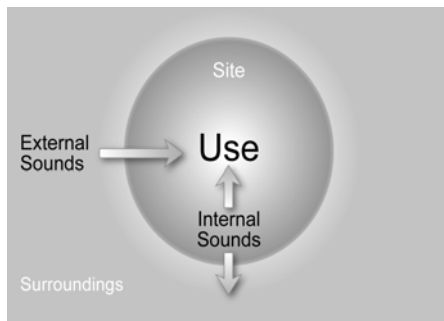


Soundscape Design Process: 2. Other External Sounds (Intrusions)

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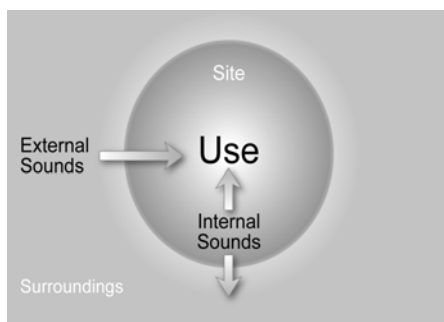
Soundscape Design Process: 3. Planned Uses (as Receiver and Source)



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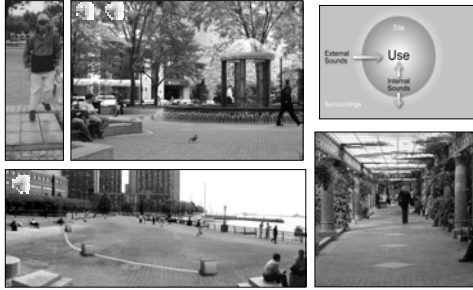


Soundscape Design Process: 4. Add or Subtract



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**Every landscape has a soundscape.
Will you design it or hope for the best?**

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