Designing Downtown and the Social Economy for Women

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About Us

- **Non-profit** Founded in 1983
- **Mission:** Assist Businesses and Communities to Create Safe and Vibrant Places to Socialize
- **The leading North American source** of events, resources and consultation services on nightlife and the social economy

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Sociable City Vision

We believe all people should have access to safe, vibrant places to socialize—regardless of age, life stage, race, ethnicity, sexual identity or disability. We help communities create diverse, welcoming social venues and districts where people have an opportunity to connect and lead more enriching lives.
Connection to Santa Cruz

UCSC is my alma mater
Downtown Santa Cruz was my motivation for attending UCSC
First nightlife experiences were on Pacific Avenue
Worked with RHI since late 2005
80+ City Clients
Interviews and Focus Groups with Women in the U.S., Canada and Mexico
Why Talk to Women?

- Drive 70-80% of all consumer purchasing decisions (Forbes 2019)
- Under-represented in the fields that design downtowns:
  - 37% of urban planners
  - 24% of working architects
  - 10% of civil engineers
  - 3% of all engineers
- Ownership of restaurants, bars and clubs still a male-dominated industry
- Women comprise the majority of servers in F&B (71%)
Disconnect

The people who live, work, play and socialize in downtown settings (and who make decisions on where to go and what to buy!) ≠

The people who plan downtowns and own/operate social venues
A Movement is Underway

Growing recognition of the need to view downtown planning from a woman’s perspective
Men’s Decision-Making on Whether to Go Out
Men’s Decision-Making on Whether to Go Out

Cheap drinks?
Men’s Decision-Making on Whether to Go Out

Sports?
Men’s Decision-Making on Whether to Go Out

Hot people?
Men’s Decision-Making on Whether to Go Out

- CHEAP DRINKS?
- SPORTS?
- HOT PEOPLE?
- YES, GO OUT!
Women's Decision-Making on Whether to Go Out
### Women’s Decision-Making on Whether to Go Out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Mobility</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Comfort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will there be food? If so, what’s on the menu?</td>
<td>If I drive, where will I park? Who will be DD?</td>
<td>Will I have to go alone?</td>
<td>Dress code</td>
</tr>
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<td>What’s the entertainment?</td>
<td>Will I have to walk far in the dark?</td>
<td>Is the business located in a safe area?</td>
<td>Is there a coat check?</td>
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<td>What’s the social scene?</td>
<td>If I take transit, which is the safest route?</td>
<td>Will there be other people walking around?</td>
<td>Will there be a quiet place to chat?</td>
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<td>How much will it cost?</td>
<td>How do I get home?</td>
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- **Activity**
  - Will there be food? If so, what’s on the menu?
  - What’s the entertainment?
  - What’s the social scene?
  - How much will it cost?

- **Mobility**
  - If I drive, where will I park? Who will be DD?
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- **Safety**
  - Will I have to go alone?
  - Is the business located in a safe area?
  - Will there be other people walking around?
  - Can I bring in my pepper spray or taser?

- **Comfort**
  - Dress code
  - Is there a coat check?
  - Will there be a quiet place to chat?
  - Are the restrooms clean?
LIFE STAGE INFLUENCES SOCIALIZING PATTERNS

- Times to go out
- Frequency of going out
- Goals for going out
- Risk aversion vs. risk tolerance
Top 5 Social Experiences Women are Seeking

1. Social spaces without alcohol or with alcohol alternatives
2. Active/competitive socializing
3. Gamification
4. Social dancing
5. Daytime socializing options
Social Spaces without Alcohol & Alcohol Alternatives

- Health-conscious alcohol alternatives (e.g. kombucha on tap)
- High-quality mocktails
- Sober bars / zero-proof bars
- Social spaces beyond a “bar without the alcohol” e.g. hammock cafe
Active Socializing

• Axe throwing
• Roller disco
• Indoor mini-golf
• Volleyball on the roof
• Bowling
• Table Tennis
Gamification

- Vintage arcade bars
- Board game cafes
- Trivia nights, pub quizzes, music bingo
- Escape rooms
- Staff-facilitated activities
Social Dancing
Social Dancing

- Associated with salsa, bachata, swing, line dancing, and other dance styles
- Emphasis is on technique – to practice and have fun
- Takes place in clubs and non-club settings
- Clearer rules of engagement and protocol for inviting a partner to dance
What are the barriers for women to go downtown to socialize?
Environmental Cues that Public Space is Unsafe or Inconvenient

- Litter and overflowing trash
- Graffiti and vandalism
- Uneven sidewalks (nightmare for strollers, walkers)
- Dim/inconsistent lighting on street
- Dark, unmonitored parking lots
- Aggressive panhandlers and unsheltered
- No public restrooms
- Crowds exceed sidewalk capacity, forcing you to walk into the street
- Excessively loud music escaping from venues
What do these Cues Communicate to Women?

- No one’s watching
- Anything goes
- No one cares
- I’m not supposed to stay here long
- I shouldn’t bring my family here
What Makes Women Feel Safe in Public Space?

- **Lighting is seamless** (streetlights, window displays)
- Stable walking surfaces
- Streets/sidewalks clean, well maintained
- Wayfinding signage
- Clean public restrooms
- Eyes on the Street
  - Passersby
  - Buskers
  - Safety Ambassadors
  - Cleaning crews
  - Police on foot, bike
- Parking lots: Visible, roving parking attendants
- Rideshare Hubs for Lyft, Uber pick-up
What Makes Women Feel Unsafe Inside a Social Venue

Unmonitored line queues with long wait times
Inequitable favoritism by staff
Dirty venues
Tolerance towards rowdy behavior
Overcrowded, noisy venues
Poor navigation (getting bumped)
Smokiness, poor ventilation, warm temperature
Inadequate seating
Inconvenient bar access
Fast rate of drinking, round buying, cheap drinks
Women’s Wish List for Venues: Safety & Comfort Improvements

1. Clean, well-lit and well-stocked **restrooms**
2. **Professional staff**: easily identifiable, vigilant, don’t flirt, don’t drink on the job
3. **Staff training**: signs of intoxication vs. being drugged, intervention procedures for disorderly behavior, sexual harassment
4. **Policies/procedures** for sexual violence
5. **Purse hooks**
6. **Coat check**/place to hang up coats
7. **Bag checks** at the door (to prevent weapons, syringes for spiking)
8. **Business certification/accreditation/seal of safety**
Men and Women Experience the Night Differently

What steps do you take for your safety when you go out at night?
Common Steps Women Take for their Safety at Night

- Avoided poorly lit streets/took the long way home
- Crossed the street to avoid someone/group of people
- Told a friend your itinerary ahead of time
- Texted a friend to let them know you got home safely
- Rejected a drink from a stranger because you didn’t see it made
- Kept your eyes on your drink all night, even bringing it to the bathroom
- Enabled the Emergency SOS function on your phone
- Pretended to be on the phone with someone while walking home
- Walked with your keys in your hand as a potential weapon
- Avoided parking garages
- Didn’t get on an elevator with a lone man/group of men
- Shared your ride-share’s license plate number / trip progress
- Took Uber, Lyft, or taxi, despite the cost, instead of public transit
- Carried mace in purse. Didn’t carry a purse at all.

Disclaimer: This does NOT mean that women who did not follow this litany of steps merited unwanted attention or harassment.
Venue Safety...Not Just a Women’s Issue!

2021 Study in England

• 5,050 adults aged 18-45
• 3 out of 4 adults wants improved safety procedures in bars, pubs, and nightclubs
• But it is especially important to women: 80% of women want safety improvements compared to 70% of men across all licensed premises

More than 80% of women want safer pubs, bars and restaurants

October 1, 2021
How Can Men be Better Allies and Active Bystanders?
Angel Shots: Posters in Women’s Restrooms

Do you feel unsafe?

Is someone making you feel uncomfortable?
Are you or a friend in danger?
Have you or a friend been physically harmed?

If you need help go to the bar and order the Angel Shot.

NEAT
The bartender will escort you outside.

WITH ICE
The bartender will call you an Uber, Lyft, or taxi.

WITH A LIME
The bartender will call the police.

Angel Shots Explained
Don’t Forget about Men’s Restroom Posters, Too!

DONT BE A CREEP

BRISTOL RULES No.3

Put yourself in their shoes. They don’t want you to tell them they’re fit. If someone tells you they’re not interested, they’re not playing hard to get. And remember everyone’s allowed to change their mind.

bristolnights.co.uk/bristolrules
Achieve a Baseline of Understanding

In a study conducted by Bristol Nights and their Nighttime Economy Advisor, Carly Heath:

58% of the men spoken to could not name a sexually harassing behavior.

@bristolnightsHQ on Insta and Twitter
Unwanted Flirting, Unwanted Staring, Unwanted Catcalls, Unwanted Compliments, Unwanted Hug, Unwanted Jokes, Unwanted Touching, Unwanted Kiss, Unwanted Attention, Unwanted Drink, Unwanted Photo, Unwanted Grab, Unwanted Groping.

If it’s Unwanted IT’S NOT OK.

BRISTOL NIGHTS
Bristol City Council
bristolnights.co.uk/its-not-ok
If it's unwanted, not or
Women’s Night Safety Charter:
A Community-wide Approach

Bristol Nights
https://www.bristolnights.co.uk
@bristolnightsHQ on Insta and Twitter
Carly Heath: carly.heath@bristol.gov.uk
Sexual Violence Prevention Campaigns & Training Programs
Take a Walk in Her Shoes....

• Organize a Night Tour in your city
• Invite women of multiple generations
• Listen to women’s observations
• Bring men along!
• Invite elected officials
Thank you! Stay in Touch!

• Sign up for our Newsletter and access free resources on SociableCity.org

• Reach out with questions: Alicia@RHIweb.org

• Come to our annual Sociable City Academy and Summit in Dallas: April 18-20, 2024