

HRMbyDesign – Media coverage of a planning process

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Abstract

A robust and informed public debate encourages public engagement, which is essential to a successful planning exercise. The media play a vital dual role, reporting on and serving as a forum for, public debate. This paper is a case study of news media coverage of HRMbyDesign, a recently completed urban design study and plan. I analyze the coverage and investigate the forces that shaped it. I collected articles that expressed an attitude towards HRMbyDesign: 221 articles from 12 sources in total. As part of the analysis, I created a matrix of 17 distinct attitudes towards HRMbyDesign, and coded each argument instance. I consulted stakeholders from four groups about their experiences: the HRM planning department, the media, groups critical of HRMbyDesign, and groups supportive of HRMbyDesign. I determine that stakeholders both inside and outside of a planning process can affect the public discourse. This analysis demonstrates the importance of paying attention to media coverage, gives planners an example of the coverage they can expect of their planning process, and illustrates the techniques stakeholders use to affect coverage.

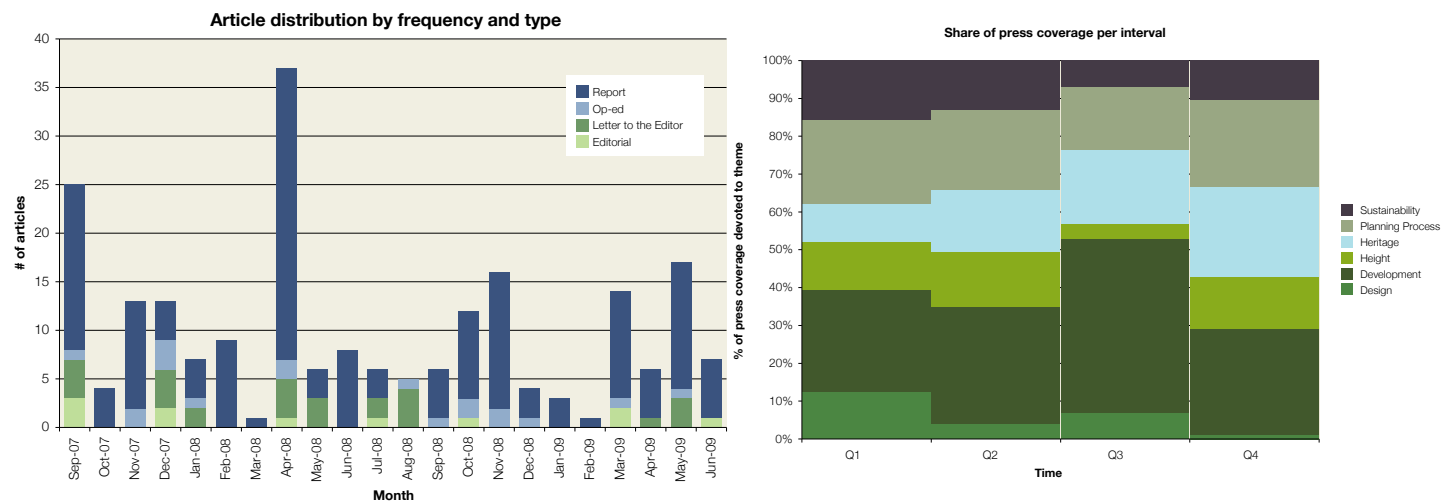


Figure 1: Article distribution by frequency and article type

Figure 2: Share of press coverage devoted to each theme per interval

Supportive		Critical
Height		Unacceptable new height limits
Design	Higher quality of urban design	
Heritage	Protection of heritage resources	Unacceptable level of heritage protection
	Acceptable balance between heritage, development	
Sustainability	Sustainability: Walkability	Lack of sustainable initiatives
	Sustainability: Densification	
Planning Process	Due process has been followed	Process was flawed
		Too soon, more studies are needed
Development	Old plan is out of date and/or did not work	New plan is unworkable, based on incorrect information
	Plan will encourage new development	Plan will create unaffordable developments
	Create a more predictable, streamlined approval process	Plan will create an undemocratic approval process

Table 1: HRMbyDesign argument table