

March 16, 2020

Dear CNU Members, Partners, Allies, and Supporters:

The CNU National Board met last week to discuss the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on CNU 28.Twin Cities. Much has changed in the world since our March 4 coronavirus update, including the CDC [recommendation](#) that organizations cancel or reschedule events with 50 or more people for the next eight weeks.

The health and well-being of CNU members, partners, and allies is our greatest concern. Clearly, the pandemic and its economic impact have created unprecedented uncertainty throughout the world. Understanding that this is an extremely dynamic public health crisis, we wanted to update members and partners on our *current* approach and planning for CNU 28.Twin Cities.

- **In-person Congress.** Currently, CNU 28.Twin Cities remains scheduled to take place in June. We do not anticipate cancelling the in-person Congress unless required to do so by the federal or state government. However, we will be monitoring travel restrictions and assessing members' willingness to travel.
 - Most airlines now are offering flexibility on travel reservations and we are currently working with our host hotel to allow that same kind of flexibility for our room block.
 - We will be following all the recommended health precautions during the Congress including offering hand sanitizer, wiping podiums and other surfaces frequently, and encouraging regular handwashing among participants.
- **Virtual Congress.** If the in-person Congress must be cancelled, we will host a virtual Congress over the same dates in June. A number of large events have already been held virtually and we feel confident that CNU staff and partners can produce a meaningful interactive online event.
 - Sessions would be recorded, enabling Congress participants to review sessions that otherwise would have been missed.
 - A virtual Congress would decrease participants' travel costs making it more affordable and hopefully expand participation.

We are currently exploring technology that would help replicate the in-person experience that is so valuable and invigorating, including random meet ups, debates, and offline discussions. We welcome any recommendations and offers of help with this endeavor by emailing us at congress@cnu.org.

- **Refunds.** Your investment in the Congress is important to us. As always, CNU offers refunds (minus an administrative fee) for Congress registration through May 13, 2020. We will reassess this long-standing policy as May approaches. A new policy change for CNU 28 is that we will offer refunds to anyone who is sick or caring for a family member, up to the beginning of the Congress.



It is possible the cost to CNU of a virtual Congress would be lower than that of the onsite Congress. If so, CNU would offer a refund in an amount reflecting this savings, or a credit to apply to next year's Congress, member dues, or another CNU-sponsored event.

The CNU 28.Twin Cities Legacy Projects, originally scheduled for the last week in March, have been postponed through a joint decision made by community leaders and the urban design teams. All projects will likely take place in mid-to-late May.

Now, more than ever, the ideas and information exchanged annually at the Congress are crucial to the New Urbanist movement and the future of our cities, towns, and communities. We believe that this public health crisis has created a pivotal challenge for us: how we deploy our principles and expertise to benefit people and communities in a time of great distress. And the Congress – whether held in person, virtually, or in some combination of the two – will be our first opportunity as a movement to confront the ramifications of this pandemic.

Please feel free to reach out to either of us with any questions or concerns that you may have; we will try to address them as best we can. Please continue to stand with us as we find our way through this global crisis and let us know what we can do to help you. Finally, and most importantly, please stay safe and healthy. We need you and your work to champion walkable urbanism worldwide.



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Lynn Richards
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