

Gehl: Can AI Plan For Public Life?

● **Future of Work & Life** | OBOS Showroom · 1st floor | 10:30–10:45 | 

Part of The Human Data Layer



Liselott Stenfeldt

Partner and Director of Urban Data, Gehl

What an AI model cannot see, it cannot plan for

Liselott Stenfeldt of Gehl set an AI-generated city model beside the real Mjøsfronten in Hamar and asked what was missing. Her point was that a model cannot plan for what it does not see, and she grouped what it misses into three questions: life (what people do), value (what public life creates) and belonging (what a place means to people). For each she showed Gehl's work. At Times Square in 2007, cars took 90% of the space while people made up 90% of the users. At Wilton Park in Dublin, Gehl tracked the value of place development for a property investor over five years. At Stanford, interviews, behaviour studies and workshops with over 150 people shaped a new campus. She closed with three conditions for AI that understands life between buildings: better data, better models and better decisions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A planning model misses three things unless it is given them: what people do, what places create, what they mean.
- At Wilton Park, reports linked place development to higher demand, higher rent levels and long-term property value.
- AI needs data on people's lives, experiences and needs alongside traditional data about the city.
- Planning models should weigh physical, social, economic and experiential values together.
- AI should support human priorities, not let what is easiest to optimise steer development.

54%

of Wilton Park respondents
felt safety had improved
over three years