

AN INTRODUCTION TO TEMPORARY-USE: STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE INTERIM

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Berlin with its numerous vacant buildings and properties has become an urban laboratory. It is a world with limited planning. With the market economy withdrawn from the numerous wastelands which dot the city, seemingly functionless spaces have become the staging ground for a number of unexpected activities. Freed from the restrictions of traditional social rules and organizations, these spaces have developed a tremendous range of uses. These are places of inventions and of start-up companies. While temporary-use is not a cure-all to the problem of urban decay, it may nonetheless prove extremely beneficial to cities in filling “holes” in the urban fabric and cultivating innovation.

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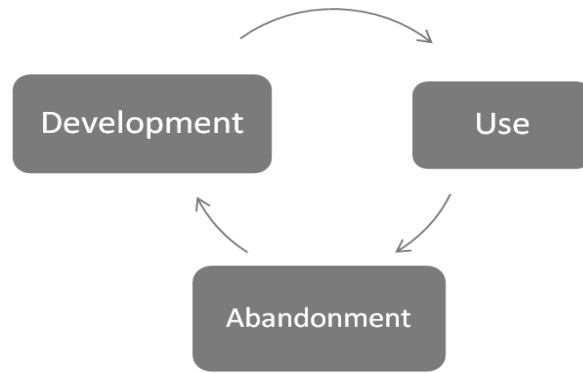
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## Introduction

In German the term *Brache* (pl. *Brachen*) emerged in the pre-industrial era to describe a field which had been ploughed yet unplanted. To ensure future fertility and the replenishment of valuable nutrients the land was left fallow for a growing season or more before planting would resume (Hoffmann-Axthelm 1998: 54). Beginning in the 1970s, however, the term became increasingly used as a metaphor to describe vacant land in urban areas (Kruse 2003: 23). While in the agricultural sense of the word, *Brachen* refers to a strategic decision, in urban settings the connotation is far different. Rather than being intentionally uncultivated, activity on the land has, for one reason or another, partially or entirely ceased. The land has deviated from its planned use and dropped out of the land use cycle (Kil 2004: 125).

Generally land use is cyclical (see Figure 1). A site is developed to meet the needs of a particular function or user. It is then occupied by users who continue activity at the site until they are disrupted, or the use is no longer viable. For growing economies, property vacancy and disuse are generally fleeting. New businesses, new tenants, and new residents arrive in little time to reoccupy and reclaim vacant spaces. The short-term inactivity of a facility, storefront, home, or other parcel - though lamentable - presents an opportunity for turnover, for growth and expansion of the marketplace. Recycling becomes the vehicle through which new and innovative development strategies may be introduced (Rudolph 2007).

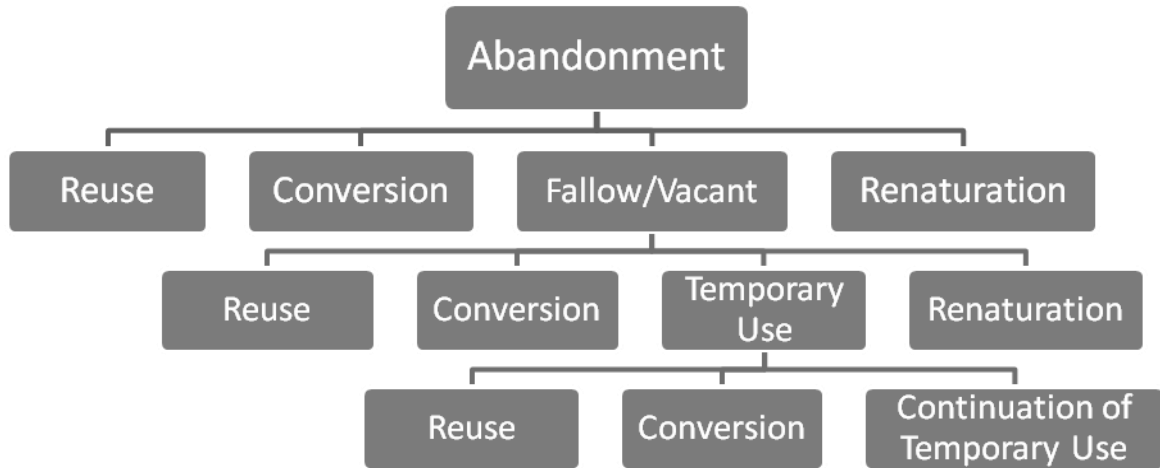


**Figure 1 Land Use Development Cycle**

For cities languishing under economic and population decline, however, vacancy is more likely to become an impediment to innovation rather than a force for community redevelopment. A number of internal and external decisions and circumstances may explain this turn of events. Poorly constructed and executed business plans, insufficient capital, and overexpansion lead to empty storefronts, buildings, warehouses, and the like. Personal financial hardships such as employment loss, tax delinquency, and mortgage default produce residential vacancies. Natural disasters such as flooding, wild fires, and earthquakes also add to the ranks of vacant properties as may man-made events, including arson and war (Kaufman and Coultier 2006: 29). Regardless where the disruption originates the site enters the third phase of the land use development cycle, abandonment. For some period of time the property lies unused. Time spent in vacancy will vary from space to space depending on the strength of local demand and the site's suitability to future development needs. Abandonment is usually followed by one of four (re)use alternatives (Dransfeld and Lehman 2008: 12):

1. Immediate reuse (continuation of existing planning regulations and zoning).
2. Immediate conversion (use continues under new regulations, e.g. adapting of a former industrial warehouse into residential lofts).
3. Renaturation (land is intentionally abandoned and allowed to “return to nature”).

4. Vacancy (nothing happens at the site for a period of time, which may then be followed by options 1, 2, or 3 or temporary-use is introduced).



**Figure 2: Abandonment Alternatives**

A number of site-specific and non-site-specific factors determine the particular development alternative a site will follow. Factors include market conditions, location, infrastructure and accessibility, previous activity and intensity of use. Environmental contamination, the presence of antiquated structures and machinery, land speculation, and the availability of cheap, unspoiled land in peripheral areas may be reasons why sites continue to lie unused. Generally speaking, a trying economic climate will facilitate property abandonment, making reuse and/or conversion less likely (Dransfeld and Lehmann 2008: 12).

Declines in employment-intensive sectors, such as manufacturing, may have vast ripple effects on the local economy. They may affect not only industry suppliers and supportive businesses, but local tax revenue and a host of other areas. Weak market conditions challenge the sale of even well-priced properties. Rising unemployment and declining quality of life conditions feed migration from areas of crisis to more prosperous areas (Buzar et al. 2007:660). Widespread, sustained property abandonment and depopulation is known as shrinking. Eastern Germany, for example, has struggled since the fall of the Berlin Wall with declines in



manufacturing and rising unemployment. Roughly 1.7 million people have left eastern Germany since 1989 (Kulich 2009). A low birthrate has exacerbated the problem (Uhlig 2008: 9). With immigration not robust enough to overcome migration and natural population decline, there creates a situation for high levels of surplus property.

If unchecked, property abandonment may become self-perpetuating. Neglected buildings and lots can deteriorate quickly. Vacant properties become liabilities for cities. They may become eyesores attracting a host of undesirable activities from illegal dumping to graffiti, arson, and narcotics trafficking. Properties in the immediate surrounding area are affected by the decay becoming less desirable, potentially jeopardizing property values (Kaufman and Coultier 2006: 29). Should the problem prove more pervasive, entire neighborhoods may be affected, increasing outmigration, and deterring reinvestment. Vacancies affect not only a neighborhood's appearance but may foster potentially harmful negative perceptions of an area (Hoffman 1997:9). "These areas have become 'wasteland,' visual representations of urban decay and decline" (Kaufman 4). Difficulties in overcoming negative images are compounded as time passes and negative associations become entrenched.

Governments, private individuals, and firms often employ vast resources to secure and maintain vacant properties until new long-term tenants may be located. Precautionary measures such as mothballing, fencing, and policing are often necessary to curtail damage to unoccupied spaces by natural forces (i.e. rain, wind, freezing temperatures) as well as preventing trespassers from occupying, looting, or otherwise harming the site. Such measures are taken in the hope of preserving and safeguarding sites for the next users. However, while offering some guarantee of future condition, the value of precautionary measures to the present urban environment is questionable.

Planning in Germany as in many countries is often a long and expensive process (Studio Urban Catalyst 2003: 16). Plans must conform to a number of local and national statutes and aims. Its focus is not on the short-term but rather more lasting, sustainable uses (Steward 2001: 349). Discrepancies between long-term plans and existing economic realities may delay development and produce vacancies. Gaps in planning, while sometimes unavoidable, slow the pace of construction (Oswalt 2000: 59). Even the best laid plans are irrelevant when there is no market pressure for redevelopment. Shrinking is an unintentional phenomenon, an unplanned side effect of political and economic decisions, circumstances, and processes beyond the control of architecture and urban planning (Oswalt 2005:15).

New thinking and new directions may be required to avoid perpetuating vacancies, marginalize land, and revitalizing disinvested areas (Hauser 2001: 65). Governments and private firms should look to fill empty spaces with individuals and groups eager to develop and grow their ideas but who otherwise may be unable to afford market rent. “A surfeit of space in a situation of low commercial pressure harbors a chance for people with minimal capital but with time on their hands to experiment with new ways of acquiring space and to profit from urban ‘left –over’ spaces” (Rudolph 2007: 151). Instead of becoming eyesores, “wastelands” may emerge as nuclei for a new and more dynamic urbanism (Oswalt 2002: 45). Vacant land must not be a hindrance to urban development can serve as a catalyst for its reorientation (Feldtkeller 2001: 39). It can become a staging ground for a host of beneficial activities from gardening, leisure and sport, to social experiments and services, youth and pop culture, art and music, nightlife, trade, industry, invention, entrepreneurship, and start-up companies. Because much of the current literature and research on the subject comes from Germany this paper shall draw heavily from German and other European examples.

Temporary-use has shown tremendous potential to positively impact artistic/creative, social, environmental, and economic conditions of many urban areas. Although it remains a largely organic, grassroots movement, governments and increasingly private companies have begun taking an interest in temporary-use. This paper serves as an introduction to the subject of temporary-use. It will seek to explain what temporary-use is, examine conditions under which it develops, and most importantly discuss its potential as an urban redevelopment strategy.

## **Introduction to Temporary-use**

Despite a growing number of publications and discourse on the subject, relatively few definitions of temporary-use presently exist. One of the more prominent groups to have entered the discussion in recent years has been Urban Catalyst. An international team of researchers, Urban Catalyst formed in the early 2000s to conduct a study for the European Commission examining the capacity of temporary-use to “activate unused urban areas by optimally using existing resources” (European Commission 2003). Several major European cities, including Berlin, were included in the study. At the end of the two year study, Urban Catalyst published a document detailing its findings including a definition of temporary-use. Three requirements were put forth (Studio Urban Catalyst 2001):

- 1) "People other than the real estate owner perform activities on a site."
- 2) "The owner receives no or no relevant financial income for this use of ground or building."
- 3) "The use is time-limited."

Other groups have also sought to frame a definition for temporary-use. In 2003, researchers from the Technical University of Hamburg concluded that temporary-use is the short-term use of “wasteland” or vacant property, not in keeping with its original or planned use (Bieback et al. 2003: 2). In December of the following year, the *Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung* (Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning or BBR) issued a study called *Temporary Use, and New Open Space - Future Urban Habitats* focusing attention on urban redevelopment efforts in the former East Germany. Similar to the work of researchers at Hamburg, the BBR definition emphasized the relationship between new uses and previous planning documents. Temporary-use represents the reutilization of vacant and abandoned property without the need to amend or alter planning documents (BBR 2004: 118). The option for future development remains open while lessening the effects of urban decay. New qualities are lent to a space (BBR 2004: 4)

At a most basic level, temporary-use may be considered a “use between two main uses” (Mellauner 2003: 148). That which distinguishes it from “normal,” planned, or primary uses is what gives the temporary-use meaning. The functional definition of temporary-use in the context of this paper is uses which do not require major investment in the vacated properties. They are temporary uses as temporary solutions.

Temporary-use is a not new phenomenon. When faced with food shortages, small-scale agricultural production and gardening took root in postwar Berlin in some rather unusual locations, including within stone’s throw of the once majestic, but burnt out Reichstag (German parliament building). A reality which before the war would have been dismissed as preposterous was by war’s end deeply necessary (Oswalt 2000: 67). With the restoration of food supplies and order to Berlin, these temporary gardens quickly disappeared.

The situation facing the modern shrinking city is not as dissimilar as that of post-WWII Berlin. Rather than a quick and punctuated blow, shrinking cities face a more gradual and persistent foe. Left alone vacant lots and abandoned buildings can have adverse consequences on the urban environment, becoming host to a number of undesirable activities. These may be costly not only to property owners but detrimental to a neighborhood's image and reputation. Simply rebuilding what was lost is not an option, nor a sustainable answer to more serious issues. Rather the focus must be on identifying root causes and developing realistic plans of action. This process will take time, but just as temporary-use served a stop-gap role in postwar Berlin, so to may temporary-use be valuable in buying time for policy makers and planners in today's shrinking cities. Furthermore it is entirely possible that temporary-use may produce lasting improvements to the urban environment in a variety of environmentally, socially, economically, and culturally enriching ways.

For landholders in regions experiencing sustained economic and population decline, improvement of the real estate market at least in the near future is highly improbable. Property owners should be realistic in their outlook for leasing and selling their properties. Locations which may have demanded a premium a decade earlier may command only a fraction of that price in a weak market. Knowledge of the fair market property value and consumer demand is necessary to avoid extended vacant periods caused by overpriced sale and rental prices. Property owners, particularly those living in economically struggling areas, should remain open to new methods of marketing their property, including temporary-use. Temporary-use represents a short-term solution in unfavorable economic times. By allowing temporary users access to their property, the land owner hopes to minimize the time between primary uses or achieve an

acceptable sale price. At the very minimum operational and maintenance costs associated with vacancies may be reduced (Overmeyer 2005: 7).

Although no longer occupied, vacant properties still some costs. Among these are fixed costs such as property taxes and maintenance of infrastructure and/or buildings. Buildings left unattended for extended periods of time risk deterioration either as a result of natural processes or at human hands (i.e. scrappers or vandalism). When a profitable reuse in the short and medium term is improbable, property owners may need to proceed with financial "damage control." Temporary use represents an opportunity to reduce expenses associated with maintaining and securing vacant property. Temporary-use allows buildings and operational equipment such as heating systems and plumbing to continue to be used in the interim, reducing the likelihood of costly repairs. Increased activity and monitoring of the site by temporary users will also be beneficial in discouraging undesirable activities like illegal dumping or vandalism. Service and operational costs may be even passed on to the temporary user.

The capital needed in initiate temporary-use projects is usually lower than primary uses. Due to the limited period of operation, significant financial investment in temporary-use is unjustifiable if the end goal remains the temporary-use be taken over by a primary use. Accordingly the risk of failure is also slightly diminished. For artists looking to establish themselves, temporary-use offers a low cost opportunity for studio or gallery space. Without burdensome rent, artists may concentrate on their craft and building their reputations. Similarly business incubators help reduce cost thresholds and implementation barriers for individuals looking to start businesses and enterprises. (Brech 2002: 1). This arrangement is particularly valuable for businesses in the early stages of development. Fixed costs are lowered reducing financial risks. Additional benefits come in the form of synergies between start-ups located

within the same building or complex (Rosa 2005: 114). Because failure is not as bad, temporary-use may push the proverbial envelope, testing new ideas and concepts more freely than more capital intensive primary uses. An environment is created whereby one could test a business model and if successful build on momentum through increased investment. In this respect temporary-use projects may serve as a trial run of more substantial, long term uses to come (Fezer et al. 2004: 74). After a certain period, six months to a year for example, the start-ups move out, (hopefully) ready to compete in the wider market.

In 2001 in the Berlin district of Friedrichschain the Boxion project took 12 vacant storefronts ranging in size from 320 to 750 square feet and let them to start-up art enterprises. Stores were leased for a period of one year at subsidized rents. A private agency was hired to administer the project and helped negotiate contracts between the landlords and artists. Candidates were chosen from a variety of backgrounds including fashion, arts, photography, communications, and music. Storefronts served a number of functions including gallery space, retail shops, workshops, and offices. Minimal investment in infrastructure was required from the users. After the first year four of the twelve shopkeepers took over the leases for the storefronts, and four others relocated within the area. The Boxion project has been critical to the revitalization and gentrification of the neighborhood, spurring renovation, a lively restaurant and bar scene, and attracting an influx of young people to the area (Templace 2003).

Temporary-use also helps compensate for deficiencies of space. In areas built without significant green infrastructure, temporary-use may provide much needed green and recreational spaces. Vacant lots become de facto playgrounds, athletic fields, parks, and gardens. For roughly ten years before construction began on the new headquarters of the German intelligence agency, the site of the former East German *Stadion der Weltjugend* (Stadium of the World

Youth) became an axis for sport and recreation in central Berlin. At various points, it was home to Berlin's largest outdoor beach volleyball complex, a golf driving range, numerous soccer and other sports clubs, and even a BMX race track (BBR 2004: 26).

For inner cities lacking healthy and fresh food options, temporary-use offers the potential to improve access to quality produce and food products through farmers markets, food stands, or direct cultivation such as vegetable gardens or large scale urban farms and co-ops. Where contaminated soils make in-ground cultivation inappropriate, raised beds, greenhouses, hoop houses, and hydroponic food production may be explored. This situation not only improves access to quality foods, serves as a potential source of employment, and offers new life to otherwise derelict properties.

Shrinking may also lead to social polarization and isolation. Through gardening etc. temporary uses help engage people. Rapid political and economic changes may be difficult for individuals or society to comprehend. Generational bonds and the stability they represent are put to the test by the problem of migration. There is a loss of urban culture. Fewer outlets exist for socializing. Formerly stable circles of friends are broken up. "Those who have stayed behind react by withdrawing into their own private worlds; collective resignation spreads" (Matthiesen 2005: 275). Family and close friends act as a cushion from the lack of social exchanges (Dürschmidt 2006: 277). Suspicion of all things new or even of strangers preserves a rudimentary internal identity, but it can barely hide the collective resignation at the bottom of it. For the unemployed in Germany, social safety nets provide generous financial support, which though in avoiding the stigma of poverty, may instead foster feelings of uselessness (ibid. 277). External support mechanisms, financial and otherwise, serve to emphasize feelings of inadequacy. Negative self-images and collective inferiority are reinforced daily by a



disintegrating landscape. “Collective efforts to break out of this vicious circle are then in fact quite impossible; it appears that only the individual can achieve this, and no longer locally, but elsewhere – as a leaver” (ibid. 278).

Temporary-use can engage citizens facing increased isolation as a result of economic and population decline. Temporary uses give power to individuals to intervene in the world around them. Instead of eyesores, vacant spaces become vehicles for civic engagement. Citizens become actors no longer exclusively observers in the planning process. Their capacity to shape the urban environment has expanded. Their needs and ideas take on greater weight. This also offers the opportunity to confront social divisions (Boll et al. 2004: 33ff). Connections are built up and neighborhoods are strengthened, integrating diverse population groups into active neighborhood development (Schophaus et al. 2002: 53). Increasing social interaction and strengthening ties among residents. Residents may take a greater stock in and role in improving their neighborhoods. Unlike growing cities where government, private companies, and institutions implement land use, temporary-use allows citizens greater latitude to create vacant land as they see fit (Haydn et al. 2006: 4). In this sense temporary-use becomes a galvanizing force for community revitalization. Temporary-use may even become a launching point for career exploration and development (Oswalt et al. 2001: 2).

Essentially, anyone can become a temporary user. There is really no set age or skill set required, although certain characteristics are more common than others. Temporary users are often young people. Perhaps the higher unemployment rate among the youth population offers an explanation or simply because they are not burdened with years of previous experience, which allows them to distance themselves from present realities and conceive of new. Similarly the local environment has yet to become habitual for newcomers to an area (Overmeyer 2007: 36).

The unemployed are also particularly well suited for temporary use projects. For one they have plenty of time on their hands. With basic needs such as food and shelter covered by the government the unemployed are free to try out a number of things such as temporary-use. While there is the stigma of social shame, nonetheless the pressure to find a job or settle for employment is not as strong as in countries without such expansive social assistance. This provides a window of opportunity for creative expression and chance. It also provides the opportunity to find a new career (Oswalt et al. 2001:2).

Temporary uses possess a great deal of potential to both enhance and strengthen neighborhoods (P3-Study Project 2003: 38). Temporary-use helps strengthen local economies with renewed activity. It acts as a stabilizing force in declining urban areas (Schophaus et al 2002: 53). Temporary users imbue spaces with new meaning, bringing life and vitality to areas which have been long abandoned by the market and society. It is no coincidence that they are often referred to as urban pioneers (Overmeyer 2005: 12). In many ways they are discoverers of places long-forgotten.

Temporary-use adds value to spaces, increasing a location's visibility and bringing areas back into the social consciousness of a city (Oswalt 2000: 69). This helps transition areas from prior uses to a more relevant and meaningful new uses (Overmeyer et al. 2003: 2). Through this increased public exposure and relevance, new development may be spurred (Langheiter 2003: 15) and gentrification set in motion in surrounding areas (Oswalt et al. 2001: 2). For example, in the city-state of Hamburg planners looked at decreasing the time between planned use and implementation for a former port area. One way they sought to spur long-term development was by staging events such as the *Hafencity Fest* (Harbor Festival) and *Hafencity Run*. These events

drew large numbers of people to these transitioning areas (Aslak, Stannies et. al. 2003:24f).  
Provide an uptick in local businesses from the surge in potential customers in the area.

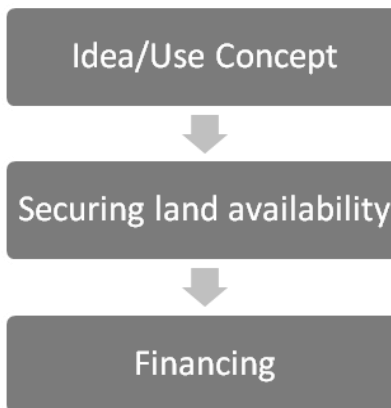
Even well-established firms may employ temporary-use for targeted advertising and marketing purposes. Temporary-use becomes a tool with which to advance other goals, such as stirring interest in a brand, product, or area. When used by corporations, temporary uses, such as sports tournaments, concerts, open-air cinemas, and exhibitions, become active and often participatory advertisements. Depending on their motivation, these events may be designed simply as revenue generators or more strategically for increasing brand and product visibility or building brand loyalty and identity. In 1999 the sporting goods manufacturer Nike occupied the vacant site of a former East German stadium as a temporary sports venue and promotional space (Borries 2004: 27). Looking to expand its product reach to the youth market, the firm set up a free temporary interactive soccer exposition. Nike provided free transportation to and from the site and flew in famous soccer players as instructors. The company was looking to create a buzz or myth surrounding its brands and products which it in turned hoped would pay off in influence purchasing decisions (Polinna 2003: 67). Nike returned to the site in 2006 to host similar events during the World Cup.

Temporary users fill unused and undesired locations with their ideas and visions. Where others see blighted landscapes, temporary users see locations for new and exciting businesses. They see opportunities to express creativity, places for experimentation and the introduction of new concepts and ideas. These may be completely new ideas or merely new in the context of the space to which they are being introduced. For example, in the summer of 1995, 5 million visitors descended on the German parliament building, the Reichstag, to witness a spectacle entitled the “Wrapped Reichstag.” 100,000 sq meters of a white fireproof fabric were wrapped

around the Reichstag in an attempt to create art at monumental scale through temporary transformation (*The New York Times*).

Temporary-use is helpful in redefining areas, ushering in new qualities, new identities, and fostering new perceptions of stigmatized places. Temporary-use can liberate spaces of previous meanings and attach to them new meanings. Even controversial spaces, sites which have been particularly divisive, can take on new meanings as new uses are introduced. From 2004 until 2005 former East German Parliament building, the *Palast der Republik* served as the "People's Palace" (Mohr 2004: 34). After discovering high levels of asbestos contamination, the Palast was ordered closed in 1990 until hazardous materials could be removed. (Studio Urban Catalyst 2003: 56). Workers gutted the hulking bronze-mirrored structure until all that remained was its shell. In July 2002 the German parliament voted in favor of demolishing the Palast to be replaced with a €550 million replica of the old baroque *Berliner Schloß* (Berlin City Palace), which was badly damaged in WWII. However funding the project would take time. In 2004 the property owner, the *Bundesvermögensamt* (Federal Property Administration) agreed to open the building to temporary uses. The decision to open the space was met with some controversy. Debates raged over the appropriateness of activities and designs at the controversial space. It was transformed into a concert hall, an art exhibition space, an indoor soccer arena, and the host site for the 2005 Red Bull BC One Break Dancing World championship. Although these changes most certainly would have been a hard pill to swallow for those sympathetic to the old GDR, some consolation may have been in building at long last being occupied. For those too young to remember the old Palast as it was, temporary-use offered them their first experience, one free from political connotation, place of showcase.

## Cultivation and Execution



**Figure 3 Temporary-use Components**

The assembly and execution of temporary-use requires three critical components (See Figure 3). Firstly some concept, artistic, commercial, recreational, or otherwise is needed. Inspiration may come from its creator, a particular location, or a number of sources. Ideally the concept should be well thought out. A clear plan of action is helpful in obtaining the support and confidence of skeptical property owners. Secondly a suitable location for the undertaking of the idea/use concept must be secured. Temporary-use is dependent on inexpensive and accessible spaces. Changing economic, demographic, and even political circumstances while creating vacancies initially also open up land and properties for exploitation and reuse (Brech 2002: 6). Vacancies may emerge in a variety of locations from residential neighborhoods to industrial districts and commercial spaces on the urban fringe and in the center city (Rosenfeld 200). A desolate stretch of riverfront becomes the perfect setting for a beach bar. A vacant lot in a multifamily housing block becomes, with a bit of artificial snow, a convenient location for a ski school. An abandoned subway station is transformed into a hip, underground nightclub.

Spaces which require low upfront costs and maintenance are preferable to those requiring significant investment. Unless the move is part of a strategic long-term objective, it makes little sense to invest a great deal of time and money in preparing a property for temporary-use.

Parking has been often floated as a quick fix to vacant land. With the exception of grading and gravelling, and potentially lighting and fencing, vacant lots may cheaply accommodate motor vehicles in everyday situations as well as occasional sporting events, festivals, and concerts. However, the wisdom of such a land use strategy is questionable. Open space is highly customizable and able to meet a wide variety of temporary-use requirements, including parking, but also more creative expressions such as gardens, art installations, and athletics.

The built environment too, despite carrying costs such as maintenance, plumbing, electric, and heating is also well suited for temporary-use. Besides obvious advantages like protection from the elements and added privacy, the reuse of structures presents savings in terms of demolishing costs by repurposing useable built spaces and preventing the creation of empty lots. Temporary-use allows these spaces to take on new roles outside their normal function. For example, researchers in eastern Germany have discovered that common, formally communist-era prefabricated high-rise apartment buildings are particularly well suited for growing mushrooms (Lage et al. 2006: 174). Although there are costs in retrofitting these spaces, major structural change is unnecessary.

Just because space is available for temporary-use, does not necessarily mean that it is right for temporary-use. For concepts dependent on customers and public exposure, location is often critical to success. Accordingly central areas generally make better locations than do outlying areas. Not only offering greater visibility, centrality brings greater accessibility to users and visitors alike through public transport. In 2002 Berlin's first beach bar opened on a quiet, but central section of the Spree River in the district of Mitte. The land was intended for pedestrian and bicycle pathways as part of the expansion of a nearby park (Schaffelder 2004: 28). However with the funding necessary to complete the project delayed for several years, the

park's expansion was put on hold. In the mean time, an individual approached the State of Berlin asking for a seasonal lease of the property. After negotiations, the State agreed to lease the property for the period of April until September for a cost of €25,000 (ibid.). Sand was trucked in to the site, a small tiki bar was constructed, and deck chairs, umbrellas, and palm trees added to create a beach atmosphere in the heart of landlocked Berlin. A tobacco company, which used the location for a photo shoot, fronted the cost of the sand. The beach bar proved tremendously popular, particularly with young people and tourists.

After a successful first season, the bar's owner petitioned the State to purchase the land. His request was denied following considerable protest from neighbors fearing increased foot traffic and noise (ibid.). However, the beach bar continued to operate at its original location until 2005 when it was displaced as funding was secured for the park's expansion. The bar relocated to another tract of land a short distance from the original location where it has enjoyed similar success to this day. Several other beach bars have sprung up at various locations throughout Berlin. Other projects have looked into tapping into the city's other riverfront including the *Badeschiff*, a former barge turned floating swimming pool (2004).

For individuals or groups looking to get away from it all or avoid the spotlight, peripheral and less visible spaces would certainly be preferable over central areas. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, a vibrant club scene took advantage of the less visible spaces in the central districts of the former East Berlin. A number of factors from poor infrastructure to questions of ownership and property restitution allowed for an abundance of empty space. Downtown locations for clubs were particularly desirable. However, if too visible they may be discovered and forced to close down. Because of the resilience of the scene and the large volume of potential venues, clubs were able to relocate to other premises without much difficulty. Since

then it has become almost a tradition for clubs in Berlin temporarily occupy a space then reappear again in other places. Part of the charm of the underground clubs was their nomadic nature and high degree of mobility (González 2003). Subcultures, such as underground music scenes have become an important ingredient for urban development in Berlin. They may be considered forerunners up in 2003 once a year showed with the Love Parade on the streets: the club culture of Berlin, a "large-scale pop-cultural interim use" (Steiner 2004: 438).

Although temporary uses occur in isolation, when clustered together their impact is far greater. The importance of networking should be stressed. Temporary users should take advantage of communal experiences and knowledge through networking. Networks allow users an opportunity to share resources and knowledge of past experiences. They allow for the creation of synergies and other mutually beneficial, inexpensive assistance, often crucial in overcoming financial and material deficiencies. Networks may even be able to transcend cultural and ethnic differences, strengthening neighborhoods, and promoting greater social integration (Feldtkeller 2001: 39). For temporary users displaced by permanent uses or facing eviction following the end of a contract, networks may provide the support needed to ease the transition to new spaces.

Lastly, although temporary-use does not generally require significant financial investments, without proper financing it may have difficulty getting off the ground. Management costs such as heating, cooling, and electricity will depend on the intensity of use and other factors such as the volume of a space and efficiencies of equipment and insulation. Operational costs (utilities, taxes, etc.) should be kept as low as possible as not to become overly burdensome. Personal contributions by temporary users and other volunteers may serve to reduce costs, but there are certainly limits to volunteer and unpaid labor.



Public funding is one of the most important sources of financing for temporary-use projects in Berlin and other parts of Germany. Although self-financed temporary uses exist, they tend to be more the exception than the rule (BBR 2004: 107). Public financing may take on a number of forms, from grants and loans to tax cuts and non-monetary services. Microloans for example provide capital to small-scale ventures lacking the securities for traditional development loans. These typically range between €5,000 and €15,000 (Novy-Huy 2006: 589). Reducing or exempting property owners from taxes for the duration of the temporary-use, partially funding the demolition of obsolete structures, speeding up design approval and/or rezoning may further incentivize temporary-use. Non-monetary aid may be provided in the form of assistance in developing business plans, marketing, and mediation services between owners and users.

The ability of a community to grant incentives and provide relevant services will vary from place to place. Weak market cities tend to open up more spatial niches for temporary-use than more economically prosperous areas, but may have a harder time offering financing. Private sponsorship may be available in these situations, but may come with certain obligations such as product placement and advertisements. Funding for the €2 million Berlin Hi-Flyer hot air balloon service, for example, was made possible by private capital and bank loans, and sustained by ticket costs and corporate sponsorship, including a television networks (1999-2005) and a major newspaper (2006-present) whose logos were displayed on the balloon.

### **Promoting Temporary-Use**

Temporary-use may be promoted in a number of ways. Public officials may be helpful in clearing regulatory hurdles, granting financial subsidies, loosening planning restrictions. New laws with attention given to speeding the initiation and proliferation of temporary-use may be

introduced. For example, zoning may be relaxed to accommodate a greater variety of uses without altering the basic form of the law or jeopardizing public safety. More aggressive measures may be taken to encourage property owners to make a concerted effort in occupying their vacant properties. In the Netherlands recent legislation shows promise in facilitating access of land and property for temporary-use, by allowing for the occupation of properties which have for a period of more than a year been in violation of planned-use laws (Oswalt et al. 2002: 28).

Municipalities should lead by example, leasing surplus property to temporary users. In 2004 in Berlin the Liegenschaftsfonds, the state's real estate management agency, began leasing some of its more than 5,000 properties for temporary-use. While the Liegenschaftsfonds works to unload Berlin's immense real estate portfolio, temporary-use at least in the interim helps to defray costs, prevent vandalism and property depreciation, while providing an opportunity for disadvantaged individuals to work and create. Municipalities can further facilitate temporary-use by maintaining property inventories. Information such as location, size, condition, previous use, and availability may be recorded and made available to potential temporary users. Such information would be useful in matching land opportunities with prospective users. Private landholders may do likewise or add their properties to the public pool.

Additionally, individuals and groups with previous experience as temporary users, may be consulted to gage the risks, extol the benefits, and enlighten audiences on the non-monetary values of temporary-use. Third party organizations may also be brought in to fill this capacity. Interim use management agencies may provide neutral, expert legal advice, settle disagreements, and work with municipal planning departments. The firm Coopolis for example has been operating in the Berlin district of Neukölln for the last five years linking properties with

temporary users. It offers a range of services from negotiating lease agreements to mediation and networking (Coopolis: 2011).

Trust and cooperation between property owners and users are essential to the success of temporary-use. It is crucial that temporary users maintain a good rapport with property owners. The continued existence of the temporary-use is after all contingent on the support of the property owner. Risks can be minimized by limiting the duration of the use. However, too stringent time constraints may make it difficult for a temporary-use to establish itself and generate public interest. Lowering occupancy tenure too low may even discourage temporary users from investing time and resources in the site in the first place. Contracts have become an increasingly common and necessary component for the undertaking of temporary-use. Both the temporary user and owner take a risk by entering into an agreement, but through contracts the interests of both parties may be well articulated and understood before a project is underway. Precise definition of permitted uses and the extent to which these may reach as well as any financial responsibilities and rental payments (should there be any in the first place) may be ironed out in advance. Temporary-use should not perpetuate nor advance factors which have prevented a site's redevelopment in the first place. Changing or extending the duration of a temporary-use may be made contractual. Attention and adherence to terms and conditions, such as tenure of occupancy, should be observed to ensure both an orderly departure from and a satisfactory return of the property to the owner.

Temporary users should also look to earn proper standing within their communities. They may be regarded with some degree of suspicion by locals. Caution should be taken to ensure that new comers do not alienate their neighbors. To alleviate possible misgivings community outreach should be encouraged. Through introductions, public information sessions,

or even involvement of residents in the projects themselves, temporary users may reduce skepticism and even find strong public backing for their endeavors. Temporary-use can be a “win win” for all parties. With a good framework, good location, a consensual approach between owners and users, temporary-use may put on a solid footing to succeed in helping distressed properties and areas.

## **Implications for Planning**

The reuse of vacant land is among the greatest challenges to contemporary urban planning. For an institution so dominated in the past by growth management, dealing with periods of low or no growth can be difficult. Attention should be given to pursuing alternative, more efficient means to deploy resources, stimulate activity, manage public funds, and engage private actors in urban development. Simply fitting spaces to certain programs is not an option. Rather the focus must shift to designing programs to fit their environment (Oswalt 2000: 57). City planners and officials are challenged to think more creatively or risk advancing spatial fragmentation and social polarization. Planners must take on new roles and functions including public engagement and organizing individuals and groups to take a greater role in the shaping of their environment. Planners increasingly must concentrate on visualizing problems and fostering conditions conducive for involvement of non-government actors. Temporary-use in its simplicity and affordability represents a new front in the fight to confront blight and revitalize vacant and abandoned spaces (Overmeyer 2004: 1). It carries a number of implications for policy makers and planners.

Firstly temporary-use presents an opportunity for savings. Costs associated with maintaining and securing vacant spaces are reduced. While not providing the full market rent of permanent occupancy, temporary-use may at least cover fixed costs, alleviating some of the

burden of vacant property for owners. Because properties are better monitored when occupied, problems may be addressed as they arise rather than allowed to grow before being noticed. In this regard, sites are better preserved for new, long-term users instead of suffering the decay of prolonged abandonment and disuse.

Secondly temporary-use presents an opportunity for public engagement. For individuals facing increased isolation and polarization, temporary-use allows them to once again become involved in their communities. Through community gardens, events, art galleries and exposition space, business incubators, and the like, temporary-use is something to rally around. It provides otherwise disadvantaged individuals a conduit through which they may shape the world around them, providing a new outlet for expression, socialization, and even career exploration.

Temporary-use also helps redefining struggling areas, putting a spotlight on them and bringing greater attention to previously neglected spaces. Through temporary-use, abandoned spaces are often made accessible once again. If successful, abandoned sites may be “rediscovered,” once again becoming part of the wider public consciousness and capital-intensive investments may then be made.

Most importantly temporary-use serves a critical role as gap filler. Temporary-use is not a substitute for traditional planning, but rather a complementary tool to capital-oriented, long-term development strategies. Temporary-use allows for greater latitude in trial and error approaches, particularly useful in areas experiencing chronic economic and population decline, where the capital necessary for traditional intervention techniques is not always available. It is useful in buying time for policy makers and planners in the short and medium terms, while more significant, underlying issues are addressed. This time is useful not only for drafting new plans and policies, but offers other benefits such as time to build public support for more

dramatic, but necessary changes to come. Temporary-use becomes a vehicle to advance and further lasting improvement of the urban environment.

## **APPENDIX**

## APPENDIX

**Table 1: Research Summary**

<b>Temporary-use</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Function</b>
Berlin Beach bar	Berlin - Mitte	Open April – September annually since 2002	Commercial
Berlin Hi-Flyer	Berlin - Mitte	Seasonal	Commercial, tourism
Boxion Project	Berlin - Friedrichshain	Year leases	Incubator
Christmas markets	Locations throughout Germany	Early November until December 24	Commercial, cultural
Community gardens	Throughout Berlin	Seasonal	Agricultural
Hafenfest, Hafenumlauf	Hamburg	Annual	Marketing, recreational
Lange Nacht der Museen ( Long Night of Museums)	Major cities throughout Germany	Annual, semi-annual	Marketing, cultural
Nike Exposition	Berlin - Mitte	Week	Marketing, recreation
Palast der Republik	Berlin - Mitte	2002-2004	Exposition space
Ski School	Berlin - Prenzlauer Berg	Seasonal (Winter)	Commercial, educational
Stadium of the World Youth	Berlin - Mitte	1993-2006	Recreational
Underground clubs	Locations throughout central Berlin	Opened year round, more active in warmer months	Music showcase, subculture
Wrapped Reichstag	Berlin - Mitte	Summer, 1995	Art exposition



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