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TRANSCRIPT –

Rail~Volution Podcast, Episode 42 – A Framework for Inclusive Healthy Places, May 2021

Sharon Roerty and Maki Kawaguchi, Welcome to the Rail~Volution Podcast.

Sharon Roerty: (1m 15s): Thank you for having us.

Jeff Wood (1m 18s): Before we get started, can you tell us a little bit about yourselves? We'll start with Maki and then we'll go to Sharon.

Maki Kawaguchi: I'm Maki Kawaguchi. I am a Director at an urban design and strategy consultancy named Gehl. And my background is in both architecture and urban design. I have a passion for all things cities, whether it's about community building, about transportation, design. At Gehl, we really focus on sustainability, health and inclusion. And so I'm very excited to have this conversation with you today.

Sharon Roerty: I'm Sharon Roerty. I'm a Senior Program Officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. I work within the Foundation on a small team called "global ideas for US solutions," and we look outside the US for inspiration - policies, programs that are working, again, outside the US - that we think we can bring inside the US. And sometimes just by going outside the US, we get another perspective and we bring that back in. We bring it into the Foundation so that our colleagues can learn from it.

We bring the learnings back to our grantees and we also use other platforms to get them out and engage people. And that sort of discovery is the solutions that we're finding. My background is in urban and environmental planning. I grew up in a city. I've always lived in and around cities. And for me, since I was 10 years old, the big challenge has been starting in one place and trying to figure out how to get to another place miles away and how many different ways you can get there.

Jeff Wood (2m 56s): We appreciate your expertise! This is actually part four of our series on health and equitable transit-oriented communities. We talked about the social determinants of health with Dr. Georges Benjamin. We discussed transit's response to the pandemic with David Huffaker in Pittsburgh. And we talked about building community health outcomes through focused development near transit with Nilda Ruiz and Rose Gray in Philadelphia. So we're excited to have you all on today.

How did you all get involved in this work specifically? I know Sharon, you talked about when you were 10 years old, you started focusing on this stuff. How did you all get involved in this topic matter?

Sharon Roerty (3m 31s): Well, working for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, we're the largest health philanthropy in the United States. So health is what we do, really. And we work through the prism of culture and health, the culture-health framework; the social determinants of health are really important to us; equity. We can't have health unless you have health equity. So that's my connection. And I look as a planner, I look at the connection between the built environment and health.

Maki Kawaguchi: (3m 57s): So for me, maybe I could share a little bit about my background and my story and how I got here, because obviously many things that have influenced how I got here and why I care about health equity. I'm a Japanese person who grew up in Madrid in Spain. From an early age, I was exposed to many different cultures and urban environments. So I would say from an early age, I was very aware of the different city experiences. I grew up in a very European city with beautiful boulevards and plazas, but also at the same time, in my visits to Japan, I would be exposed to these very organic, urban morphologies, which is more common in Asian countries.

But I would say that it wasn't until I turned 18 and I moved to Los Angeles. I'd never been there before. It was the first time I moved to Los Angeles to go to college. And I was really actually shocked and fascinated by LA's model of city planning and urban growth. I really had not seen anything like that in my entire life, growing up in Europe and visiting Japan. Growing up in Madrid, similar to Sharon, what you were saying about when you were 10 years old, when I was 10, I was walking by myself to school, taking public transportation because it was very safe and I had no concerns.

As a teenager, I could go around the city without any concerns. And the city was for me to explore. But then when I moved to LA at the age of 18, suddenly that freedom of moving around the city was taken away from me because I didn't have a driver's license, but I also didn't have a car. And I was completely dependent on my friends to take me around the city. So I felt very restrained in how I experienced the city. And I will say the other thing that was really shocking to me when I moved to LA was to just see how segregated neighborhoods were by race, culture and socioeconomic status.

And I had really never experienced that stark contrast in the cities where I had grown up. So, you know, I was very curious about, why does this happen and how do we change this? And, you know, oftentimes in the US, we know about how, depending on what's the zip code you live in, or even if you just cross one street, the experience and the built landscape can completely change. Right? And the inequality in the cities were so clearly demarcated for me. So blatantly obvious. And I was like, well, how do we change this? How do we change this? And really thinking that, understanding that, these kinds of city planning were done by design, it was through design that these kinds of inequalities of come to place. And so, you know, Robert Wood Johnson, Gehl, when we started collaborating and we really focused on this idea that place really matters. And is integral for both the individual and community health. And so that's

sort of a long story, but I wanted to explain to you my interest and passion for the work that I do today.

Jeff Wood (7m 4s): Yeah. I love it. That's awesome. We appreciate long stories. Well, so you all have been working on the Inclusive, Healthy Places Framework. Can you explain a little bit more of what it is and what you all set out to do when you started it?

Sharon Roerty (7m 17s): Oh, well, let me give you the origin story of the inclusive, healthy places framework. So I work on, as I said, the global ideas for US solutions team. So I'm always thinking about places and the connections to the built environment. But really the inspiration for this work came when I wasn't expecting it. I was on a trip to Australia. I was in Melbourne Australia to visit my daughter. I hadn't seen her in a year. And she asked me to meet her at this place called Federation Square. She had been working all night, so I was going to meet her there.

So I'm standing, waiting for her. And I'm really excited about seeing her. And I'm looking around, I'm thinking this place is different. You know, there's something really special about this place. I didn't know it at the time, but it's built on top of a rail station. So you have that vector. You had bus lines all around you, all of these modes of transportation, all around Federation Square. You have all of these restaurants and other shops that opened up to it. You had fire pits going on. We had, you know, benches of all sorts. There was a park that was a public square.

It was a place for business. It was a place for transportation. So I knew as I'm looking around scanning the square, that's something - you know, I'm looking for my daughter - but something special is going on here.

And over the course of my trip to Melbourne, which was about two weeks long, I kept coming back to Federation Square and kept visiting it. And each time I saw a more pieces of it. So I knew it was someplace really, really special. One of the things is it's open 24 hours a day. It has free wifi for all. Anyone could get on the wifi. Anyone could use the restrooms, free public restrooms that are open 24 hours a day. It had fire pits that anyone can use. There were no signs. I looked for them. There were no signs that said, you know, you can't do this. You can't do that. No loitering, no bike, riding, no signs, that prohibited activity.

So again, over the course of two weeks, I knew this place was special. And that's what set me on the course for the Inclusive, Healthy Places Framework. I thought about it in terms of placemaking, which is a practice we do in the US and throughout the world, planners engage in placemaking.

But what was it? What were the activities that lead to this place, being this place? What's the history of the place? What's the context of the place and how do we learn from it? And how do they do placemaking in other parts of the world? So I started having conversations with

different people that I knew, and didn't know, that practice planning and what I figured was placemaking.

One of those conversations was with some folks from Gehl and as the conversation went on, we, we embarked on this project: We didn't know it at the time, but developing the Inclusive, Healthy Places Framework. And we set it out as a tool for evaluating spaces so that we could know beyond design. It's not just about the design of a place, but beyond the design. What got to the design? How do you create a process for inclusive, healthy places? How do you sustain it? How do you measure it? How do you value the history of the place? That was really what got us started.

Maki Kawaguchi (10m 32s): Maybe I'll just add to that. Sharon, the guide is really meant to be both a data-driven and very people-first approach to, as Sharon said, evaluating and creating healthy, inclusive public spaces. And it's both a process and an outcome for us. And it really serves us a tool of metrics that different audiences who work at the intersection of health equity and the physical environment could use as a tool and a roadmap. It's not meant to be a prescriptive tool, but really a guide and, you know, start to have a conversation and have shared language between different audiences who work both in design, planning, policy making, but also health practitioners.

Sharon Roerty (11m 14s): And as we got into the process, I just want to add, that we dropped the term placemaking because that's not what this was about. Placemaking has some connotations that aren't necessarily positive. It doesn't always value the place, at least it's viewed that way, and equity and inclusion isn't always part of that process. So we really wanted to make that part of the process. So it became inclusive, healthy places because equity and inclusion were the drivers within the work that we wanted to do and how to lift up this process that had more to it than placemaking. It was value driven.

Jeff Wood (11m 47s): And why is that evaluation so important? We see placemaking and we see urban design guides and those types of things, but why is the evaluation such a key part of this document and in the process as well?

Maki Kawaguchi (11m 58s): Well, the evaluation is basically data. We use both quantitative and qualitative data. So we're not stuck to just one type of data collection, but the data really helps us monitor and evaluate outcomes. But also it helps us understand the baseline condition. So we always try to collect data from the baseline condition and compare it after a project is implemented. It's a way to sustain and evaluate and continue to tweak and improve any project. And without the data it's oftentimes, when you have a project done, there's the ribbon cutting and that's the end of it. But the reality of a successful public space doesn't end at the ribbon cutting; that's actually one of the beginnings of the success of the project. And that monitoring is really key to it.

Sharon Roerty (12m 46s): So often in my work I'm asked, well, how will I know what is a healthy place? How will I know what is a healthy, inclusive place? What is equity in place? How

will I know that? And how do I measure it? How do we sustain it over time? So having a tool and a methodology that allows people in communities - and they don't have to be professionally trained - but people that can collect data at the beginning of their process, in the middle of their process, and then as the place goes on. Public spaces are living, breathing spaces.

So how can it be sustained by the community as a Healthy Inclusive place? How will we know when we get there and then how do we keep it going? So that's what the Framework does. And that's why the evaluation piece is so important.

Jeff Wood (13m 30s): That's a good point as well, because sometimes it feels like it's hard to get everybody on the same page. In the report, it's mentioned that health professionals and urban planning professionals, sometimes they're speaking different languages. And so trying to get everybody on the same page seems to be one of the hard parts as well.

Maki Kawaguchi (13m 45s): That's absolutely right. And the Framework is really intended to be a cross sector Framework that helps different departments and audiences use data as the common language too. Because oftentimes what you see, especially in cities, you have different departments working within their own silos and collecting their own data. But that data is not necessarily cross-evaluated. Or, the example that I always give, is oftentimes departments of transportation collect data about the number of bikr trails or how many new linear feet of bike trails they've created. That data is important, but it's also an equally important to understand who is using that, right?

Not just the product, but also the users. And so this is why it is a very much a people-focused approach. The data is also reflective of that people-focused approach. We want to understand well who is using the parks, who's using the bike trails, because we always talk about the ratio and representation of people. So, we talk about gender equality or age representation. And we know that when women and children are represented more in public spaces, it's typically perceived as a much safer place.

So if we look at a bike trail and we only see young men in the age of twenties using it, it's not equitable. It's not for everyone. But if we start seeing women and children also using those bike trails, we understand that the infrastructure is there to create a safer environment so that women like I, as a woman, feel comfortable riding my bike in the urban jungle of Manhattan. So the “who” is really important too.

Sharon Roerty (15m 27s): The data in the Framework, there's four principles and there's nearly 200 metrics, measures, right? And some of those measures are hard data that's available in public databases. Other measures are measures that people, that just regular people, can go and collect. And that is as important as the hard data that's out there: as say the traffic data or anything else that exists in publicly-collected databases. But even within those metrics, there's room. This is not a hard and fast rule.

Within those metrics, the important part is at the outset to say, “What do we want to measure?” as the community groups that engage with us? What do we want to measure over time? What's important to us? And then how can we get that data? Citizen science can be a really important part of this tool. And by citizen science again is, is how just community people can go and collect the data - who is in the park, who is in the public space, who's traveling through the space at different periods of time? Clipboard type data.

Jeff Wood (16m 29s): Yeah. I have a copy of the color wheel here, of all the stuff. There's a lot on there. How do folks decide what they want to focus on? How do folks go through those four: the contexts; and the process; and the sustain; and the design and program parts of the data and figure out which pieces they want to collect? Because there is a lot in here to go through.

Maki Kawaguchi (16m 51s): Yes, it's a very dense framework. There's a lot in there, but again, it's not meant to be prescriptive or you're not meant to use every single driver or measure or metric. It's really meant to be a guide. And so I would say the idea is that if you're really focused on, like, initial stages of your project and you really want to understand context, then you can go through those different drivers and understand which are the most applicable. Like Sharon said, it's meant to be decided with the community, with the people, with the stakeholders, right?

So it's really more of a menu than a prescriptive tool. They go through it and decide what's important to them. And so again, like, if they're focused on understanding context, they can look through the lens of the principle of context, and then go through that. If they're really interested in the engagement component, there's a whole set of the principle about engagement, right. And there's different ways to engage. So again, it's hard to say. It's not a formula. It's not that you have to use this and this.

I will say, ideally, everybody goes through the four principles, the four facets of the wheel. So that they're not just focusing on just design. I'm an architect and urban designer and there is a tendency of, of architects, to just focus on design, right? We tend to sort of not think so much about the process or the context, or even what happens after a project is completed. So the wheel helps you remember and remind people that there's these four principles that we should be aware of and definitely apply as much as we can.

Sharon Roerty (18m 21s): With the data, as you're collecting data, and work your way through the various metrics, too, it's as important to remember what you collect, who you see, who's like in the space. If you're collecting sort of users of the space, who's not there. And if you look at the metrics, they'll help you punch out not only what's there, what's not there. And when we're talking about equity inclusion, that's really, really important. The data that you see, you also have to ask the questions, what are we not seeing?

Jeff Wood (18m 49s): And Maki, you mentioned, you know, the way that urban designers and architects and, and even planners like myself, usually do things. But you all work with a number

of different partners. How have each of the partners that you've been working with, the four partners that have been implementing this, been responding to the process?

Maki Kawaguchi (19m 3s): Yes. So we are currently working with four US organizations, over the next two years, to really start to adopt and take the Framework and use it and put it into action. And so those four organizations are APA, American Planning Association; LISC, Local Initiatives Support Corporation; New Jersey Community Capital; and, and NRPA, National Recreation and Parks Association. Many of them are membership organizations that work around the country and can really influence their members. And so that's the way to scale and to disseminate this Framework, right?

For example, APA and NRPA, are really focused on creating a guide and a toolkit using this Framework to integrate some of the principles and metrics into their work, right? So it's a tool within their organization that they're adopting and disseminating.

On the other hand, LISC, for example, is a national funder and non-profit, and they're working more with two community partners in Washington, DC, and Houston on two public space projects. So there are concrete projects that they're working on. They're looking at the Framework and seeing which components can they apply in their process in designing this public space. And they're very much focused on, you know, community and understanding community and engagement, right? So that's a way that they're using it.

And then New Jersey Community Capital is a community development finance institution focused on community wide development planning for the city of Paterson in New Jersey. So they're actually using the Framework to really reshape the way its own organization is investing in community.

So they're applying it in different ways, but the beauty of this is that again, there's not one way to use it. There's many different ways to use it. And our hope is that through partnering with the organizations like these, the IHP Framework can be most scaled and disseminated amongst a wider audience.

Sharon Roerty (20m 59s): And it's the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's hope that by helping to fund these applications and the scaling of Framework, that other organizations, membership organizations, community driven organizations, that they see it, and then they get their own ideas about how to use the Framework and how they can adapt it and adopt it to their own needs.

Jeff Wood (21m 20s): And what are you hearing from communities who are using the Framework? What's been some of the feedback that you've gotten?

Maki Kawaguchi (21m 25s): So LISC, for example, they are working directly with community members and applying the Framework. And of course it is a very dense Framework as we've mentioned. And so there's a lot to dissect, but it's, we received well, you know, it's essentially

also bringing awareness of how to be more intentionally inclusive in both the community engagement and design. And so I think it's been helpful for them as the tool to just bring awareness, not just for themselves, but the community on how to approach and what are again, what are the metrics that we should care about so far. So, you know, pretty good. Well, we'll see how it goes.

Jeff Wood (22m 3s): Has the pandemic impacted any of this work specifically? I mean, I imagine it has, but has there any way that you've seen that you've had to change ideas or thoughts or process things differently or react differently to say the situation that is going on around, around the world?

Sharon Roerty (22m 17s): Well, I think the pandemic has really created greater interest in public spaces as communities across the country and across the world have really thought differently about their public spaces. They've had to use them in different ways. You know, everything. You know, people think of public spaces and they think of parks, but the pandemic, where thinking about all sorts of public spaces. It can be the public space in front of the municipal building. It could be in the parking lot behind the municipal building where now people have to wait and gather and line up to file a building permit or do a whole slew of transactions.

These now are looked at and understood to be public spaces. So the importance of public space has really come in to view during the pandemic. And I think communities too were thinking, OK, as we emerge, hopefully emerge from COVID, how do we think about these spaces differently? Because they are important community assets and perhaps the way we've done things in the past do not have to be the way we think to do things going forward. We've seen how we've been able to use public spaces and cut through red tape because now we need those public spaces.

We don't have the indoor spaces. So local governments have been quicker and more prone to cutting through some of the red tape than they had before. In terms of programming space, the streets, the sidewalks, people now have a greater understanding how important they are as part of public spaces, the public realm. It's not just thinking about a geographically defined space. So in that way, the pandemic has put a new light on our public spaces and broadened our idea of these public spaces.

It's also, I think, gotten a lot of people thinking about how important these public spaces have to be as welcoming spaces for all people, because we know that's not true too. And that we need a quality public spaces. So we need quality greenspaces for people to go to it. It's important for their mental and physical and social health. So I think there is a, again, a greater awareness of the importance of public space, the relationship to health or physical, mental, and social health, and hopefully an awakening of how we program and invest in these spaces.

Maki Kawaguchi (24m 42s): At Gehl we have always said streets are also a part of the public realm. And I think with the pandemic, that awareness has heightened. And it's a great time for

us to rethink about how we design the street. And again, I want to emphasize the point that Sharon said about who we invite, because public spaces are not created equal, or it's not the same for everyone. So I think with that greater awareness of not just the pandemic, but the social justice movement that has been happening in the past year, I think we have to be much more intentional about how we design the spaces so we invite for everyone: people of different race, color, age, gender, these are all important things to consider in our design of the public realm.

Sharon Roerty (25m 25s): One of the things we learned in the process of learning about inclusive, healthy spaces is when we went outside the us to look at places, the difference in lingering, the invitation to linger in a safe space. You can see it in places in the US but you really see it, like you go to plazas in Italy, certain places, a lot of cities in Europe, the invitation is there to linger. The idea is to get people to stay. So often in the US, our public spaces is about getting people to move through them and not so much to linger.

And in fact, in a lot of public spaces, what you see are prohibitions about lingering, right? They're called loitering. And we have laws that say you can't loiter in a public space. You cannot spend an excessive amount of time in a public space. And what we've seen too, and particularly in the last year, it's gone on for a long time, but in the last year a greater awareness around how these laws are applied. So for me as a white woman, lingering in a public space, being at a public space, I may not be challenged. For a person of color, they are more likely to be challenged in that space. So what does that mean? How then does that reflect the values of the community? The Inclusive, Healthy Places Framework gives us a chance to peel through that onion, to maybe take a look at the laws and how we invite people in our spaces and how we disinvite. How we apply the laws and the values and the priorities within our public spaces.

Jeff Wood (27m 3s): Yeah, that's a really important point. You know, we talk a lot about it on the podcast and we have a Monday show where we talk about a lot of different ideas and news and information. And what we've been talking about recently is the freeway fights that are going on in places like Portland and Houston and Austin, all over the country. And one of the things that we stress is the idea that we're trying to go to a place, not through a place. And I think that the same good ideas that we should be focusing on in public spaces are the same good ideas that we should be focusing on in transportation. And they all interconnect. And it's really important that we kind of understand that we're trying to go to these places, not necessarily through them. Because, if we go through them, we're ignoring them. We're othering them where we're not focusing on their wellbeing and their needs.

Sharon Roerty (27m 45s): Yes. We need to think about the whole journey. If we are using public transportation. So you start at a bus stop or a train stop or in a transit center, however you're getting there. And that maybe you're making a transfer somewhere and maybe you're getting off at another place and going through a park or a Plaza or you're using the sidewalks. You're using public space to get to the next, whether it's a transit space or a library or some other public space. You're moving through spaces and each one of these spaces is a public space in and of itself.

So how does the whole journey look and how do you feel? And how might someone else feel in those public spaces? How do you feel during the course of the day in those public spaces? Does it change, you know, does it feel better or worse? Who's there at different times of the day? And how does that make you feel? How do the other people that should be in this space feel? So it's a really important to think about it as more than just one geographically defined place and as part of a longer journey and movements throughout a day in these various public spaces.

Jeff Wood (28m 54s): Yeah, I would agree with that, but that also speaks a little bit to the conflicts that might occur when you're trying to plan the spaces or trying to be inclusive about spaces. How do you deal with conflicts that might arise between different stakeholders, who might have different goals for a place?

Sharon Roerty (29m 9s): We had many people engaged with the process while we were developing the Inclusive, Healthy Places Framework, many different people, from all different kinds of backgrounds, professional people, planners, architects, designers, finance people, community activists, regular citizens that we pulled into the process. The thing that galvanized everyone, that brought everyone together was dignity. That we can all agree on whether or not a space provides dignity, for you and for other people. And that was when we came together and really made some progress. And when we can look at a space or at a series of public spaces: Does that space provide dignity for me, for my neighbor, for my sister, my brother. However you define your sister and your brother, my child, my mother, my grandmother. And when you start thinking about dignity, you have a whole other lens to think about the public spaces. And that was really the value or the virtue that we all came together on.

Maki Kawaguchi (30m 14s): I love that. The word dignity, I think it's so key. You know, we don't use those words in design and planning, right. We talk a lot about social coexistence in our work. And part of that is communal dignity. That we can live together.

And I just wanted to bring up an example of another body of work that we did in San Jose, where we essentially created a study to understand the coexistence in public space. And it essentially was an engagement tool for creating shared spaces with homeless people, unhoused people.

Oftentimes there is this perception that a certain group of people equate to some bad behavior. This tool really helped us understand that that's not necessarily true, but really separate a group of people to the antisocial behavior. And so disassociate behavior to people and not make that those pre-assumptions. This tool really helped people awaken and see that antisocial behavior doesn't only happen through the homeless people that they think are the bad people. Oftentimes they are just people who needed a place to hang out, right? And they're not actually engaged in bad behavior, but we have a perception as a society that homeless people that equates to bad behavior. We need to rethink of how we link up both people and behavior. And it's just an awareness. And so again, I think in designing places, we

need to think about that social coexistence and how can we become better at that? And with that, you know, this idea of dignity for everyone comes into play.

Sharon Roerty (31m 54s): One of the places we visited while we were developing the Inclusive, Healthy Places Framework was a park, called Folkets Park in Copenhagen. Folkets Park had been through a couple of different sort of redesigns, but it was a need of a do-over. And there had been a lot of mistrust in the community because of things that the community members, the people that lived around the park wanted, and didn't happen the last time, last several times. So this time, the City of Copenhagen engaged an artist to work with community residents to kind of re-imagine the space and what it could be.

So Folkets Park was located outside the city center and a pretty dense neighborhood. One could say a transitional kind of neighborhood. There were the hipster types, young families and some professionals, you know, social entrepreneurs. They were new immigrants to the community. There were homeless people that used the park, there was even sort of a local gang that hung out in the park. The artists brought everyone together and brought them all into the process. In doing so, it wasn't about coming up with solutions so much as what they wanted. What their vision for the park was. How it was, and wasn't working for them.

And one thing the homeless people said was that the lights in the park, being too bright at night, made them feel unsafe and made them feel vulnerable. So in the process, one of the things they did was they worked it so that there were lights in the park at night, but gave homeless people, actually, an area where the lights were dimmed. So that they could sleep at night and not feel like they stuck out or, you know, prey for other people. What that did, I mean, people can think, "Oh, well, we don't want it to invite homeless people on the park." But the truth is, they were there. Because homeless people are unfortunately in a lot of parks and public spaces. It gave them a safe place and they are part of the community. So by making the homeless people safer, it made everyone safer and it gave everyone dignity within this space. It made them all feel like they were valued community residents and community clients of the park and the public space. They all became stewards of the place. It became a different kind of place going forward.

Jeff Wood (34m 15s): What does success look like in five years, from the document, from your work with other communities, with other organizations, what does that look like?

Maki Kawaguchi (34m 24s): Well, I would say success can come in many ways. But for sure, as a starting point, having a greater awareness about the need to be more inclusionary in our places. I think it needs to start with the awareness, just from both designers, sort of practitioners, both in the health equity environment and the built environment and just awareness of that. But then hopefully, with that awareness, comes the commitment and intentionality to design for more healthy and inclusionary cities and communities, right?

So whether it's planners or designers or policymakers or a health practitioners, I mean, for me, ultimately, if everybody considered this commitment of inclusive, healthy places in their body

of work, I think we'll have come a long way. Today, we're not there yet. A lot of times people talk about it, but lack sort of that intentionality. It is more of a checklist and not done with commitment.

Sharon Roerty (35m 23s): One measure of success for us, I think is creating awareness around inclusive, healthy places and getting people to think beyond design. People love to think about design. We're driven by it. We watch all the reality TV, the HGTV, whatever it is, we want to design our living spaces better. And then when you take us outside, we want, you know, and we go, right, the design, this bench goes here and this swing should go there. But inclusive, healthy places is so much more than design.

So we need to think about the whole space. We need to think about it 360 degrees. We have to think about the history of the place. Who uses the space beyond us, beyond us being sort of a new group, the new users that come in and to discover this place and now want to sort of redesign it for our use. Who else is there? What's the history, what's the process? How do we measure it going forward? How do we measure it? How do we sustain it? How do we program it without over programming, which is another sort of thing that people love to do, over-program a space. Either under program it or over programming.

So getting people to think about that and also, you know, public spaces for the full year, not just for when the weather is warm and we like to be outside. We need those spaces all the time. So that's part of it. That's a measure of success. How do we really bring people into the process and think about every one in that space and having a value around that space for all people, so that it can really create opportunities for health and for connection, to build our social networks, to build social cohesion in a place, to make community, to give us all a sense of belonging in our community and with the emphasis on *all*.

Maki Kawaguchi (37m 12s): I think those are examples of great metrics. If five years from now, 10 years from now, we could collect data about the sense of belonging of a community in a place. And if we hit the mark and everybody responds positively, where we've done well. I'm going back to this idea that the data that we collect is also very important and what we collect. We need to also rethink what kind of data we're collecting, now and then the future. And that is not just about infrastructure or product-based data, but really focused on the human.

Jeff Wood (37m 47s): What's, the geography that you all hope to work with. I mean, there's so many different administrative boundaries. There's small spaces, there's large spaces, there's transit agencies, there's MPOs, there's city governments. What's the geography that you all hope to focus on, and it could be all geographies.

Sharon Roerty (38m 3s): Well, I would say the Inclusive, Healthy Places framework can be used anyplace. So we don't have a hope for geography, so much. This is a tool and a methodology that can be used any place. It's not designed for one specific place. It's really designed for systems change, for more equitable, healthy places. And it can be used to break down structural racism. It's not the answer to structural racism, but it gives us a tool and a

methodology to start peeling back and seeing the policies and actions that have been taken over time, that undergird structural racism, that have created unhealthy places, unhealthy policies, and in some cases, even priorities and laws that in places that separate us and don't bring us together.

So it's not about one specific place. It's really meant it's a systems change tool. If you will, that can be used in any place.

Jeff Wood (38m 60s): Y'all have been working on this for quite a while. Is there anything that's jumped out and surprised you or worked out a way that you might not have expected? You know, sometimes we expect things to go a certain way or direction. Is there anything that maybe is interesting, but, but surprising?

Sharon Roerty (39m 32s): You know, I don't know that this is a surprise so much, but I'll just say that I've appreciated how many people, once they sort of engage with the Framework, with the wheel, as we call it, get excited by it. You know and want to dig into it and want to think about how to use it. And then again, and in the past year, how, people have had this awakening around public spaces, see a need to be able to think about the public spaces and to create better public spaces or to think more broadly about the public spaces.

I don't know if it's a surprise, maybe a little bit in terms of the last year, because you know, who could ever imagine this? You know, I never thought about like parking lot so much as the public spaces. And in the past year, I see how people are using parking lots that are public spaces, right? The parking lot behind the municipal building is a public space, but how now that's become an important public space and thinking about those spaces differently.

Maki Kawaguchi (40m 34s): I'm repeating what you've already said, Sharon, but I think how we've changed the way we look at public spaces as a collective, just as people. And I think the potential of just the greater awareness, is the potential of public spaces. And the importance of again, not just design. There is a full process and that there needs to be engagement and that we need to create a sense of belonging and community and coexistence. And all of these things have sort of heightened in the past year.

I do feel like there's a greater collective awareness just from the general public about the importance of public spaces. And so for me, having a tool like the IHP Framework is really exciting. I think for those, with whom I've shared, you know, I've gotten very good response. Of course, that's not just the answer. The IHP Framework is not going to answer everything, but it is the tool. And it is just like for me as a first step to getting into a better place in terms of community building too.

Jeff Wood (41m 37s): Thank you so much for joining us. Where can folks find the Framework and maybe contact you if they want to find out more information?

Maki Kawaguchi (41m 46s): If you just type in Inclusive, Healthy Places Framework on Google, it'll pop up, so you can find it there. You can also find it on our website, Gehl people.com, and also I'm happy to speak more about this Framework.

Sharon Roerty (42m 5s): And one thing I just want to add before we go that I want people to think about: that public spaces are really a reflection pool. They reflect our norms, our values, our priorities, our culture, our aspirations, and even our fears. They represent yesterday. And they represent tomorrow. They really represent the promise of what can be, when we really come together and think about our communities and what we want them to be.

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