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## Symposium 14 February 2007 London

InSITU would like to invite you to our end-of-project symposium – **Spaces, Places and Faces: Tools for Successful Community Involvement** on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 12.30 to 4.30pm at the Graduate Centre, London Metropolitan University. Please contact: Steve Shaw, Director: TRaC Research Centre, s.shaw@londonmet.ac.uk; or Clare Redwood, Project Manager, Cities Institute, c.redwood@londonmet.ac.uk.

## Progress So Far...

InSITU (Inclusive and Sustainable Infrastructure for Tourism and Urban Regeneration) is a research project to support those who are working to improve public spaces and walking routes with the active participation of local communities. Funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, the cross-disciplinary research team has been developing and testing new tools to widen user participation and inform design solutions in areas that are rich in industrial and social heritage but poor in many other respects. The aim of InSITU is to allow all participants - regardless of their expertise - to frame the issues and problems in their own terms.

In particular, the project has encouraged involvement by so-called 'hard-to-reach' groups: people who tend not to respond to 'traditional' forms of consultation, such as questionnaires, exhibitions and public meetings. Through innovative application of Geographic Information Systems for Participation (GIS-P), 'lay' participants with in-depth local knowledge have been able to contribute to the design of schemes in their locality on an equal footing - with each other - and with practitioners who can deliver significant improvements to the public realm. This allows citizens, planners and implementers to engage in a more direct and less confrontational manner than has generally been possible hitherto.

Through this 'field work' over the summer/autumn, valuable local knowledge and insights have been gained through local panels (focus

groups) drawn from local communities. The use of GIS-P has enabled maps produced by different local panels to be digitised and superimposed so that they can be interpreted by key specialists, especially urban designers, planners, engineers and heritage attraction managers. These techniques have been piloted in collaboration with InSITU Project Partners in 'roundtable' meetings that include Local Authorities, Regional Development Agencies, Groundwork Trust and the National Trust to secure more inclusive spaces and walking routes for leisure, tourism and everyday uses.

In each of the study areas the Project Partners and other organisations are strongly committed to creating new spaces and walking routes and/or upgrading existing ones to benefit local people as well as visitors. Initiatives in which the GIS-P techniques were piloted have included: accommodating markets, concerts and other events in historic public squares (York Spaces Case Study); converting a former chocolate factory site including new paths for walking and cycling (Terry's Chocolate Factory Case Study); upgrading a pedestrian link between a hospital and local railway station (Homerton Hospital Case Study); creating a 'family trail' around a historic house (Sutton House Case Study); establishing a riverside 'health walk' including interpretation of local histories (Lower Kersal Case Study). Further details of progress in each of the three study areas (London, York and Salford) are in



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YORK SPACES FOCUS GROUP



SUTTON HOUSE FOCUS GROUP

this Newsletter. During the next few months, representatives of our Project Partners and other organisations will be providing us with feedback and advice on how the techniques might be further refined; this should enable practitioners to widen user participation and inform design solutions in other schemes.



HOMERTON CASE STUDY  
DRAFT GIS-P MAP

### Contacts

The InSITU project team is very happy to discuss its research outcomes with readers of this newsletter. If you are interested in any of the items discussed in this newsletter please contact Clare Redwood at London Metropolitan University on 0207 133 5099, c.redwood@londonmet.ac.uk or Joanne Leach at the University of Salford on 0161 295 2690, j.leach@salford.ac.uk. Or visit our website at [www.insitu.org.uk](http://www.insitu.org.uk)

## London Case Studies

For both case studies in Hackney (Homerton Hospital and Sutton House) the focus groups have been held. Each case study offered a different and diverse approach to using GIS for participation.

The first case study was with the National Trust at Sutton House and involved facilitating focus groups with children and their parents to gain information on their preferences when visiting various rooms in the house. Using GIS with children was an interesting experience; ages ranged from five to twelve and their understanding of

mapping on such a micro-level as a house was excellent. However, negative questions regarding improvements to the room were a bit too advanced for those six and under.

The second case study (Homerton Hospital link) included local residents and representatives with specialised knowledge of the area. A satisfaction study was undertaken on improvements to the public realm between Homerton railway station and Homerton hospital. Participants were asked to walk along the route, annotating on individuals map comments con-

cerning personal security, accessibility, road traffic, street planting and signage to the hospital. At the hospital a collective map was used for the focus group, with disagreement on the exact whereabouts of certain issues clarified with the individual maps. To this end, it was felt that the initial mapping session had been extremely useful, as all participants had gained the same knowledge of the area.

The findings for both case studies proved to be extremely beneficial for both Hackney Council and the National Trust. A roundtable for both case studies will be held in

the near future to include other interested parties; this will also be an excellent means of disseminating information on the constructiveness of GIS for participation purposes.



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## York Case Studies

Following initial roundtable meetings in York, two separate case studies were finalised. The first is based around the use of space in the city centre (York Spaces) and the other on the redevelopment of the former Terry's Chocolate Factory site.

The York Spaces study focused on local stakeholders' uses of, and views on a number of open spaces (public squares) within the city centre. The team used two different approaches to GIS-P, one informal and one formal. For the

informal approach the researchers set up a stall in the middle of York's Parliament Street in order to capture the views of passers by. The formal approach was run as a traditional focus group meeting with 11 invited members of York's Citizen Panel. Both these meetings were held in September 2006 and the data from this fieldwork are currently being analysed.

The Terry's study focused on access routes for both pedestrians and cyclists across and around the former Terry's Chocolate Factory

site. A traditional focus group meeting was held in late July 2006 with people who had expressed and interest at an open day held by the site developers. Other significant local actors were also invited as were members of the York Cycle Campaign group to help with the discussion of cycle routes in and around the site. The results of this study were presented back to local people, the developers and the council and exhibited at a second open day in early August.



TERRY'S CHOCOLATE FACTORY FOCUS GROUP

## Salford Case Study

Despite initial logistical difficulties of timing and scale in finding a suitable location for a case study in Salford, a project to develop a health walk in Lower Kersal was selected. The time-scale for the health walk was relatively short, with completion planned for the autumn of 2006. A budget of £20,000 had been allocated for the creation of the walk. Salford City Council were working with the Groundwork Trust, with funding from the New Deal for Communities, to undertake consultation on improving footpaths and routes around a nearby Sports Village and along the River Irwell.

Meetings with the key stakeholders

were held and membership of the roundtable was agreed with Groundwork. Following the first meeting with the roundtable, consultations with members of the local community, in collaboration with Groundwork's community link officer, took place in five public locations in order to reach as wide a sample of residents, including as many hard-to-reach groups, as possible.

A map of the proposed route, mounted on polystyrene boards, was set out on which residents could stick a flag with their comments about specific locations. Around 120 residents participated and over 200 comments relating to

the planned health walk route were obtained. It is felt that siting the consultation events on public streets and in the public realm achieved the goal of involving hard-to-reach residents. Comments were then analysed and maps were prepared identifying the location of particular aspects and issues relating to both historical and current events.

A second meeting with the roundtable presenting the findings from the consultations has recently been held at which the priorities for improving the walk have been discussed. These suggested priorities will now be presented to residents at different locations in

Lower Kersal. A final meeting with the roundtable to discuss the feedback from residents and to take forward the detailed proposals will then take place.



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