

Reimagining the Civic Commons



Civic Commons Learning Journey: Akron

June 1-3, 2022



Welcome

Welcome to Civic Commons Learning Journey: Akron

One of the best ways to learn is to see things in person and talk with the instigators who are bringing about change in their own communities. This Civic Commons learning journey offers exactly that.

We are so pleased to have you participate in this exploration of Akron.

Thanks to many local hosts, over the next few days you'll have the opportunity to experience public places and neighborhoods that bring civic engagement and socioeconomic mixing to life. You will explore Akron by foot and bike and have frank conversations with local leaders on the work they are pursuing, what works and what doesn't.

Leaders and community residents from many sectors including local government, design, urban planning and environmental sustainability will offer the context, successes and challenges they have faced in building and sustaining public places that foster communities where everyone belongs.

Along with active touring, we will also take time to reflect on and share how our experiences may influence our work at home.

And throughout you'll have a chance to appreciate local cuisine and reconnect with colleagues from other demonstration cities.

Come with a curious mind, ready for candid conversations. And leave inspired with new insights for your own work.

We look forward to learning together.



Bridget Marquis
Director
Civic Commons Learning Network



Daniel M. Rice
President & Chief Executive Officer
Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

Itinerary

Wednesday, June 1: Downtown

Time	Activity	Location
8:30 - 9:15 AM	Welcome to Akron A Story of Change: Overview of Akron Civic Commons Breakfast at Courtyard by Marriott Akron Downtown	41 Furnace Street
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Walking Tour of Downtown	
	Coffee Break with Akron Coffee Roasters	
	Representation Matters: Future Sojourner Truth Park & Statue with Lisa King	37 N High Street
	Toward a People-oriented Public Realm with Catey Breck & Michelle DiFiore	S Main Street
	Public Space for Revitalization and Recovery: Lock 3 with Mayor Horrigan, Catey Breck & Michelle DiFiore	Lock 3
	From Vacancy to Vibrancy: Lock 4, Akron Civic Theatre Knight Stage & Bowery Project with Howard Parr	Lock 4, 182 S Main Street, 156 S Main Street
	A Connected Set of Assets: Lock 2 with Catey Breck & Michelle DiFiore	Lock 2
1:00 - 1:45 PM	Philanthropy as Collaborators with Bill Considine, Kyle Kutuchief, Christine Amer Mayer & Bronlynn Thurman Lunch by Diamond Deli	Richard Howe House 47 W Exchange Street
1:45 - 4:15 PM	Walking Tour of Downtown	
	Supporting Diverse Public Life Downtown with Suzie Graham	Cascade Plaza
	Snack Break at Chill Artisan Ice Cream	209 S Main Street
	Downtown on the Move with Lori Pesci, Joel Testa & Bronlynn Thurman	Lock 3
4:15 - 5:30 PM	Free Exploration	
5:30 - 7 PM	Dinner at Jilly's Music Room	111 N Main Street
7 PM	Return to Courtyard by Marriott Akron Downtown	41 Furnace Street

Thursday, June 2: Summit Lake | Ohio & Erie Canal Park

Time	Activity	Location
8 AM	Meet in Lobby of Courtyard by Marriott Akron Downtown	41 Furnace Street
8 - 8:30 AM	Bike Fitting & Rules of the Road	
8:30 - 8:50 AM	Bike to Summit Lake	Towpath Trail
9 - 10:15 AM	From Pilot to Permanent with Margo Sommerville & Demetrius Lambert-Falconer Breakfast by 28th and South	Summit Lake Nature Center 411 Ira Avenue
10:15 - 10:45 AM	Co-creating the Future: Summit Lake NorthShore Design Plan with Catey Breck, Michelle DiFiore & Marcus Saulsberry	
10:45 - 11:15 AM	The Critical Role of Resident Leadership: Summit Lake Community Development Corporation with Grace Hudson & Sandy Saulsberry	
11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	Exploring Summit Lake, Part 1: Canoeing & Kayaking Summit Lake with Tom Bennett, George Ebey & Nancy Rice; or Walking the Ohio & Erie Canal Summit Lake Trail & Let's Grow Akron Community Farm Market & Kitchen with Lisa Nunn & Dan Rice	
12:30 - 1:45 PM	A New Way of Working in Akron: AMHA Choice Neighborhoods Program & Summit Lake Land Use Plan with Christina Hodgkinson & Erin Myers Lunch by 28th and South	Summit Lake Pavilion
2 - 2:45 PM	Exploring Summit Lake, Part 2	
3 - 3:30 PM	Cultivating a Culture of Caring: Summit Lake Ambassador Program with George Ebey, Toqa Hassan & Marcus Saulsberry	
3:30 - 3:40 PM	Bike to Ohio & Erie Canal Park	Towpath Trail
3:40 - 4 PM	Connecting Neighbors Through Music: Alpha Phi Alpha and Summer Concert Series with Al Bragg & Tom Fuller	Ohio & Erie Canal Park Pavilion
4 - 4:30 PM	Play and Stay at Ohio & Erie Canal Park: KABOOM! Playground & Programming with Crystal Ann Williams Costa & Phyllis DeHart	
4:30 - 5 PM	Belonging in Nature: Black Women Explore with Bronlynn Thurman	
5 - 5:20 PM	Leveraging Trail Adjacency: Volleyball Courts with Andrew Novak	
6 PM	Dinner at the Duck Club and Akron RubberDucks Baseball Game	Canal Park 300 S Main Street

Itinerary

Friday, June 3: Bringing it Home

Time	Activity	Location
8 AM	Check Out of Courtyard by Marriott Akron Downtown	41 Furnace Street
8:20 AM	Meet in Lobby of Courtyard by Marriott	41 Furnace Street
8:30 - 9:30 AM	System Change with Catey Breck, James Hardy, Demetrius Lambert-Falconer, Grace Hudson & Erin Myers Breakfast by NOMZ	Northside Marketplace 21 Furnace Street
9:30 - 11:30 AM	Bringing it Home: Workshop	Northside Marketplace 21 Furnace Street
11:30 AM - 1 PM	Lunch by NOMZ	Northside Marketplace 21 Furnace Street
1 PM	Depart for Home	

Important Information

What to Wear

The attire for the trip is business casual, with an emphasis on casual. Summers in Akron are lovely with an average highs in the high 70's, and lows in the 60's. We'll be out and about throughout the trip, so feel free to wear nice shorts or jeans and definitely your favorite walking shoes. Our site visits go on, rain or shine. You may want a light jacket for evenings and an umbrella just in case we hit a rain shower.

Contacts

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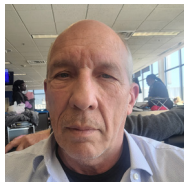
erin@allshookupevents.com

Social Media

When you share insights and images on social media from our explorations, please tag **@CivicCommonsUS** and use hashtag **#CivicCommonsUS**.



Our Local Hosts: Akron



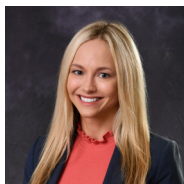
Tom Bennett • Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

Tom Bennett is an Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition team member and retired from his role at the City of Akron. He also volunteers with the Summit Cycling Center and serves as the Summit Bikeshare Co-Administrator.



Albert Bragg, Jr. • Alpha Phi Alpha Homes, Inc.

Albert A. Bragg, Jr., Ph.D. is a life-long resident of Akron, Ohio and a graduate of John R. Buchtel High School. He received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Public Administration degrees from the University of Akron and his Ph.D. in Urban Studies/Public Affairs from Cleveland State University, where his doctoral studies focused on sustainability and public policy. Al was a United States Army Transportation officer and served the citizens of Akron as the Fire Prevention Bureau Manager. Currently, Al is the executive director of Alpha Phi Alpha Homes, Inc. His hobbies are golf and traveling to play golf.



Catey Breck • City of Akron – Office of Integrated Development

Catey Breck has spent the majority of her career serving the people of Northeast Ohio as a Congressional staffer in various positions for two members of Congress. In 2021, Catey was appointed by Mayor Daniel Horrigan to the Office of Integrated Development and serves as the director of strategic development. She manages and develops the City's work within the Elevate Akron strategic plan, the Akron Financial Empowerment Center, and oversees the divisions of Public Life, Small Business and Entrepreneurship, including leading the City's submission to the Bloomberg Global Mayors Challenge.

Our Local Hosts: Akron



William Considine • Akron Children's Hospital

Prior to transitioning into the role of CEO emeritus in 2018, William Considine was one of the longest-tenured hospital chief executives in the country. He is an internationally known advocate for issues affecting children's health and well-being. William is widely consulted by policymakers in Columbus and Washington, D.C., and has served on the boards of many healthcare, educational and cultural organizations.



Phyllis DeHart • Akron Civic Commons

Phyllis DeHart is an Ohio & Erie Canal Park resident, advocate and true connector of those in and around her community. She is part of the Interfaith Church Council and Ohio & Erie Canal Park steering committee.



Michelle DiFiore • City of Akron – Office of Integrated Development

Michelle DiFiore is the development engineering manager for the City of Akron's Office of Integrated Development, leading the City's efforts for Lock 3 and Summit Lake. She is also working on the rehabilitation of two pools and three community centers for the City. She recently managed the design phase of the Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel, a 6,200 foot long, 27-foot diameter tunnel which controls combined sewer overflows into the Ohio and Erie Canal and Little Cuyahoga River.



George Ebey • Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

George Ebey has worked at the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition since 2011, managing the Strategic Initiatives program, as well as various projects and events, including the construction of boardwalks along the Towpath Trail in Tuscarawas County and the improvement of underpasses along the trail in Downtown Akron. George is a graduate of Kent State University and The University of Akron.



Tom Fuller • Alpha Phi Alpha Homes, Inc.

Tom Fuller is the former executive director of Alpha Phi Alpha Homes, a nonprofit developer and manager of affordable housing with 2,400 units of housing developed. Working for Alpha Phi Alpha Homes since 1976, under his leadership the organization converted several historic structures to affordable housing. Alpha Phi Alpha Homes provides supportive services at each of the developments and employs social workers to assist with connecting low-income residents with social services providers. Tom is married with five adult children and six grandchildren. He is a graduate of The University of Akron with a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's in urban studies.

Our Local Hosts: Akron



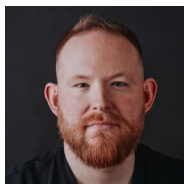
Amber Genet • Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

Amber Genet is the vice president and COO for the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, a nonprofit in Akron dedicated to developing the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area and Towpath Trail. In this position, she works with public-private partners, units of government and elected officials throughout three counties, and she has the privilege of working on many community engagement projects. Amber graduated from The University of Akron with degrees in public relations and business communications, and a master's degree in communications.



Suzanne Graham • Downtown Akron Partnership

Suzie serves as president and CEO of Downtown Akron Partnership. She mobilizes positive partnerships and oversees the planning and implementation of programs and services to anticipate and address the needs of the neighborhood. Her work centers on the necessity of a thriving urban core and the importance of downtown as a key indicator of the health and success of the city and region. She works closely with government, corporate, education, non-profit, human services, and small business stakeholders to assist their efforts and benefit the holistic downtown experience. Suzie facilitates efforts to enhance and promote downtown as an economic catalyst, hub for arts and culture, partner in driving equity, champion of the city's identity, and place for all people.



James Hardy • Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

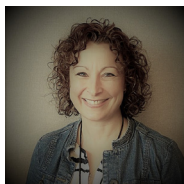
James Hardy joined the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in 2021, bringing his extensive experience in city-wide economic and community development to his work supporting RWJF's efforts in building healthy, equitable communities. He views his role as an opportunity to work with small and mid-sized cities, across the country, in promoting economic development as a key driver of health outcomes. Previously, James served as the Deputy Mayor in the Office of Integrated Development in Akron, Ohio, where he merged economic and community development efforts in the city. Earlier he served as chief of staff to Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan and assistant director of community health at Summit County Public Health.



Toqa Hassan • Kent State University

Toqa Hassan is a proud Muslim woman, who has gone around the sun twenty-five times and tries to be happy and hopeful each day. She was born in Egypt and moved to Akron, Ohio when she was ten. Being part of a team, a community, and a family drives her forward to make sure that others are happy and well-taken care of. Volunteering and helping others have been a hobby since her teens. Toqa enjoys working with youth of all ages and backgrounds, and this past summer became a Summit Lake ambassador with the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition.

Our Local Hosts: Akron



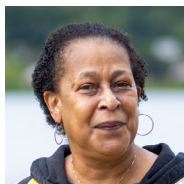
Christina Hodgkinson • Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority

Christina M. Hodgkinson has been a team member of the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA) for over fifteen years. In 2014, Mrs. Hodgkinson began serving as AMHA's director of resident services. The housing authority, through various programs, provides affordable housing to over 20,000 individuals in Summit County. Christina is committed to serving the residents of the City of Akron and Summit County. She is extremely active in elevating the housing authority's strategic goals that contribute to the preservation and expansion of affordable housing and in the improvement of the quality of life for low-income residents in the community. AMHA was selected for a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant for the Summit Lake neighborhood, Jobs Plus program and Moving to Work demonstration program.



Mayor Daniel Horrigan • City of Akron

Daniel Horrigan was sworn in as the 62nd Mayor of Akron on January 1, 2016 and was elected for a second term which began in 2020. Since 1999, he has been a dedicated public servant to Summit County and the City of Akron. With a core focus of growing Akron's population again, he has been focused on key areas of opportunity, including jobs and economic inclusion, improving infrastructure, investing in safety equipment and programming, uplifting neighborhoods and investing in public spaces. His family legacy, deeply rooted in Akron's North Hill, and his experience as a public servant, fuel Mayor Horrigan's unwavering commitment to move his hometown forward.



Grace Hudson • Akron Civic Commons

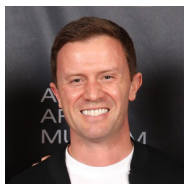
Grace Hudson has been a Summit Lake resident for over fifteen years. She has been involved with the Akron Civic Commons project since inception. She holds a leadership position with the Summit Lake CDC where she currently serves as the chair. Grace has participated in the Better Akron Fellows leadership program, City of Akron Neighborhood Institute, Summit Lake Community Council, Summit Lake NorthShore steering committee, Ohio & Erie Canal Park steering committee and numerous other community organizations.



Lisa King • Summit Metro Parks

Appointed in September 2015, Lisa King is the seventh director of Summit Metro Parks and the first woman to lead the park. As director, she serves as the chief executive and chief financial officer, leading the organization to ensure achievement of its mission, financial viability, growth and stability. An employee since 1998, King has also served as the park district's landscape architect and its chief of planning and development. She is a graduate of The Ohio State University, a state-registered landscape architect, a champion of sustainable design and a certified parks and recreation professional through the National Recreation and Park Association.

Our Local Hosts: Akron



Kyle Kutuchief • John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Kyle joined Knight Foundation in May 2015. In Akron, the birthplace of Knight Newspapers and the foundation, Knight focuses on downtown and inner ring neighborhoods through investments in public space and public life to increase population and advance equity.



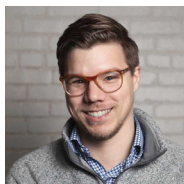
Demetrius Lambert-Falconer • Summit Metro Parks

Demetrius Lambert-Falconer, chief of community engagement for Summit Metro Parks serves with the purpose of connecting residents of Summit County to parks. Demetrius has more than 26 years of experience in creating outreach and in-house programming for varying populations. Her years of experience were served in the National Park Service, Cleveland Metroparks, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and Summit Metro Parks. Demetrius develops relationships with grass-root organizations, local government offices, and school districts to counteract economic, transportation and social barriers of access to public lands and nature-based experiences. She holds a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instructions from Cleveland State University and a Bachelor of Science in Social Science Education from University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. She is a mother of four and a wife.



Christine Amer Mayer • GAR Foundation

Christine Amer Mayer is president of GAR Foundation. Christine guides the foundation's strategic direction and annual grantmaking which focuses heavily on education and economic development. An Akron native, Mayer practiced commercial litigation and business law for eight years and joined GAR Foundation in 2001 as a program officer. She was named president of the foundation in 2012.



Andrew Novak • Summit Sports & Social

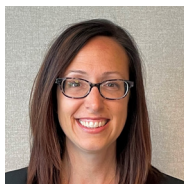
Andrew Novak is a passionate business leader, entrepreneur and lifelong Akronite. A graduate of Walsh Jesuit and Miami University, he has spent the past eight years of his career working in operations and business development roles with local and international software organizations. Sports, recreation and community impact have been a guiding force in his life as long as he can remember. In 2016, he co-founded Summit Sports & Social with Logan Jennings to pilot the social venture with sand volleyball leagues. The organization now programs year-round volleyball kickball, and other sports leagues with over 500 unique participants per week.



Lisa Nunn • Let's Grow Akron, Inc.

Lisa Nunn has served as the executive director of Let's Grow Akron since November 2012. Prior to this role, Lisa served as Let's Grow Akron's program director under the organization's founder, Elaine Evans. Lisa's community organizing and educating around growing and preparing food began as a backyard gardener and then evolved as a community gardener and volunteer with Let's Grow Akron. Lisa's background in arts education has contributed to the creativity needed to grow food in community.

Our Local Hosts: Akron



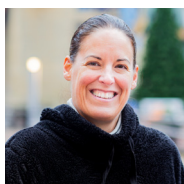
Erin Palmisano Myers • Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority

Erin Palmisano Myers has worked in the Real Estate Department at the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA) for over eight years. Erin is currently managing the Choice Neighborhoods planning process at Summit Lake and is dedicated to using her over fifteen years of legal and real estate experience to expand and preserve affordable housing in Summit County. Erin served on the Board of Trustees for the Akron Civic Theatre, is a member of CREW Greater Akron and serves as a member of the Akron Civic Commons core team for the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition. She is a proud Ohio State Buckeye and earned her Juris Doctor from DePaul University College of Law in Chicago.



Howard Parr • Akron Civic Theatre

Howard Parr has served as executive director of the Akron Civic Theatre since September 2007. He has more than 25 years of professional experience in arts, entertainment and consulting. His work includes organizational development and strategic planning, as well as program management and event production.



Lori Pesci • County of Summit, Ohio — Executive's Office

Lori Pesci is the deputy director of public safety with the County of Summit, Ohio — Executive's Office. A Youngstown transplant, Lori has worked for Summit County for over 15 years, moving to Akron's downtown a few years ago.



Daniel M. Rice • Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

Daniel M. Rice is the president and chief executive officer of the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC). OECC is the regional non-profit organization working for the conservation, development and interpretation of the natural, historical and recreational resources along the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway from Cleveland to New Philadelphia, Ohio. Since 1994, Mr. Rice has worked with over 150 community partnerships and raised over \$75 million in development funds for the development of the 101-mile multi-use Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area and has received numerous regional and national awards.



Nancy Rice • Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

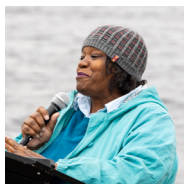
After a 30-year career with the Ohio EPA, Nancy Rice spends her time with her husband, Dan, and their daughter, as well as engaged in various volunteer activities including the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, Cuyahoga Valley NP-Cycling Schools, Akron Public Schools and Good Samaritan Hunger Center. In addition, she enjoys hiking, biking and kayaking.



Marcus Saulsberry • Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

Marcus Saulsberry is Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition's place maker. Marcus works to maintain the welcoming and beautiful grounds at the Richard Howe House and cares for spaces along the Ohio & Erie Canalway. A Summit Lake resident, he came to Akron from Detroit, Michigan in 1983. In addition to working with the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, Marcus volunteers with the Chapparells Baton & Drum Core as a chef. He and his family are also very involved in the Akron Civic Commons project.

Our Local Hosts: Akron



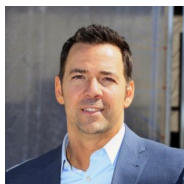
Sandra Saulsberry • Akron Civic Commons

Sandra Saulsberry has been living in Akron since relocating with her family in the early 80's. A long-time Summit Lake resident, she can often be found participating in the many activities at the Summit Lake Community Center and the Reach Opportunity Center, doing everything from computer classes to canning and cooking demos. She also volunteers with Akron Civic Commons, acting as a steward and advocate.



Margo Sommerville • Akron City Council

Born in West Akron, Ohio, Margo Sommerville graduated from Firestone High School and completed her undergraduate education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. Later, Margo returned home and earned a master's degree in Public Administration and Urban Studies from The University of Akron. Following in her father's footsteps, Margo joined the family business, Sommerville Funeral Services, and presently serves as the vice president. Elected to Akron City Council in 2014, as the Ward 3 councilwoman, Margo is a committed public servant and staunch advocate for her constituency. In 2018, her exemplary leadership and prolific service resulted in Margo being elected as the first African American Woman President of Akron City Council.



Joel Testa • Testa Companies

Joel Testa is the president of a family of companies that include architecture, construction, land development, real estate sales and leasing, property management, hospitality and dining groups. Testa Companies manages a real estate portfolio of \$380 million dollars across 700 properties in five states, and Testa Builders has been named Builder of the Year four times by the HBA. Joel was named the Marketing and Advertising Person of the Year, one of Crain's Magazines 40 under 40, finalist in Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year award and named the 2018 National Developer of the Year by Smart Growth America.



Bronlynn Thurman • GAR Foundation

An Akron native, Bronlynn Thurman is a program officer at GAR Foundation. As a program officer, she works to advance the Foundation's strategic priorities through the assessment and review of grant inquiries and applications. Her areas of focus are education and economic development through the lens of equity. In the community, Bronlynn serves on several area boards and committees, including Countryside, the City of Akron Planning Commission, Akron Civic Commons, Elevate Greater Akron, the Akron Black Artist Guild and is cofounder of Black Women Explore. Bronlynn received her Bachelor's in Advertising and Master's in Information Architecture & Knowledge Management – UXD from Kent State University.

Our Local Hosts: Akron



Crystal Ann Williams Costa • Sterling-McCullough Williams Funeral Home

Crystal Ann Williams Costa is a licensed funeral director. She enjoys being a member of the Ohio & Erie Canal steering committee, helping to make positive changes in the Akron community. She is a member of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church among several other organizations and spends time taking care of her 8-year-old grandson and mother. She is married to Malcolm J. Costa, CEO of Community Action Akron Summit, and they have five children, nine grandchildren and one great-grandson.



Participant Biographies



George Abbott • Memphis

Memphis River Parks Partnership

gabbott@memphisriverparks.org

George Abbott leads marketing and communications, development, community engagement and programs for Memphis River Parks Partnership, the nonprofit leading the \$61 million transformation of Tom Lee Park on the Memphis Riverfront. Previously, Abbott served as program director (Cities) at the Knight Foundation.



Effie Alofoje-Carr • Detroit

Live6 Alliance

effie@live6detroit.org

Effie Alofoje-Carr is a current Challenge Detroit Fellow working to support neighborhood residents, businesses and investors as a project coordinator at Live6 Alliance.



Eric Avner • Cincinnati

Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation

eric.avner@hailefoundation.org

Eric Avner is obsessed with reimagining philanthropy to do more to build cities. He directs Haile Foundation's investments in Cincinnati's distinctive urban neighborhoods, a talented regional workforce and a culture of entrepreneurship. Eric also founded People's Liberty, a 5-year philanthropic lab that invested in Cincinnati by directly investing in her people.



Susannah Barton • Memphis

City of Memphis – Office of Comprehensive Planning

susannah.barton@memphistn.gov

As administrator of the Office of Comprehensive Planning, Susannah Barton is responsible for directing the implementation of the City's comprehensive plan, Memphis 3.0, as well as the investment of nearly \$75 million in Memphis neighborhoods through the Accelerate Memphis initiative. She received her Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from SUNY Buffalo.

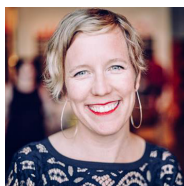


Dominique Boyer • Detroit

City of Detroit – Planning and Development Department

dominique.boyer@detroitmi.gov

Dominique Boyer is a graduate of the University of South Florida's Urban Planning Program and is currently a neighborhood planner working for the City of Detroit. She is passionate about citizen participation and economic development.



Carrie Christensen • Minneapolis

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

cchristensen@minneapolispark.org

Carrie Christensen is a senior planner at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board where she works on park policy, design, and community engagement. With a Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies from Stanford University, Christensen's work falls at the intersection of equity and the environment.

Participant Biographies



Christina Crutchfield • Memphis

Heights Community Development Corporation
christina@heightscdc.org

Christina Crutchfield is the community engagement coordinator for the Heights Community Development Corporation in Memphis, Tennessee. Christina specializes in both activating community spaces and community members in public processes.



Tess Donie • Philadelphia

Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
tess.donie@phila.gov

Tess Donie serves as the community engagement director for Philadelphia Parks and Recreation. There she has led the agency's efforts to build its capacity for improved engagement for three years. Tess came to Philadelphia Parks and Recreation after a decade of experience in community development, engagement and organizing. She specializes in trauma-informed community leadership development, having built the curriculum "Connected Community" as the associate engagement director at New Kensington CDC. Tess resides in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia with her two cats, Betty and Veronica. There, she serves on her local community development organization's board.



Missy Frankil • Camden

Camden Community Partnership
mfrankil@camdencpinc.com

At Camden Community Partnership, Missy Frankil is responsible for managing environmental justice community initiatives and neighborhood planning projects. This requires her to think creatively and to work collaboratively with Camden stakeholders to work towards the mitigation of environmental concerns and improve the accessibility of neighborhood planning conversations and efforts.



Valerie Friedmann • Lexington

Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government –
Division of Planning
vfriedmann@lexingtonky.gov

Valerie Friedmann is a long range senior planner and greenspace planner for the LFUCG Division of Planning. Her work focuses on planning and policy efforts to increase environmental resiliency and equitable access to parks and greenspace. Valerie holds a Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Tennessee.



Jeff Fugate • Lexington

University of Kentucky
jeff.fugate@uky.edu

Jeff Fugate is an associate professor in the University of Kentucky School of Architecture. Fugate has a two-decade career in housing, community design, and economic development. His current work lies at the intersection of community engagement, real estate and urban form. Fugate has degrees from the University of Kentucky and MIT.

Participant Biographies



Tedra Huston • Macon

Macon-Bibb County Community Enhancement Authority
[tedrahuston@gmail.com](mailto:tedahuston@gmail.com)

Tedra Huston is the executive director of the Macon-Bibb County Community Enhancement Authority. Their mission is to eliminate blight and poverty in category 4 poverty level areas in Macon-Bibb. Ms. Huston is currently managing the mitigation deal with Georgia Department of Transportation in Pleasant Hill and overseeing the management of the Little Richard House Resource and Booker T. Washington Community Centers.



Kelly Jin

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
kjin@kf.org

Kelly Jin is vice president for Community and National Initiatives at John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, where she leads a team of twenty in offices across the country, a \$150M active grant portfolio and \$30M in annual grant-making. The Community and National Initiatives team invests in the future of more engaged and informed 26 Knight cities, with investment strategies including downtown and neighborhood revitalization, smart cities, public spaces and economic opportunity.



Wade Johnston • Cincinnati

Tri-State Trails

wade@tristatetrails.org

An avid commuter cyclist and outdoor enthusiast, Wade Johnston is working to change people's everyday interaction with the built environment and the outdoors in Greater Cincinnati. Under Wade's leadership, Tri-State Trails has grown from a grassroots coalition to the leading advocacy organization for active transportation issues in the Tri-State region.

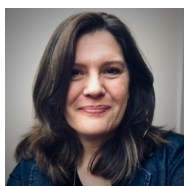


Tonja Khabir • Macon

Francis and Wade, Ltd.

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Tonja Khabir is a culture and community curator with over ten years of experience in organizational development and ecosystem support. As the founder of Jones Cafe, she values culture creation, capacity building, and connection. Jones Cafe, a social enterprise facilitating the redevelopment of a blighted historic African American church in Pleasant Hill Macon into a revenue generating asset.



Janette Law • Minneapolis

Minneapolis Parks Foundation

janette@mplsparksfoundation.org

As director of communications, Janette Law helps steward strong relationships with our partners and informs and inspires the community and our donors about the ways parks transform lives. Janette has a background in strategic communications and has been working in the parks and design realm for over a decade.

Participant Biographies



Shawn Lewis • Minneapolis

Minneapolis Parks Foundation

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Shawn Lewis is a project coordinator at the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, with previous experiences at LifeSource, the Urban League Twin Cities, the Volunteer Lawyers Network and the Greater Twin Cities United Way. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Minnesota, with additional graduate coursework in education policy, transportation and strategic planning from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs.



Bridget Marquis

Reimagining the Civic Commons | U3 Advisors

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Bridget Marquis is the director of Reimagining the Civic Commons, a national initiative transforming public places to foster engagement, equity, environmental sustainability and economic development in cities. She manages the national Civic Commons Learning Network, housed at U3 Advisors, providing coordinated learning, impact assessment and storytelling across twelve U.S. cities.



Maggie McCann Johns • Camden

Camden County – Parks

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Director of Camden County Parks since 2018, Maggie manages 4,000 acres of parkland and open space; leading a revitalization of aged parks infrastructure and working with many partners to create access and support programs that reconnect people to their natural resources. Outside of work, Maggie enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and two dogs.

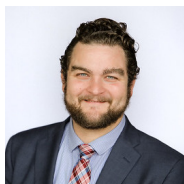


Amanda Miller Amankona

Reimagining the Civic Commons | U3 Advisors

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As the Learning Network expansion manager for Reimagining the Civic Commons, Amanda works to curate and design spaces for convening, shared learning and connection. Her work is informed by her background in architectural design, and she is active in her local design community, presently co-chairing the AIA New York Chapter's Diversity and Inclusion Committee.



Alex Morrison • Macon

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Alex Morrison is the strategic planning agent for the Macon-Bibb County Consolidated Government and co-convener of the Macon Civic Commons project.



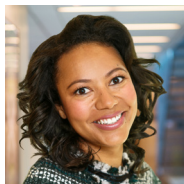
Josh Rogers • Macon

NewTown Macon, Inc

josh@newtownmacon.com

Josh Rogers leads the non-profit organization, NewTown Macon, where he works to attract, leverage and invest in self-sustaining transformation for downtown Macon, Georgia. Through cooperation, trust, honesty and inspiration, Rogers builds coalitions, raises resources and implements strategies to help communities and economies meet their residents needs and dreams.

Participant Biographies



Chantel Rush

The Kresge Foundation

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Chantel Rush is managing director of the American Cities Program at The Kresge Foundation, where she leads a team focused on creating a future in which American cities are racially equitable, sustainable, and prosperous and all people have the economic and political power to thrive. Her work includes supporting leaders working across sectors in specific places and sharing what works with cities across the country. Chantel is a native Californian residing in Metro Detroit. She is a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Business School.



John Sigmund • Philadelphia

Fairmount Park Conservancy

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John Sigmund manages public programs for the Fairmount Park Conservancy. He is an artist, history lover and urban park enthusiast. Before returning to his hometown of Philly, he spent a decade living in Austin, San Antonio and NYC. John currently lives in Fairmount Park as a caretaker and tour guide at Woodford Mansion, a National Historic Landmark built in 1756.



Chris Spahr • Philadelphia

Centennial Parkside CDC

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Chris Spahr, Ph.D., AICP is the executive director of the Centennial Parkside CDC in West Philadelphia and is an Urban Innovation Fellow with Drexel University's Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation where he studies the development of community owned social enterprises as a way to build community wealth.



Anna Thompson • Detroit

City of Detroit – Planning and Development Department

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Anna Thompson is a planner in the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department. She works as a neighborhood planner, working mainly with the Russell Woods, Nardin Park, and Fitzgerald communities. Anna has a Bachelor of Arts from Wellesley College and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from University of Michigan.



Nick Walker • Memphis

Memphis Parks

nick.walker@memphistn.gov

Where science and nature meet, you'll find Nick Walker. Nick has been director of Memphis Parks for almost two years after serving as deputy director for nearly two years prior. Through his work, Nick integrates analytics and measurement as he strives for quality and equality.



Kevin Washington

The Kresge Foundation

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Kevin Washington is an American Cities Program Fellow at The Kresge Foundation where he supports the program's strategy to promote effective and inclusive community development practices in American Cities. Kevin holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from University of Michigan.

Participant Biographies



Lilly Weinberg

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
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Lilly Weinberg joined Knight Foundation in August 2012. She is the senior director with the Community and National Initiatives, managing Knight's \$140 million investment in 18 small to mid-size Knight communities.



Richard Young • Lexington

CivicLex
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Richard Young is the founder and executive director of CivicLex, a nationally recognized nonprofit civic engagement and education organization based in Lexington-Fayette County, Kentucky.



Maps

Day 1 Site Visits



Day 2 Site Visits





Site Visits

Civic Gateway

Downtown Akron is the center of the community and includes housing, restaurants, the Main Library, government offices, cultural assets and public spaces along the Ohio & Erie Canal. Some of the park and public space assets include the Akron Civic Theatre, Canal Park Baseball Stadium, Cascade Plaza, Lock 2, 4 & 4 Parks, Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, Richard Howe House and the future home of the Sojourner Truth Park.

Ohio & Erie Canal Park

Located between the Civic Gateway and Summit Lake, Ohio & Erie Canal Park is a pleasant park and open space along the Ohio & Erie Canal and Towpath Trail. The area surrounding Ohio & Erie Canal Park is one of the more diverse neighborhoods in Akron, with a combination of fully subsidized, partially subsidized and independent home ownership. Neighborhood residents and hikers and bicyclists enjoy spending time at the playground or listening to a concert at the Alpha Phi Alpha Homes pavilion at Callis Towers.

Summit Lake

Summit Lake Park is a beautiful 100-acre lake that provides a place of refuge and relaxation for neighborhood residents and hikers and bicyclists along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Residents and visitors can learn about the history of Summit Lake at the Summit Lake Nature Center, enjoy a walk around the lake, fish, picnic, bird-watch, canoe and kayak. Future plans for Summit Lake include the Summit Lake NorthShore Park, with a pavilion for birthday parties and family reunions, a boathouse including canoe and kayak shares, concession stand, boat launch ramp and parking.

