

Title: Climate Science & Conveying Scientific Information (Peer Circle)

Day and Time: Thursday, October 17, 2019

Peer Circle Leader: Timon McPhearson

Questions raised:

- “What **climate science** is most useful for climate adaptation planning and policymaking?”
- **How should scientific information**—and quantitative information in particular—**be provided, visualized, or communicated** to be useful and impactful?”

Assistants:

- Timon McPhearson (T)
- Pablo Herreros (notes) (P)
- Elizabeth Hittman (E)
- Irene Ogata (I)
- Patrick Doran (P)
- Brendan Shane (B)
- Virginia Wasserberg (V)
- Lara Hansen (L)
- Nancy Beller (N)

Main points raised:

(I) – “*Uncomplicating* information for the general public is also a common struggle for us. Data is critical for us internally. When translating it for the audience, maps tend to be preferred over graphs, because they create a relatable narrative, a story”.

(E) – “Finding the right fit for each type of audience, not only in terms of how but also what to represent. For example, we just released Milwaukee’s new GI plan and we had to make a lot of choices of what information to use and show”.

(L) – “While maps usually work, anything relatable can be useful. Might not be a graph itself. Another challenge is to understand what/how much people need to know; we often get caught up on the most detailed information we could provide! But in the end of the day, is that the most important data to make a decision and/or to engage the audience?”.

(E) – QUESTION – “What is an example of work done by the USL around these issues of concern?” (dataviz, water, flood, urban climate change).

- o (T): “We have done work with governments of cities that tend to be well sourced in terms of data and knowledge. These cities have required us to use fine data, with fine spatial resolution, and the development of scenarios for planning, which can be very expensive. A question for us is – *How do we do with less sourced cities?*”.

(B) – “Relationships are very important to make sure that people and institutions know about the existence of the data/ maps you have produced. Usage of the data we generate at the TPL has grown overtime, for example”.

(I) – “Us city officials, we tend to look for very site specific data – which has an impact on time and data requirements. In some cases, we have the data, but not the know-how or the software – which is why some cities will lean on consultancy companies”.

(N) – “NOAA has so much data, and we struggle with making people know about it / getting the data out to the world!”.

(L) – “We actually love NOAAs tools and climate explorer. Very useful in my job. Also the Climate Change Adaptation Certification Tool, which provides info about what data is needed and where it can be found”.

(I) – QUESTION – “For example, on housing and UHI, who do we ask? What data do we need to incorporate?”

- o (P) – “It is not *what data is needed* that matters, but *what decision is it needed to be made*. This means adding goal driven questions, and its very important, and it depends a lot on who you engage with because that will define the goals of your project.

(V) – “And people do not care about the data that much. They really want to know whether they are going to flood now or in the future, or not.”

- o (T) – “And this is data that the city might want, too, but they might also not want to share it with the public” – comment on data democratization.