

## Wiener Gesundheitsförderungskonferenz

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### ABSTRACT

#### Happy City: Transforming our Lives Through Urban Design

For years, self-help experts have told us that we need to do inner work in order to improve our lives. The link between health and happiness has long been understood. But what if our cities themselves had the power to make or break both?

Drawing on brain science, psychology, and rich personal stories, Happy City Director of Research and Partnerships Christine McLaren explains how cities influence how we feel, behave, and treat other people in ways most of us never realize, and how that, in turn, influences our health. Everything from the length of your commute to the depth of your front yard can have an unseen effect on how much you move on a day to day basis. It also influences your mind, emotions, and social life.

But McLaren demonstrates that we are not helpless. We can change our lives and health by changing our relationship with our cities. By understanding the effect that design has on our emotions and decisions, we can all share this empowering new vision of a healthier city life.

Christine McLaren

Director of Research and Partnerships for Happy City— a consulting firm launched by the team who produced the 2013 book, *Happy City: Transforming our Lives Through Urban Design*.