

# CITIES INITIATIVE: MORE LIVABLE FOR MORE PEOPLE

In 2008, the world passed a significant milestone. For the first time, more people were living in cities than in rural communities, a threshold moment for humankind with far-reaching implications for how we live now and in the future. In response to this profound shift, the Urban Land Institute Minnesota (ULI MN) and the Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM) established the *Cities Initiative* to develop a major traveling exhibit and civic engagements on how cities become more livable for more people.

The *Cities Initiative* will address the pressing issues tied to increasing urbanization, climate change and more. It will engage large public audiences while also encouraging new leaders and invigorating existing ones by giving them the knowledge and tools they need to make decisions and take action.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

Through the activities outlined in *The Road So Far*, we have learned much about how leaders across many industries perceive the challenges of a rapidly urbanizing world and how ULI MN and SMM are uniquely positioned to help.

- Complex global dynamics—the breakneck pace of technological change, international economics, climate change, declining social trust, debt and more—are shaping our lives and leading to a perceived lack of ability to influence the world.
- To counter this alienation, the *Cities Initiative* will speak to these complex dynamics and help citizens to imagine how they can exert agency over their lives and the cities in which they live.
- For both ULI MN and SMM, our business is people. Our aligned missions are to empower people with knowledge and tools to provoke new ways of being and thinking, to develop leaders and encourage action through experiential learning and civic engagements.

## THE ROAD SO FAR

### April 2015

“Designing a Driverless World” by John Eddy of Arup, the world’s largest engineering firm

### July 2015

Grant funding from the Pohlad Family Foundation to build and develop the partnership

### Autumn 2015

Interviews with Minneapolis–Saint Paul thought leaders about the objectives of the Cities Initiative

### Jan–Feb 2016

Inspired by the Cities Initiative, the Association of Science-Technology Centers devotes an entire issue of its magazine, *Dimensions*, to exploring collaborations between museums and cities.

### February 2016

“Discover the Future” workshop led by futurist Jack Ulrich

### April 2016

The 40+ members of the ULI MN Advisory Board, comprised of regional public and private sector leaders, endorse Cities Initiative.

The 40+ global members of the ULI Sustainable Development Council decides to champion and support the Cities Initiative.

## DISCOVER THE FUTURE WORKSHOP: FOUR KEY QUESTIONS EMERGED

1. How do we accelerate our collective capacity to adapt to change?
2. How do we re-scale systems to give communities more agency over their futures?
3. How do we continue to foster human interactions?
4. What are the tomorrow problems we need to begin working on today?

# OUR ROADMAP FOR MOVING FORWARD

## PURSUE NEW PARTNERSHIPS

ULI MN and SMM are cultivating partnerships with philanthropic organizations whose missions focus on critical urban issues, corporations and universities who research and innovate in areas that are important to cities, and business and political leaders whose decisions powerfully shape our cities.

## CREATE NEW CIVIC COMMONS

The *Cities Initiative* is an opportunity for professionals from many sectors to both contribute and learn, and thereby demonstrate how the MSP region is poised to succeed as a hub of urban innovation.

## PROTOTYPE EXHIBITS

Exhibits will bridge knowledge gaps about the challenges we face in an increasingly urban world. They will engage people in experiential learning about a wide range of issues that cities face and demonstrate how possible solutions can be scaled to communities of many different sizes, helping people begin to see themselves and their communities in these issues and their potential solutions.

## DEVELOP NEW LEADERS

The Cities Initiative will cultivate interest in civic issues, urbanism and science, particularly among audiences such as the Millennial generation as they assume leadership roles in our communities.

## THE CHANGES WE WILL CREATE

Here we are. Humanity is the dominant agent of global change. With six billion urban residents expected by 2050, the future of Earth will be decided by its cities. And the futures our cities will be determined by human decision making, either by default or by design, by accident or by intention. Through the *Cities Initiative*, ULI MN and SMM will provoke new ways of being and thinking that will help cities become more livable for more people. So together let's imagine, design, and realize the better, brighter, more livable cities that we all want.

## GOALS OF THE CITIES INITIATIVE

1. Demonstrate how the complex global dynamics and market forces that affect our lives can be rescaled to a local level.
2. Empower people with knowledge and tools about the factors that make cities resilient in the face of changes that arrive with increasing frequency and decreasing warning.
3. Accelerate our collective capacities to adapt to these changing dynamics that affect our cities and the citizens therein.
4. Generate active hope— **“what can I do?”** and **“what can we do together?”**

## THESE ARE THE ORGANIZATIONS TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

