



Designing,
building and
caring for a
better city.



Mission & Values



Our Mission

Urban Design Forum connects and inspires New Yorkers to design, build and care for a better city.



About Us

We are a member-powered organization of 1,100+ civic leaders committed to a more just future for our city. We believe the built environment—our neighborhoods, buildings, public spaces and infrastructure—shapes our city's health, culture and economy. We bring together New Yorkers of diverse backgrounds and experiences to learn, debate and design a vibrant city for all.

We envision a city where every New Yorker can thrive in a healthy neighborhood, with a stable home, dignified workplace, safe commute, lively public spaces and dynamic arts and culture—and we believe everyone has a role to play in creating that city.

Our Approach

- We convene courageous conversations to rally New York City leaders to rise to the challenges facing our city today.
- We invest in neighborhoods across the five boroughs and equip local leaders with resources to improve their communities.
- We partner with city government to shape public policy that improves health outcomes, economic opportunity and quality of life.
- We nurture a new generation of informed leaders so that they can confront the challenges we will face in the future.



Membership



Individual Membership

Our 1,100+ members hail from over 50 cities across the United States and around the world.

They are planners, developers, architects, builders, public officials, scholars, journalists and lawyers, who are committed to building a dynamic, resilient city for all.

We rely on our members' expertise to advance creative solutions to today's urban challenges. We celebrate their work and research in programs and publications throughout the year.

Levels

- **Professional (\$350)**
Available to individuals working in the private sector.
- **Public (\$175)**
Available to individuals working in city government, civic organizations, educational institutions or media organizations.
- **Emerging (\$175)**
Available to individuals under the age of 36.
- **International (\$175)**
Available to individuals located 90 miles or further from City Hall in the City of New York.
- **Pay-What-You-Wish**
Available to individuals under-employed or when our recommended tiers are not affordable.

Benefits:

- ✓ **Program Participation**
Opportunities to participate in working groups, professional development initiatives and community design efforts.
- ✓ **Publicity**
Opportunities to promote your latest work and research in monthly bulletins and calls for ideas to our network of 10,000+ members and followers.
- ✓ **Tickets**
Access to roundtables, forums and tours throughout the year.
- ✓ **Recognition**
Prominent recognition by name in organization materials and on our website.

Company Membership

Enrolling in our Company Membership gives your organization unparalleled access to our global network of leading design, planning, development, construction, engineering and technology practices.

Company members may enroll senior colleagues as members, and principals as in our Leadership Circles.

Company Membership Levels Company Members Enjoy:

● Lead (\$25,000)

2 Circle Seats
8 Members

● Champion (\$12,500)

1 Circle Seat
6 Members

● Supporter (\$7,500)

1 Circle Seat
4 Members

● Emerging (\$3,750)

(<10 staff)
1 Circle Seat
2 Members

- ✓ **Leadership Circles**
Practice leaders are invited to join one of our Leadership Circles: private networks of civic, philanthropic, and industry leaders that receive exclusive invitations to bespoke events with esteemed speakers.
- ✓ **Advisory Opportunities**
Shape our conversations by suggesting topics and speakers for tours, roundtables or fellowships.
- ✓ **Access to Study Trips**
Early bird access to two annual international study trips to explore global strategies and engage with civic leaders.
- ✓ **Professional Development**
Nominate colleagues to participate in our events and activities throughout the year.
- ✓ **Publicity**
Prominent recognition in monthly newsletters featuring new work and research, marketing collateral and on the organization website.





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Programs



Next New York

Next New York rallies New Yorkers to confront a defining issue facing the city each year. We gather our Fellows for candid conversations and convene working groups to develop forward-thinking policy ideas.



Rewire 2024

Rewire looks at how we can reshape existing buildings and public spaces as engines for a climate positive New York City. We invite architects, urban designers, developers, ecologists, community stewards and small businesses to advance ideas on transforming our existing buildings and public spaces to meet the climate emergency. We take a holistic approach to confronting climate challenges by bringing in cross-disciplinary expertise.

Good Form 2023

In the wake of a historic crisis, the design and public health communities must come together in new ways to shape a healthier city for all New Yorkers. It's time to rethink the way we approach public health in the built environment with new tools and approaches for preventative care. We convened working groups of multidisciplinary professionals from architecture to public health to advance ideas for creating a healthier city.

Streets Ahead 2022

As the City was struck by COVID-19, our streets also became sites to socialize, dine, exercise and play. This presented an opportunity for us to reimagine the public realm with racial justice and equity at the fore. We formed a coalition of multidisciplinary professionals from lawyers to activists to advance proposals for a vibrant, equitable streetscape. How can we transform streets to build better connected communities?

Forefront

The Forefront Fellowship cultivates emerging leaders in urban design, development, policy and advocacy. Each year, 30 Fellows investigate a defining issue facing New York City, develop research with a city agency and launch creative projects.



Lifelong 2025

Our ninth Forefront Fellowship imagines how to create an age-friendly New York City for all. In partnership with the Department of Housing Preservation & Development, our Fellows will reimagine housing for older adults that facilitates stronger communities and explore creative approaches to support the agency of older adults.

Free to Grow 2024

Our eighth Forefront Fellowship, Free to Grow, inspires adults to center youth in the built environment. In partnership with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and New York City Public Schools, our Fellows investigated the current inequities in and around schools and strategized how to establish vibrant outdoor learning spaces across New York City.

New Loops 2023

Our seventh Forefront Fellowship, New Loops, re-envisioned how we keep our city clean. Culminating a year of immersive research in partnership with the Department of Sanitation, Forefront Fellows developed a report and created original projects on increasing waste diversion at restaurants; fostering pathways to local circular jobs; investing in decentralized waste infrastructure; and reclaiming underutilized spaces for local community exchanges.

Global Exchange

Global Exchange aims to inspire creative change around the city's most entrenched challenges. This re-launched venue for peer learning will empower mid-career executives to survey the world for solutions that can invigorate the public imagination and motivate reform.



Big Swings 2024

New York City's population growth, outdated regulations, escalating costs and political inaction have driven an unprecedented housing shortage. What can we learn from other cities creatively contending with their housing crises? We plan to survey global cities for insights into the intersection between housing and affordability, migration, decarbonization, overregulation and NIMBYism.

New York London Exchange 2011-2023

Hosted with New London Architecture and Kohn Pedersen Fox, our transatlantic exchanges bring together industry professionals in New York and London to share knowledge on key issues in both cities, from affordable housing policy to tall buildings.

Private Development & Public Good 2019

Cities around the world are leveraging private development to build new neighborhoods, public spaces, transit networks and social housing. We invited global leaders to present projects that exemplify excellence in urban design, significant investment in the public realm or a commitment to an open planning process.

Local Center

The Local Center brings together neighborhood leaders, designers and government agencies to realize local visions for public space. In partnership with the Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development we equip local leaders with technical assistance, funding and connections to reclaim public spaces in their communities.



Connected Corridors 2024

Commercial corridors are the spine of New York City neighborhoods. They serve as engines for local economies, create a sense of identity and belonging, and bring together neighbors to build community cohesion. In partnership with city agencies and three BIDs across New York City, we are developing district-wide public realm vision plans and activating plazas, parks and streets with new lighting installations and improvements.

Rooted Cultures 2023

Culture is the fabric that connects our communities. Our public spaces can uplift neighborhood histories and celebrate cultural identities. Through markets, art installations and cultural programs, our partners are reclaiming public spaces to reflect the unique character of their neighborhoods. Through their work, they will build power with their neighbors, develop long-term visions and advocate for future investments.

Public Works

Public Works is a new discussion series to drive civic dialogue around new and forthcoming built environment projects in New York City.

Throughout the year, we invite government officials and private sector leaders to present design and development initiatives that shape the public good. Our goal is to create an open and collegial venue for deeper conversation between the public sector and our network of civic leaders building, caring for and maintaining our city.



New City Critics

New City Critics, a partnership between Urban Design Forum and The Architectural League, empowers new, fearless voices to challenge the ways we understand, design and develop our cities.



The fellowship supports the development of critics from underrepresented backgrounds through guest lectures and workshops, research guidance, networking, and production of new critical projects in a dedicated platform. Through published work and other channels, the fellowship encourages a more expansive conversation on the future of cities.

New City Critics aims to drive change in the culture of criticism. Today, architectural criticism and urban analysis in mainstream media is a shrinking arena, though it remains extremely powerful. Newspapers and magazines have moved away from having full-time critics on staff.

A handful of professional critics from similar backgrounds means attention to a limited selection of topics and perspectives. We want to see kaleidoscopic coverage from a much wider variety of perspectives and rewrite public understanding of why urban design and development matter.

New City Critics is for a criticism of city design and development that reflects the people who live in cities. We need more informed and sustained examination of citymaking in media beyond small professional circles, for a broader public.





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