



NIGHTSEEING™

...a real-time travelogue through the culture of urban lighting.

NIGHT
SEEING
Navigate Your Luminous City

What is **NIGHTSEEING™?**

The NightSeeing program is a group itinerary of exploration and discovery – a curriculum designed for the general public and those in the design, architecture, engineering and planning professions.

Presenting the nocturnal city of light, NightSeeing is an in-person journey through city districts after sunset. Its objective is to convey recognition of one's own illuminated environment—both emergent and designed—that define our surroundings literally half the time—vistas that are so familiar they are almost unseen.

The program can stand alone, or consist of several events: the LightTalk, LightWalk and Envisioning Workshop. Often a reception or party is planned for before and after the LightWalk.

The **LightTalk** conveys an overview of the systems, past and present, that light our cities and creative opportunities for public lighting of special interest to architectural planning and lighting professionals. General audiences also appreciate behind-the-scenes discussions of the methods and strategies that bring vibrancy to their night city.

The **LightWalk** is an exploration of active learning that is eye-opening and a bonding experience for participants. It is a 10-minute route, which expands to an hour walk during the event. This carefully selected and stimulating route is developed with the local representative through photographs and discussions with Leni. Each LightWalk is singular, with a custom NightSeeing Map handout for each location.

For master-planning community involvement activities, the **Envisioning Workshop** lasts approximately two hours, depending on the composition of participants—stakeholders, agencies, neighborhood businesses and residents—the day following the LightWalk.

For more information visit www.nightseeing.net.



NightSeeing: Barcelona, Spain - November 2023, Smart City Expo World Congress



NightSeeing: London, UK 2013, Light Night Canning Town

The Essence of NightSeeing Fear or Poetry?

Savor the word “light” and one’s internal landscape of language evokes images of atmospheric effects— luminous, mysterious, picturesque, and sublime. The issues and substance of public illumination increasingly influence the global language of urban design and urban experience, and the shifting interplay of nighttime dark and light makes every city a unique destination.

In this spirit, NightSeeing provides a context to examine and decode the shadows, emanations, and reflections that define our cities’ darkened hours. The NightSeeing initiative inspires attendees to see shadows in a whole different light.

1 LightTalk

Provides a basic understanding of our cities’ lighting systems. Planning professionals will gain insight into the after-dark experience, learning to create a welcoming public realm. General audiences will gain insight into various kinds of lighting that typify public spaces after dark.

2 LightWalk

Participants join Leni on a rigorously planned route to raise awareness of local after-dark joys and fears – from shop silhouettes and signage to streetlights and the phantom photons of passing cars. Active learning includes Leni’s signature expression of private, public and found lighting categories.

3 Envisioning Workshop

The 2 hour Nightseeing Envisioning Workshop includes steps 1 & 2. Leni trains workshop leaders and character cards are provided to focus participant explorations resulting in nighttime and lighting objectives for the district or study area.

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Here’s what selected attendees and observers are saying about NightSeeing in Sydney, London and New York.

Leni’s influence extends beyond mere aesthetics. She has challenged and supported our thinking regarding how light contributes to the achievement of sustainable cities including the social aspects of urban environments. We eagerly anticipate a long-lasting partnership with Leni, where we can continue to share knowledge and learn collaboratively on our sustainable cities journey.

- Michael Rosetta, Omexom Australia Business Unit General Manager

Alliance Lighting UK were delighted with our association in the biggest yet NightSeeing Walk, led by Leni Schwendinger. The light walks have been gaining popularity around the globe and as a new company, we wanted to make our launch here in the UK something to be remembered and the walk and the after party certainly did that!

- Suzanne Wardley, Alliance Lighting

Leni’s enthusiastic exploration of nighttime design through NightSeeing allowed the Local Center teams to step back and consider their own experience of light, how it contributes to feelings of safety and belonging, and how they might integrate nighttime experience into their public space vision planning processes in their neighborhoods.

- Aashika Nagarajan, Urban Design Forum Program Manager

Enjoyed your entertaining and thought-provoking walk through London’s streets - thanks Leni!

- Pete Brewis, Mondo Arc Magazine Editor

The NightSeeing Experience: Background and Travelogue

NightSeeing is rooted in Leni Schwendinger's curriculum for Parsons, The New School for Design. "Designing Urban Nighttime Environments" from 2003. In New York City, an interdisciplinary class for lighting design, architecture, and interior design students created a NightSeeing map of Manhattan, which included imaginary schemes for several key districts.

In 2005, Leni Schwendinger began to develop a public lighting theory, based on ownership of lighting—public and private—and a layer of incidental illumination called "found" lighting. Zones of after dark economic and social activity were defined in her "Shades of Night," framework. This underlying vision of changing illumination relative to street life and open/closed hours of commerce, shops, restaurants, and institutions in a given neighborhood.

The NightSeeing program has traversed the globe for a decade. Including, in 2017, reSITE conference guests explored Prague, CZ's historic district walking and discussing tourism, authenticity, and UN World Heritage cities. In 2019, Leni conducted workshops in Sydney, Australia, for "Get the Night Right". In Sunset Park, Brooklyn, U.S. an Envisioning Workshop set the stage to develop lighting objectives for Design Trust and NYCDOT's "Under the Elevated" project.

In late 2023, for the Smart Cities conference in Barcelona, ESP, the NightSeeing talk and tour was held for international lighting manufacturers. Key topics included new city designs, energy saving, equity, the possibilities of smart lighting.

In 2024, after a NightSeeing program in 2022 consisting of the tour and several workshop, a lighting masterplan has commenced.

In summary, NightSeeing operates as an informative, social awareness-raising tour and productive outcome-oriented workshop. The program has been conducted globally with Business Improvement Districts and City Councils with their community and stakeholders. For Associations the program serves as an exciting way to familiarize members with nighttime issues and creative solutions. Conferences have included lighting, manufacturer, transportation, and landscape hosts as a featured event.



NightSeeing: Queens, New York City - 2013, Roosevelt Avenue and 82nd Street

Summary Process: Walking Tour + Workshop



NightSeeing Program Report Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 2021



NightSeeing Action Plan, Jackson Heights, NYC, 2014



NightSeeing Master Plan, Double Bay, Sydney, Australia, 2016

Led by Leni Schwendinger, a night and lighting expert for cities, the Walk and Workshop, combined, is three hours. The program establishes a launch point into the issues and opportunities for a street, neighborhood, district or city design.

Nighttime design is placemaking after dark. The practice is a critical response to the after-dark experience, proposing integrated lighting solutions based on the study of local mobility, built and spatial elements, and activities. Nighttime design positively impacts public health: illuminated streets extend walking hours, increase the number of social encounters, and stimulate economic activity through after-dark cultural and retail offerings. It also improves general wellbeing and feelings of safety in the community through improved perception of well-being.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

The purpose of the NightSeeing workshop program is to provide a qualitative, eye-opening experience of the subject area's night. Stakeholders encounter both positive and the neglected places, social conditions and absorb an expanded vocabulary to describe objectives for a vitalized area after dusk. The Program is composed of the following parts:

1. Preparation for the Program: assigning roles and responsibilities, scheduling, route mapping
2. Event: Pre-walk, visual lecture, walking tour, workshop
3. Summary Report
4. Next Steps Discussion: Developing a light strategy

The NightSeeing tour activities take place over two nights, the first is a prewalk, or rehearsal. The second is the walking tour itself with workshop afterwards. The workshop, which can be held day or evening, is customarily focused on identifying three objectives for nighttime and lighting of the subject area. After the event, Schwendinger delivers a summary report of the outcomes proposed at the workshop.



NightSeeing workshop: Double Bay, Sydney 2016

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