THE TIME MACHINE

STEPPING STONE TO A SHARED FUTURE

stipo

THE CITY AT EYE LEVEL

HOW TO ORGANISE THE TIME MACHINE WORKSHOP

"Our urban environment could be seen as the illustration of a book: it helps to explain all the stories and experiences of the past, shaped by its different users through time."

The Time Machine can be used as a tool for places with an (expected) redevelopment task with a desire for a connection between the past and the present. The tool enables involved stakeholders like the owner, developer, (former) resident, users or municipality to look for an alternative way of developing a future vision through co-creation and participation. The Time Machine is used as a stepping stone to a shared narrative to find common values for future development of a building, neighborhood or area in order to collect.

You don't have to be an expert to be able to analyze a place and to look for existing storylines, anecdotes and facts by navigating through official or personal archives and find key players who can help give shape to its sense of place.

The Time Machine workshop gives all types of participants an easy tool to identify the layered history of the place and to collectively formulate shared values that need to be preserved for future development. Most importantly, a Time Machine session is a joyful and collaborative activity, in which the community at large gets to interact with each other and really give shape to their common urban identity.

With this step-by-step manual, we hope to give you a head start in organising your very own Time Machine, and enable agency to improve soul of the place in the city together with your local community in an enjoyable way. The Time Machine is not only about finding ways to collect stories, but to look for new functions for a building on a short-term base, the right key values for area or city marketing and work towards a long term vision for the place. Its goal is to seek for stories as an inspiration and direction for future place or area development, supported its community, to prevent disconnection and displacement of the original stakeholders in the future.

WHEN TO ORGANISE A TIME MACHINE WORKSHOP

You can organize a Time Machine for areas with an (expected) re-development task, with a desired change in function and plausible change of demography and users as a result. The tool can be used for a place where a client is struggling with a development quest, in need for a connection to its tangible and intangible values, through co-creation and participation. But residents can also take matters into their own hands to save a building or area. Hereby they could enforce their involvement to give meaning to re-development processes instead of standing on the sidelines.

The Time Machine organisers should realise that organising a workshop is a tool that has to be embedded in a long term process. It can be the kick-start of a new process to reinsure the right values or guidelines that have to be taken into account, or an event to come up with possible fitting solutions while there are already planned actions for the new development to that place. In all cases, the intention for 'preserving' or raising awareness of the soul of the place should be present.You may want to spend time beforehand to dig into the layered history, raise the first budgets for implementation of values, to get the client ready to say 'yes' to suggestions for implementation in the future development and to be welcome at the table throughout the process to be sure that the values are being respected in the process. Otherwise, the Time Machine will only create expectations which you can not live up to which may damage the trust of your involved network.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING A TIME MACHINE WORKSHOP

The Time Machine has been developed to include the stories of stakeholders in approaching changes. The personal stories are an addition to dominant stories used on identity, mostly used for commercial purposes by developers or local municipalities. Unilateral identities like Rotterdam as thé city of modern architecture, Amsterdam as thé city of the Golden Age and Eindhoven as thé industrial city of Philips may create a one-sided image. The subjection to one perspective can lead to a flat and meaningless image which the local community can not identify themselves with. With the intention to tap into different layers of time and thus to retrieve stories of the lived histories, even if they are disparate or even contradictory. During the workshop participants uncover the soul of the place in their own words and to become co-owner of a case to find purpose in the development of a place. The participants need to keep in mind the end result in formulating their common values to initiator of the Time Machine can facilitate a smooth translation to future development for the client

BACKGROUND

The Time Machine was created by STIPO, in collaboration with the Reinwardt Academy, Bachelor Cultural Heritage, department of the Amsterdam University of the Arts[1]. The project was initiated in order to give more meaning to STIPO's second core value: The soul of the place. STIPO noticed that all of our core values had a very dominant place in our projects, in one way or the other, but discovering the soul of a place was never clearly determined in project proposals as a necessary step to truly get the know a place and its needs for change.

Starting from the already existing place game methodology[2] the Time Machine methodology was given shape. The workshop needed to hold similar elements such as its participatory nature, the idea that all participants are experts of their own environment and the necessary steps to work towards short-term and long-term solutions to secure the improvement of the quality of life in public space .

Why do we think the awareness of the soul of a place is that important in urban development?
Our urban environment could be seen as the illustration of a book: it helps to explain all the stories and experiences of the past, shaped by its different users through time. A place, area, city or landscape absorbs these stories and experiences of the past and can, therefore, be seen as a dynamic document, filled with personal and social characteristics. The physical environment is, as it were, the tangible carrier of that past. But how can these intangible significances be part of a process in area development? And how can the process serve as an approach to the realization of extra social value? The Time Machine is a tool to travel through time and gradually collect these stories as an inspiration and direction for future place or area development, supported its community. STIPO, developer of the Time Machine, sees the mapping and involvement of stakeholders as a necessary step in these type of processes of change.

1   https://www.reinwardt.ahk.nl/en/
2   https://www.pps.org/article/place-game-community

In search for new roles
What is the role as a heritage professional in this changing world of area development? The definition and role of 'the expert' is vigorous and constantly changing. A heritage professional navigates skillfully in the process of defining cultural-historical values of a place, while the local stakeholders are the experts of his own lived history and the professional will have to take a step back. During this change of role in expertise, the professional can take the role of facilitator to connect the different worlds of stakeholders.

The interaction between the different roles of expertise is optimally utilized during the Time Machine. The awareness of the presence of the layered history is an exercise that can take place parallel to the more common cultural-historical research. The difference is that it presupposes an active and involved role of stakeholders in a future process of redevelopment.

1.1 SELECT A SITE

The first step of organising a Time Machine is selecting a site. This can be a building like an abandoned factory, school, formal office, square or even a whole area or neighbourhood. The place can be vacant, abandoned or used but in need for a moment of reflection in the use and needs of different stakeholders. Wander around in cities and outskirts to bump into places in need for redevelopment or to be saved from demolition. Or when being approached by a property owner or developer with a re-development question, ask yourself is the site is fit for a Time Machine workshop and do some digging in the history.

- In vacant and abandoned places, ask yourself: how can we start to bring back life and what is needed to make a building available for use?
- In used sites of existing neighbourhoods: how can we reflect on the usage throughout history and what is the desired change?
- In newly built areas: what was there before and who are the future stakeholders to be involved in the process?
- In all places: who is the owner and are the stakeholders in the inner circle, most connected to the site?

In each case, the Time Machine will prove to be a useful tool in order to determine what components work in a place, and which components don't. In general: follow the energy, don't do a workshop if there is nobody wanting to invest in any way in the place, then spend your time and attention on other places where there already is some energy to get started.

1.2 OBSERVE THE SITE

Firstly visit the site, walk around the neighbourhood and try to ask passers-by if they know anything about the site. It's an easy start to interview local people at or close to the site to get a better understanding of what is going on and who should be involved. Dive into the history of a place by carrying out a cultural-historical scan. Do research by visiting local archives, look for what you can find in online archives, get in touch with the local heritage club and ask around for people with stories. Start by looking for factual information and try to dig deeper for more personal stories about the place.

In the cultural-historical scan, you collect basic historical information in the different layers of its place. Determine how far you should travel back in time in order to contribute to the common values of the place.

Think of information about:
- Genesis of the place
- Genesis of the surroundings
- The type of functions throughout history
- Events that occurred at or around that place
- Important people connected to the place
- Personal stories of the users throughout history

What type of documents do you look for:
- Official city documents
- Maps
- Pictures
- (Personal) Letters
- Newspapers
- Stories on blogs

1.3 CREATE A TIMELINE

The findings of the cultural-historical scan are the base of the timeline, so pay attention to when the time of the place should start in de workshop. When does the story start of this place? The time should of course end in the future to when the development is planned to be finished so the participants are challenged to dream about the long-term outcome.

1.4 SELECT A CENTRAL VENUE

It is important to have a central and big enough venue where participants can gather. Ideally at the site, but if this is not possible, the venue should be in a close range of a maximum of 10 minutes walk from the site. The venue should be suitable for facilitating an event for your group size. It should have an informal atmosphere. At the venue, the initiators need to give a small introduction about the Time Machine and its goals before everyone heads off to their selected place. After everyone is done evaluating, the venue offers a nice spot where all the new ideas and insights can be discussed while enjoying some music, snacks and drinks.

2.1 IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS

How to map the possible involved stakeholders? Start by asking the client who they normally ask for information about the place. Start by first talking to the usual suspects who are, in some way, involved with the location and ask them who you should talk to to tell you more about the place. Think of (former) residents, owners, entrepreneurs, (former) staff at the location, involved civil servants, involved developers etc. Most cities have their own heritage fans, so seek out the local heritage clubs and or museums close to the site.

Check in the meantime who would like to be involved in the workshop and collect their personal contact details.

When you are finished with mapping the stakeholders, start with creating a list of varied participants: representatives of the different groups within the local community who should definitely be part of the workshop and who could contribute by sharing their story. Form a group of around 25 participants, a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 50 participants.

2.2 APPROACH PARTICIPANTS

Now that you have identified participants, it is time to invite them. Ideally, this is done through e-mail, so participants can easily let you know if they will be present; but again, be aware of the groups you may not reach through email. We recommend sending an invitation minimum of 6 weeks till 3 weeks before the event, and another reminder 1 week before the event. The best way is to personally invite people in the streets and send a mail after your encounter as a reminder. You may also want to use a flyer to hand out.

Make sure you speak enthusiastically in the invitation! Keep it accessible for everyone, and carefully avoid using any jargon. Give a little bit of background of the area and the Time Machine and tell participants about the duration, the location & the free snacks and drinks. It's important to let the participants know what is expected of them, because they do have to do some homework before attending the workshop. Ask the participants to bring a memory connected to that place. This can either be a story, but also a picture or a physical object such as a sign, a small statue, article from an old newspaper etc.

Finally, make it clear that recipients will let you know if they will participate. Use a 'Sign Up!' button in your invitation. Using a hyperlink, you can connect the Sign Up!/RSVP button to a google form collecting the respondent's name, email, and confirmation of attendance.

Dear residents, developers, civil servants and other stakeholders,

We invite you to the neighborhood Time Machine!
We heartily invite you to join us on the 3rd of October. Snacks and drinks are provided for. We are looking forward to exploring improvements and cultivating civic involvement together!

Why this invitation?
On the 3rd of October, we will host an event in order to make the Citysquare a more attractive place for everyone! During the event, we will investigate the squares history, map out short-term opportunities, tackle difficult obstacles and highlight potentials regarding the further development of the place.

From public square to public place to be!
The Citysquare is one of the most vibrant squares of the Netherlands. Together with you, we will investigate how this square can become even more dynamic and diverse.

October 3, 2019
18:00 - 22:00
Café Citysquare

STEP 3-8 EXECUTE THE TIME MACHINE

TIMEFRAME

When starting at 17:00 (example of 4 hour workshop):

Preparations
- Print all the found archive material: photographs, postcards, newspaper articles or more.
- Hang-up the timeline and map
- Place enough chairs
- Set-up the beamer
- Set-up catering and drinks

17.00 - **Walk-in**

17.30 - **Welcome and brief introduction on the set-up of the evening;**
Note: Why are we here, what are we going to do and what is the time schedule?

17.40 - **Check-in: who are you and what is your relation to the space?**
Note: Respond to the emotions (think of memories and feelings). Ask every participants to recollect their favorite place with a special memory in the area and ask them why? Participants write down their reply in keywords or little drawing on yellow post-its.

17.55 - **Introduction case: history of the place.**
Note: Start the presentation in the NOW: what traces are still visible in the area? We've asked the participants to bring a memory in the area, so as an introduction some of the participants can share the traces in their own environment.

This may trigger other participants by tapping into their senses and process of recollection. After this start with your presentation about the history of the area. Start with the origin and end with a prospect to the future and the planned activities (normally reason why you're doing the Time Machine workshop).

18.20 - **Time Machine: heritage, the soul of the place and its role in area development**
Note: Before you'll introduce the Time Machine concept you'll ask the participants to place their post-its in the timeline and place a small dot on the map. After this you will do an introduction to the background of the Time Machine, its goal and show possible different outcomes of the workshop. Explain the next steps so the participants know what to to when they start time traveling.

18.50 - **Time Machine: Start to time travel.**
Note: Participants divide into groups and fill out memories, facts, and myths. From factual information to common values. The timeline is divided in 5 moments so ideally the participants are divided into 5 groups. Participants start with writing down their most fun, exciting, emotional, special memory linked to the area. To stimulate recollecting memories you can note some triggers:
Describe the circumstances:
- Where did you memory take place?
- When did it take place? Date/day/moment of the time/season
- How old were you? Which phase of life?
- Who were you with?
- What happened?
- What kind of feeling did you have then?
- Why is the memory so special?

19.35 - **Posting**
Note: Participants come back and place all the post-its and images in the hanging timeline.

19.50 - **Sharing stories: Each group shares their findings and exchanges stories within the group.**

20.10 - **Stickering and red thread: Which gathered information is valued most by the group?**
Note: Participants will have 5 stickers each. With these stickers they will choose their most valuable story or story that reflects the identity of the area the most. The stories with the most stickers will be pinned and will be liked by a red thread: the red through its area. This is where you will sense where most sentiment and shared value among the participants.

20.25 - **Translate top rated stories to most valuable core values for the future development**
Note: Reflect with all participants what they want to preserve and pass along to the value, worth to pass on to next generations. Ask the participants why and how.

20.40 - **Check out + determine the following actions for the report.**
Note: Give the participants a peek into the next steps in order to have the storied be translated to the next steps.

21.00 - **End**

3. PRESENTATION

Kick-off the Time Machine with a warm welcome and a brief introduction on the set-up of the session: why are we here, what are we going to do and what is the time schedule. Before you present the narrative of the place (the findings of the scan) you ask the participants to present themselves briefly by introducing who they are, what they do and what connection they have with the place. But it's also very useful for the participants to get to know each other (if they don't already do). After this ask the participants to write down a memory or interesting fact that is connected to the place. They will hold on to the post-it for after the presentation.

Present the history of the place (the findings of the scan and if possible invite others from the area to share their knowledge and stories as inspiration) and an introductory on the concept of the Time Machine. Use inspirations from great examples all over the world, places with similar challenges elsewhere, and from where others have come up with solutions. Close the presentation with the development quest (by you or the client) and explain the next steps so the participants feels comfortable to move ahead to start the interactive part of the workshop: the time traveling.

Make the presentation very visual, and about the type of stories they need to look for. Tell the participants an example story from previous workshops as an example that no matter how small or non-relevant the story may appear in your head, it's important that the story shows how the places functioned and what shows the character of the places (past or present).

Make people feel the value of a sense of place, but avoid any jargon at all time, keep the presentation accessible to everyone. It is always advantageous if you or someone else can speak from your own experiences. Then give specifications about the Time Machine: set up a time-frame and make clear what is expected of everyone. The presentation can turn out to be a nice way to activate participants' thoughts before they actually go out to 'another time period'.

Moreover, it is important to set the tone of the Time Machine: it has to be informal, suitable for open discussions, comfortable and inspirational to share personal stories, and there has to be no hierarchy whatsoever among participants. You can find a recommended timeframe regarding all the components of the Time Machine on the previous page of this manual.

4. GATHER INPUT ABOUT THE PLACE

Hand out the necessities for executing the Time Machine; pens, markers, post-its, stickers etc. to everyone participating. The next step is to have a quick braindump session, where people write down the first thoughts that come to mind when thinking of the place and its connected historical factors.

After that you let participants pin their past experiences, stories, and memories but also the facts, happenings, or myths of the place on the timeline. Now that the timeline is getting full of information, it starts to create an image of the place's history.

5. SPLIT INTO SMALLER GROUPS

Split into smaller groups of 4 or 5 each. It is important to have the participants decide which group they want to be in since they have to feel collected to the time era in order to add their personal experiences and memories.

Remind them that they have approximately one hour to execute the Time Machine, this way there will be enough time left to discuss all the next steps. Most importantly- remember to have fun! Do your best to keep everyone enthusiastic, and remember the Time Machine is a great interactive way to get to know a place from the roots on.

✓ CHECKLIST

- [ ] *Participant list*
- [ ] *Timeline big sheet*
- [ ] *Lots of pens (~25), markers in different colours*
- [ ] *Post-its, tape, Pritt, pushpins*
- [ ] *125 Green dot stickers*
- [ ] *1x Red threat (~2m)*
- [ ] *Snacks, fruits, and drinks*
- [ ] *Enough chairs and tables for up to 10 groups*
- [ ] *A projector and screen, a clicker and laptop with presentation*

6. TRAVEL THROUGH TIME

To begin with the timetravel, the participants start from the earliest time possible and discuss each happening, memory, and their linkages through time.
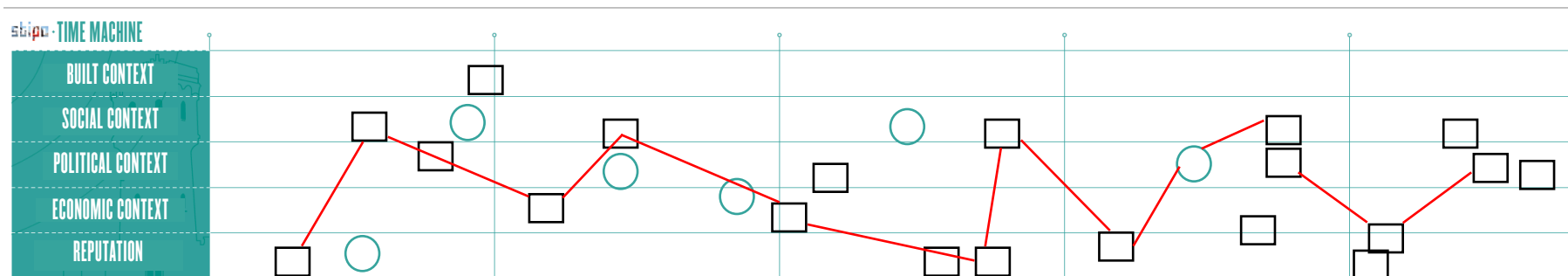
7. SHARING AND LINKING STORIES

The participants come back and place all the post-its with and images in the hanging timeline. Each group shares their findings and exchanges stories within the group.
In this way, a short summary is presented of the places' history. With this method, the storyline of the place gets clarified to highlight its significance and uniqueness.

8. SELECTION

Participants will have 5 stickers each. With these stickers they will choose their most valuable story or story that reflects the identity of the area the most. The stories with the most stickers will be pinned and will be liked by a red thread: the red through its area. This is where you will sense where most sentiment and shared value among the participants.

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BUILT CONTEXT

SOCIAL CONTEXT

POLITICAL CONTEXT

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

REPUTATION

STEP 9-11 DETERMINING AND IMPLEMENTING POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

9. DETERMINE THE COMMON VALUES

Reflect with all participants what they want to preserve and pass along to the value, worth to pass on to next generations. Ask the participants why and how. Summarize this into a minimum of 5 core values that reflect on the sense of place.

10. TRANSLATE TO ACTION PLAN

At the end of the workshop you round up with the next steps you need to take after the workshop. Show some examples on what happened after other Time Machine sessions. Explain that it can be used as a base for the development to find a (temporary) interpretation of the industry, the development of housing in the area, area marketing to people to the area and to ensure that developments in connection remains with his soul of the place.

...DON'T FORGET

Ask unregistered participants to write down their names and e-mail addresses for further actions. Before all participants leave take pictures of the timeline to make sure to include the personal items placed before their taken back home.

11. MAKE A TIME MACHINE REPORT AND GET TO ACTION

Congratulations! You set up a workshop which not only brought positive change in a public space, but also cultivated civic involvement among participants to curate common values. Now, you might be thinking:

How do I convert all these insights in actual concrete long-term change in my urban setting?

Try to reserve time immediately after the Time Machine to report the event, containing:

- The 5 values of the place
- A brief timeline of the place with its developments, links and stories.
- A brief description of the atmosphere and participants of the Time Machine workshop
- A summary of the storyline: Detailed stories, elaborated after the input from the workshop
- An overall plan of approach of the short- and long term actions
- The personal stories serve as a social foundation for the future development of the area so it's important to report the stories and let them varified before sending it to your client.
- Optional: a team who will bring the actions forward and to make sure to preserve the values in the future development

Please find an example of a Time Machine report in the list of downloads.

Report Time Machine

Stepping stone to a shared future

Ketelhuis - Apeldoorn
11 april 2019

Report version: May 2019

TO SUMMARIZE...

Organising the Time Machine ideally results in having a proper historcial storyline of a place to come up with further steps in its development. Looking at the built context, social context, political context, economic context, and the reputation of the places history, a coherent story can be set up from various memories, happenings, and facts.

Next steps should take this established timeline into consideration to assure that the story behind heritage does not fail to last. The personal stories serve as a social foundation for the future development of the area. All partners together must ensure that the core values are embraced and understood by parties involved in future development such as the municipality, the developer, property and the people responsible for maintanance, management and programming. Short term approaches might be developed fast and implemented quickly, whereas long-term solutions require more precise planning, strategising, and communicating.

This requires positioning people to implement these long term improvements. Encourage this through setting up a community group or neighbourhood organisation, or working together with the municipality for potential funding.

USEFUL SOURCES

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USEFUL DOWNLOADS

Tools for the Time Machine workshop
- Letter of invitation
- Timeline sheet
- Template presentation

INFORMATION

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