

COLOMBIA NOTES:

Turnaround via leadership and civic engagement

Former Pres helped with strong security to make citizens feel comfortable going out in public, so he beefed up police and improved public space so that they can enjoy places to go. He also invested heavily in infrastructure to both improve conditions and employ many underserved populations

The FARC deal was controversial, as it ended violence with the biggest guerrilla group, but many families who suffered under the FARC thought that more punishment should have occurred with the murderers. One camp feels that forgiveness is the only way to achieve harmony, as retributions have to stop sometime to guarantee peace.

EPM an impressive company that provides utility type services to the people, with a pay-as-you-go program for poor people. Amazingly, the program is that ½ of all their profits are fed back into the community for infrastructure and social programs for that population.

Inequality was the bigger issue over poverty which helped drive change, and they helped overcome some of it through the infrastructure investment

Collaboration is very strong there between business, education and government, which has resulted in moving agendas forward. There has been real strength in the ability for these groups to work together.

There was lots of admiration regarding the Bronx project, which was a terrible, miserable section full of drug users, squalor, etc, and the city finally set out to move those people into housing and services, and reconfigure the entire district of attractive public space, entertainment, and retail.

Colombia has a vision of their future beyond what they can realistically afford, but are aspirational with their intent. They are thinking big and being very creative...like in housing with modular small-space construction.

Colombians are focused on what they have on shared values, rather than what divides public opinion, the former driving their agenda.

Although business and entrepreneurship have never been highly regarded, that is changing with the younger generation, and university and other programs are being designed and implemented to help drive future prosperity. Our group was very impressed with their program and presentations. Are we able to help/invest as a group?

Transportation improvements have been a major part of their focus and it has brought the community together better than about anything.....not just jobs, but integrating different populations into community life. However, the roads/infrastructure is not good. The poor air quality was not addressed.

Public projects can be very beneficial, but they can also displace many people, so caution is suggested.

Change is inevitable yet caution is advised due to displacement and anxiety it can create.

They have universal health care which is admirable, although the quality for poor people is questionable.

Portlanders don't like conflict but we need leadership to take unpopular positions to move our agenda forward here....cannot please everyone but that is what leadership is all about.

GPI is probably the best org to bring the collaboration needed to advance these ideas, and others, as it integrates public, private, educational, and non-profits together.

To be a united community means to understand shared values and create goals to attain them. Perfect can be the enemy of good, so we need to make sure we have reasonable goals. (Example: Mayor Wheeler wants Portland to be the Cleanest City in America....great goal, but realistic)? If we don't make the 'best' but substantially clean it up, have we succeeded or failed?

Tim Leavitt wants more food on these trips!!!!

One observation (I am sure shared by many) is for less class-time and more field trips. Understood, but without the knowledge we receive by presenters, we really don't have the full perspective of what we see on these trips!

Fabulous opportunity to share perspectives about Portland by just having so many informed delegates together for a period of time. A great learning experience from all angles.

Colombians were quite willing to talk of their mistakes in the past, learn from them and move on. Humbleness is a terrific asset and we need to avoid the hubris of thinking we are so good we don't need to really look deeply to find ways to improve our opportunities here. Hubris has driven deep decline in many formerly-on-top cities around the US, and it has been really tough to overcome.

They have an immature understanding of how to raise venture capital for emerging businesses and it's true we learned that they are so new to that kind of a role in terms of trying to raise money - not only the people that actually companies but the effort by those looking for it don't have that much of the specification know how to go about doing it and that could be something that that where they could really sharpen their skills in an effort to be able to make it more successful. For the group coming up to PSU business school in March - might notify the Dean about this so he can be prepared maybe you could help off.