

UDF Member Survey

A survey of Urban Design Forum (UDF) members was distributed in February 2009. The survey was also linked from the UDF website at urbandesignforum.org.nz. A total of 32 individual responses were received. Among those responses received, 63% were paid members of the UDF and 37% were members participate in the UDF but have not paid for a subscription.

Professional Affiliation

9% are members of IPENZ

41% are members of NZIS

44% are members of NZPI

3% are members of no other organization

6% are members of NZILA

9% are members of other organizations

Note: Some respondents held memberships in two or more organisations

Self-Identified Profession

34% are planners

31% are surveyors

9% are engineers

6% are landscape architects

13% are architects

3% are developers

3% are other professionals

Urban Designers

34% are urban designers, all of whom also identify with another profession

9% of urban designers are also planners

3% of urban designers are also landscape architects

9% of urban designers are also surveyors

13% of urban designers are also architects

Notes: The self-identified profession among responses does not always correspond to the institute in which the person holds professional membership. The high response rate among planners and surveyors is reflected in the membership base of the UDF primarily because NZPI and NZIS allow payment of UDF membership as part of annual invoicing of regular membership subscriptions.

Work Types

44% of respondents indicated that they work on single family residential projects

53% of respondents indicated that they work on multi-family residential projects

63% of respondents indicated that they work on commercial projects

53% of respondents indicated that they work on industrial projects

59% of respondents indicated that they work on institutional projects

56% of respondents indicated that they work on infrastructure projects

50% of respondents indicated that they work on mixed use projects

22% of respondents indicated that they work on other types of projects, most commonly policy and strategy development, structure plans, and other forward planning activities

The Most Important Priority for the Urban Design Forum

- Linking urban form strategic planning into the very much physical planning which has been the focus of urban design to date
- Public education. Institutes, local and central Govt, Academia, Private Sector are (mostly) supportive. But the Public, ie end users are not sufficiently informed of the benefits
- Integration across disciplines and agreement of common urban design goals
- Collaboration
- A broad base of members who can share their background and working knowledge.
- Models and methods of development that achieve environmental impacts considered less than minor, and such that would avoid Public Notification of medium sized projects or projects that only marginally fail a zone rule. Promoting these methods to District Councils urging them to acknowledge the planning initiatives and engineering methods to achieve low environmental impacts as a compromise initiative, and therefore avoid the costly / length processes of public notification. That in fact is unnecessary when the impacts are low. Councils are 'mind set' that a breach of rule is the trigger to notification when in fact it the RMA focus is only concerned on environmental breaches. We need a development package/model that would be able to achieve a balance and readily action Resource Consent.
- Raising awareness, and support, for the importance of urban design outside the major centres - especially in small provincial local authorities.
- Provide training and practical framework so all professionals are working towards the same goal, espeacally for teritorial authorities, so they can reconise good urban design solutions even if they may deviate significantly form district plans.
- Moving towards a situation when urban design is of primary concern in all projects. Remembering the human form and scale.
- Encourage colloaboration and mutual respect between professions - within some kind of structure. Encourage shared professional development.
- Education of members and public
- Wider audience uptake

- Develop clear and distinct brand with no confusion from NZPI. Have clear lines of communication to members - no more emails confusing origin as from NZPI or UDF.
- survival as a communications network
- Not Sure. This is new ground and its just great (amazing actually) that suddenly urban design is the "flavour of the month" after years of neglect. I think the best thing the UDF can do is keep the initiative from dying (as quickly as it began) by helping to coordinate interest in Urban Design through such activities as this survey
- Proactivity and establishment as voice box and active role
- Mainstreaming urban design in the national consciousness: urban design as a key contributor to happiness/quality of life
- Spread the urban design 'gospel' to policy planners throughout the country who are in the process of reviewing district plans. The purpose of doing this is to ensure that future district plans promote positive urban design outcomes, rather than the opposite which is often the case currently.
- To incorporate Urban Design elements within other built related disciplines- getting away from the 'add on' UD status
- Provide an avenue to integrate the inputs of various related professions in a collaborative manner to ensure a common and agreed goal/vision is reached.
- Get a constructive dialogue happening with Transport Planners and Traffic Engineers to give them an opportunity to understand urban design objectives and us some understanding of their discipline
- Give high regard to liveability in designing high density mixed use developments
- Get it established in all the local authorities so that it is used in all projects
- identify and make available guideline documents relating to "good" urban design
- to endeavour to encapsulate the urban design experience already available from a wide range of professions and to identify current constraints in a local authority planning context that may be inhibiting contemporary approaches to urban design.
- Getting UD concepts into the RMA and various District and Regional Plans.
- Promoting better integration of planning and infrastructure for sustainable development
- Lots of working examples for range of different scaled projects from mutli use, multi lot to small 2 lot infill development.
- To continue provide discussion and education opportunities for all professional disciplines to encourage a body of shared knowledge and support better working relationships.
- Raise the profile urban design philosophies and recognize that many professionals have a role to play in their implementation
- Getting lower cost land development projects off ground to give first home owners a better start.

What Planners Think

... Engineers Could Do

- encourage engineers to make the connection with planners (especially those who deal with the human as distinct from physical environment)
- Participate in across profession discussions, seminars and workshops to explore how the different goals of the different professions in terms of on the ground development can be integrated to ensure achievement of common goal. A greater understanding of the skills and expertise across professions is required in terms of how they can work together to achieve common goal
- Focus on the way people use infrastructure and how they move around urban environments. Look at low impact solutions.
- Research engineering designs and development models around the world, introduce new ideas. Invent new ideas.
- Advocate for innovation and flexibility in design - traditional engineering Codes of Practice can be significant barriers to achieving good urban design.
- Become familiar at least with basic urban design concepts and become more willing to engage with urban design professionals.
- Be mindful of urban design considerations when they review engineering standards as it is often these standards that can be the greatest barrier to the more creative solutions to a problem that urban design thinking can generate.
- Consultation and Input from UDerS at an early draft stage of any development
- Think about what can be achieved with LID - is it doing what it set out to do or does it just look pretty e.g. green roofs, swales but don't stop - we need those green spaces
- Respond in a meaningful manner, by, looking at projects from a good UD outcomes point of view rather than just as an "hard engineering" projects.

What Planners Think

... Architects Could Do

- encourage architects to see planning as not just having a physical aspect, i.e. not just an extension of architecture to the wider public realm
- Focus on effects of exteriors of built form on their supporting environment. Recognise that not all architects are urban designers.
- Think smaller houses and more outdoor living will promote less environmental impact. Fire prevention in bush sites.
- Become savvy in classical urban design concepts. Buildings should become more than buildings and connect and contribute more to the public realm. The gaze needs to be refocused from the micro to the macro scale.
- Awareness raising within the profession on urban design outcomes and impacts from private development on public open space.
- Consultation and Input from UDerS at an early draft stage of any development
- Think about liveability and orientation of spaces - 50m² shoe boxes become just sleeping spaces.
- Architects shift sideways into the UD realm.

What Planners Think

... Landscape Architects Could Do

- Foster those landscape architects who understand and are passionate about urban form and space.
- Landscape plan models should become specific to situations, such methods of achieving a planting area for effluent treatment – plants for land stability – and plans detailing plants and trees linked to site specific bird life rather than only amenity value. Tie in applicable planting to replicate the ecosystem that suits the area. Encourage natural methods of weed removal or use of environmental friendly sprays. Fencing off and control of rural waterways. Suitable planting plans to bring back rural waterways to original state.
- Lead in the challenge to reestablish the public realm as a place where people want to be.
- Really as above. My perception is that landscape architects are the most aligned with urban design given the nature of their work.
- Consultation and Input from UDers at an early draft stage of any development
- make your spaces useable - can children comfortably play amongst greenery - who are you designing for? the users or the passersby?
- Landscape experts to "think" like a UD Planner.

What Planners Think

... Surveyors Could Do

- Surveyors are encouraged to collect detailed topographic data, which not only details the subject site but also where there are influences further a-field; become more aware that a thorough subdivision design process of allotment boundaries and access alignments will have an underlying association with the impact caused. The scheme plan should paint a comprehensive picture of the site and the benefits achievable as a result of subdivision.
- Surveyors create a large proportion of land use patterns. Private patterns need to respect and be open to the public realm. Public patterns need to be able to draw the private into the public.
- Abandon 'business as usual' approaches and advocate strongly with their clients that subdivision design needs to incorporate strongly urban design thinking. Surveying needs to be less of a technical profession and become more outcome-focussed with the urban environments being created through subdivision.
- Consultation and Input from UDers at an early draft stage of any development
- Try to use landform to maximum benefit for the end user - it really isn't about lines on paper - the areas have to be useable and liveable
- Genuinely buy into the whole UD way of like that is sweeping the nation.

What Planners Think

... Planners Could Do

- Encourage planners to think creatively and work proactively to create quality built environment that people want to spend time in.
- Encourage Council planners to apply the Limited Notification process to non complying applications where the design model implements low impact methods and sustainable outcomes, or enhanced ecology from its current overlay. After all, this achieves the intentions of the RMA.
- Training courses, workshops and roadshows for local authorities and those involved in development control.

- NZPI and their planners need to become the leaders in the challenge of bringing urban design to the forefront of decision making. They may or may not have the appropriate skills to do so. Where they do not, education needs to be sought or knowing when to seek the advice and participation of someone that does. Those that do have the skills need to be the primary leaders in urban design.
- Promote national recognition of the benefits of planning
- Incorporate urban design thinking into mainstream planning, rather than a subset which it appears currently. So much of planners work is undertaken on urban environments and yet until recently there has not been a strong focus on quality of urban environments and the impact planning provisions play.
- Consultation and Input from UDevs at an early draft stage of any development
- be open to new ideas, push for changes when you feel strongly that a proposal doesn't look workable - support good initiatives
- Keep our eye on continuing to promote good urban design outcomes.

What Surveyors Think

... Engineers Could Do

- A combined (through UDF?) information drive.
- Increase training and promote the use of low impact design amongst members.
- Encourage a view that engineering is only part of the solution, make asset management understanding more accessible to allied professions as this is very influential to urban design decision making but also prevents innovation. Encourage shared professional development
- Education of members and public
- Be more open to design lead projects that might not meet all the standards but the outcome is a better living environment
- Help influence local authorities to produce Codes of Practice for subdivision engineering that allow alternative solutions for stormwater and roading etc other than traditional piped / chip sealed etc.
- assist to initiate an urban design forum to encourage participation from associated professionals
- Think outside the square, be prepared to challenge TA engineers on design solutions.

What Surveyors Think

... Architects Could Do

- Demonstrate leadership particularly to the public sector on elegant not just pragmatic designs. Be collaborative - consider long term outcomes of design implementation - understand rights and responsibilities particularly as they fall to the private sector. Encourage shared professional development.
- keep to houses and structures
- Find affordable ways for 'average' kiwis to best benefit from design based on individual site constraints so that "cold boxes" are a thing of the past and more habitable alternatives are not just for the wealthy.

What Surveyors Think

... Landscape Architects Could Do

- Be collaborative - consider long term outcomes of design implementation - understand rights and responsibilities particularly as they fall to the private sector. Encourage shared professional development.
- be more proactive with Councils
- Be practical and encourage affordable designs so again solutions are not just for those with more money who can afford the input into design.

What Surveyors Think

... Surveyors Could Do

- Be collaborative - consider long term outcomes of design implementation - promote understanding on the definition of rights and responsibilities. Encourage shared professional development.
- In land development the NZIS must be more active as they are the ones that know and use the subdivisional process the most. Utilising the urban design protocols and forums are must for these people
- Help influence local authorities to produce Codes of Practice for subdivision engineering that allow alternative solutions for stormwater and roading etc other than traditional piped / chip

sealed etc. Carefully consider subdivision layout - ensure quality living environments can be provided rather than just thinking about how the lines on a survey plan will look!

- Continue to challenge TA's, encourage developers to work not just from the black and white rules in district plans, but to be prepared to do things differently - not just for a quick dollar.

What Surveyors Think

... Planners Could Do

- Increase training opportunities - focus on specific areas for planners to understand the rationale behind site placement, size and engineering design.
- Be collaborative - take responsibility for removing barriers to good outcomes. Encourage shared professional development.
- Be more flexible especially within Councils. The planning process is too driven by process and not outcome. It is outcomes that people want
- Be flexible, be prepared to look at alternatives outside TA guidelines such as site management plans for development structure instead of common forms of design and tenure.

What Engineers Think

... Engineers Could Do

- Promote and advance urban design based ideas and opportunities to clients, influence District Plan development, work with Government agencies to develop policy requiring urban design based approaches
- Moving away from linear thinking - what size of pipe and where - to do we need the pipe? Integrated approach to planning rather than infrastructure focus. Think outside the discipline - holistic approach for sustainable development - consider all 4 well-beings

What Engineers Think

... Architects Could Do

- Provide better plans and details of designs which encompass more UD principles.
- Think outside the discipline - holistic approach for sustainable development - consider all 4 well-beings

What Engineers Think

... Landscape Architects Could Do

- NZILA members need to come forward more with their ideas, skills and experiences. NZLIA members seem to be an underutilised resource and need to be involved early on in projects a lot more.
- Think outside the discipline - holistic approach for sustainable development - consider all 4 well-beings

What Engineers Think

... Surveyors Could Do

- NZIS members need to utilise their scoping and concept skills more and develop a wider involvement in spatial layout and concept design.
- Think outside the discipline - holistic approach for sustainable development - consider all 4 well-beings

What Engineers Think

... Planners Could Do

- Develop planners project management and coordination skills to bring about a more cohesive process of design involving the other professional groups
- Think outside the discipline - holistic approach for sustainable development - consider all 4 well-beings

What Landscape Architects Think

... Engineers Could Do

- Come to the process with an open mind and be willing to change to support the best practice methods and outcomes anticipated by the current UDP professions.

What Architects Think

... Engineers Could Do

- Encourage their members to be involved and start an IPENZ specific education programme to raise interest and awareness of urban design issues and alternative approaches to standardised traffic engineering approaches. Include urban design forum events in any continuing professional development (CPD)scheme.

What Architects Think

... Architects Could Do

- Encourage members with a specific interest in urban design to be involved and for architects to involve specialised urban design at an early stage of their projects so they can assist in shaping briefs and reviewing concept design. enable urban design forum events to be included as CPD points

What Architects Think

... Landscape Architects Could Do

- Encourage members with a specific interest in urban design to be involved and enable urban design forum events to be included in CPD scheme. Include specialised seminars on public space and streetscape design to illustrate detailed difference between good and bad urban design.

What Architects Think

... Surveyors Could Do

- Encourage their members to be involved and start an NZIS specific education programme to raise interest and awareness of urban design issues and alternative approaches to standardised survey approaches and to emphasise the critical importance of getting subdivision and street layouts right ! and integrated with neighbouring properties. Include urban design forum events in any continuing professional development (CPD)scheme.

What Landscape Architects Think

... Planners Could Do

- support the urban design forum as critical to achieving good urban design outcomes, and encouraging involvement of other professions that they work with. Advocating for legislation (RMA) and writing District Plans to support this. Perhaps running a specialised course on what techniques in district plans work or don't work by comparing NZ examples.