

The Innovation City – Are You Part of It?

Dawn of the Innovation Age

Urban America currently accounts for almost one-fifth of the world's GDP, but our cities are entering an era of unprecedented competition in a global, knowledge-based economy. Our communities will thrive only if they're great places. We must incubate creativity in new places and reconfigure our cities with transformational spaces to attract talent.

Even amid diminishing resources, public health challenges, and political gridlock, cities are seizing the moment for this unique opportunity. The American Institute of Architects' *Cities as a Lab* initiative aims to tap the power of design to foster innovation and meet American cities' changing needs. In 2013 its insights, case studies, and partnerships will offer policy and design solutions for buildings and neighborhoods that help to grow jobs, attract investment, and build next-generation economies.

City 2.0 - What makes an "Innovation City"?

The Innovation City, whether big or small, is intelligently designed to take advantage of its own unique strengths. It fosters connections, creates energy, and inspires creativity. In an emerging era of neighborhood-centric cities, successful urban areas may actually be a mosaic of smaller towns. These are communities with distinctive urban landscapes, cultures, and economic markets, all connected to one another and to the world beyond.

The Innovation City learns from the great cities of the past. Its adaptive reuse and the revitalization of older mixed-use neighborhoods attract millennial entrepreneurs and technology-based companies. At the same time it plans to harness the economic potential of America's aging population. With livable, less car-centric communities, the Innovation City enables citizens to age in place, create new businesses, and serve as experienced mentors to emerging entrepreneurs. Its flexible ordinances and codes enable communities to create temporary amenities and build flexible, productive new spaces that promote the exchange of ideas and resources.

Vancouver, Amsterdam, San Francisco, Singapore, Curitiba – Innovation Cities across the globe are transforming the built environment into a lab for change. They might be wired with "smart" technologies, or not yet. But they are opening municipal data to entrepreneurs and organizing hackathons to fuse design thinking with high-tech innovation.

What if... we all join them?

Innovation Districts

How are ideas-driven metros building new spaces for work and life?

- *Boston Innovation District*: A stalled redevelopment plan rockets to life, with 200 new firms and 4,000 jobs in three years. What sort of spaces made it possible?
- *Research Triangle Park & Centennial Campus, N.C.*: The original university research park, now in middle age, finds that corporate campuses have grown stale. Nearby, one university tears down the wall between town and gown and welcomes employers into the ivory tower.
- *Las Vegas surprise*: Zappos' CEO Tony Hsieh has big ideas for making downtown Las Vegas a thriving entrepreneurial community.

Future Workspaces

People thrive when they can literally work together.

- *Centre for Social Innovation*: social-mission enterprises in Toronto and New York City get low-cost, scalable workspace — and human connections that solve problems. What have they learned about building and managing these novel spaces, now sprouting worldwide?
- *Flexible offices for the future*: Firms find that new designs and teleworking let them do more with less space while giving employees better choices. What does this mean for old office buildings?
- *Libraries and schools* find that collaboration and cooperation require fewer "quiet" signs, more open doors, more robots, and sometimes entirely new missions.

Co-Location: Making Together

The new industrial revolution embraces quick change by bringing design, manufacturing, and sales all under one roof. Heavy industry was exiled to drab outskirts; now it's right downtown, and everyone wants to see how it's made.

- *TechShop*: A tinkerer's playground where corporate engineers and hobbyists co-create hardware startups using the latest gadgets — coming soon to a city near you.
- *Making Midtown, NYC*: The Garment District's unglamorous factories hone the city's fast-fashion edge.
- *The Plant*: A vertical farm sprouts in a Chicago warehouse, churning out beer, bread, and Bibb lettuce — but almost zero waste.

Valuing Public Spaces

Cities discover that fresh design approaches unlock the true value of public spaces between buildings: getting people together, not speeding their cars through.

- *Parklets, shared streets, and alleys:* from Minneapolis to Long Beach, architects extend lively shops and restaurants out into the street, creating green space from gray.
- *Pre-vitalizing:* Instant urban interventions set the stage for permanent placemaking, from Memphis to Brooklyn.
- *Found spaces:* Vacant lots, traffic islands, highway underpasses, and empty parking lots all come to life through community efforts.

Green from Green: EcoDistricts

Neighborhood-wide strategies multiply the environmental benefits of green buildings.

- *2030 Districts:* Deep retrofits that are aiming to create three very different carbon-neutral downtowns: Seattle, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland.
- *Renewing renewal:* From Portland to the Potomac, sleepy postwar projects get reborn as cutting-edge neighborhoods.
- *District systems:* Sharing building systems between buildings requires whole new ways of collaborating.
- *Portland EcoDistricts:* New engines for livability, civic capital, and economic growth.

Adapting to New Uses

Buildings can expect to adapt to unexpected new uses.

- *Power House High:* A coal power plant becomes a charter school.
- *5M:* Newspaper printing gives way to tech coworking.
- *Pittsburgh Energy Innovation Center:* New trades are invented in an old trade school.
- *The New Loft:* Office campuses and old malls reborn as housing.
- *The New Mall:* Dead malls survive to find new life as offices, schools, and churches.

Resilient Design & Climate Adaptation

As the climate changes and the population urbanizes, cities experiment with ways to revitalize existing communities and foster more resilient physical and social systems.

- *Where and How to Build:* For different reasons, cities such as New York and Detroit contemplate how to retreat from developed areas.
- *Lifecycle Design:* Maximizing return on investment by analyzing the risk posed by more frequent and devastating natural disasters.

Innovation Housing

Individual spaces are out, common spaces are in. Bedrooms shrink, while shared indoor and outdoor gathering spaces grow.

- *Micro-apartments:* A novel way of keeping young creative people working and living in the Boston Innovation District, and downtowns nationwide.
- *Cottage courts:* From South Carolina to Seattle, livable houses on tiny lots.
- *Accessory dwelling units:* Two homes in one support multi-generational families in homes new and old, from Fresno to Fairfax.

Effecting Policy Change

Unprecedented Collaboration

- Innovation Office
- Municipal Innovation Plan
- Participative Gaming
- Integrated Design
- Business Improvement Districts, Shared Space Management

Permitting & Regulatory Innovation

- Housing Unit Size & Density
- Permitting for Novel Uses and Production
- Relaxing Mixed-Use Regulations
- Vacant Land: Temp-to-Permanent Redesign
- Supporting Interim Uses
- Street Design Guides
- Citizen-Friendly: Decode the Codes
- Flexible Zoning and Special Permits
- Simplified Entitlements Process

Advanced Financing

- Innovation Loan Fund
- Infrastructure Trust
- Crowdfunding

What's your perspective? We want to hear it.

Do you know of exciting initiatives? Do your projects foster innovation? Do you see opportunities to tap the power of innovative technologies? Can we find ways to share insights, collaborate, partner, and innovate?

Tweet to #LabCities

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