

CNU CLIMATE SUMMIT

Purpose: For over two decades CNU and its members have worked to build sustainable places and preserve the natural environment. From developing the energy-efficient LEED for Neighborhood Development system to advancing the conversation around sustainable architecture, our projects have helped prepare the way for cities and towns to build greener, healthier, and more responsibly.

Now more than ever, it is critical that we continue to expand our knowledge base, share our expertise, and put better techniques into practice. At the 2017 CNU Climate Summit we invited organizations and individuals who have been addressing these issues to share their experience and guide CNU as we strive to understand our role, strengthen the role of design and the built environment, and discuss how we can best contribute to the climate change conversation.

- Where can CNU exert its influence and leverage the expertise of the membership?
- How can CNU empower and enable its membership to move knowledge, expertise, and practice forward?

Expected Outcomes: Through the Climate Summit, CNU sought to empower and enable its membership to move the needle on knowledge, expertise, and practice around specific climate issues. We identified member-led working groups to develop strategies, tools, and techniques that amplify existing efforts and address the identified gaps.

Friday | September 29, 2017

Opening Remarks

Speaker: Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, [DPZ Co-DESIGN](#)

Presentation Points:

- All adaptation is local, except for universal adaptation and getting people out of harm's way
- Society has advanced warning and we can do something about it
- The context of New Urbanism is different than it was when we were the only organization focused on improving the fabric of cities, but now we have new voices, new partners, and new obstacles.

Presentation Takeaway

In her opening remarks Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk outlined the issues we face and why CNU has the capacity to make great change that other organizations/ institutions are not able to. [CNU National](#) is connected to the people on the ground making the hyper-local mitigation strategies happen, but are also in a place to amplify and translate the work between localities so that new work does not have to be discovered, just fit into the new context.

PANEL | Advocacy and Agency

Moderator: Doug Kelbaugh, University of Michigan

Presentation Points:

- Climate change is a degenerative disease that we are not able to end, only control the long-term effects

Speaker: Edward Mazria, [Architecture 2030](#)

Presentation Points:

- 74,000 cities have signed the UN Global Compact to hit the Paris agreement target numbers
- Cities, as the places where the emissions are produced, are the places with the political will to tackle the problem
- Cities produce the least amount of carbon per capita

Speaker: Shelley Poticha, [Natural Resource Defense Council](#) (NRDC)

Presentation Points:

- Cities may be willing to take emissions action, but don't have the expertise on how to do it
- We already have the tools to reduce carbon, just need to do more of what CNU have been doing for the past 30 years

Speaker: Jay Butera, [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#)

Presentation Points:

- Carbon pollution is free, but the effects are not
- Citizen's Climate Lobby has engaged a group of citizens across the country to interact with elected officials around issues of climate change by focusing on shared values and mutual respect, rather than partisan divides
- The Carbon Fee and Dividend Policy is a bipartisan, revenue-neutral tax on carbon pollution by businesses and collected taxes would be equally divided among US citizens

Speaker: Ben Holland, [Rocky Mountain Institute](#)

Presentation Points:

- Electric vehicles are part of the carbon and energy solution, but the technology is one part of a multifaceted solution to the problem
- Have to get people out of traditional cars and into electric vehicles, walking, biking, transit, etc.
- Electric vehicles are best used by individuals that drive the most, such as taxis, ride shares, delivery vehicles, etc.

Panel and Discussion Takeaways

Urban professionals already have the tools that needed to combat climate change with meaningful results, but there is not enough strategy and cooperation within the climate change sphere to really amplify these efforts. There is no one silver bullet, but by engaging more communities and diverse communities, CNU members can demand representation in government, create equitable market choices, get smart about the impacts of new technology

and plan for our communities to get the best benefit. These conversations can happen within CNU, but design professionals are going to have to get their hands dirty and talk to partners (new and old) about profit, real estate, and governance.

PANEL | Role of Cities

Moderator: Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, [DPZ Co-DESIGN](#)

Presentation Point:

- There is a duality at the level of the built environment between the environment infrastructure (collective), and buildings (smallest level of agency)

Speaker: Riana Ackley, [ICLEI](#)

Presentation Points:

- ICLEI Five Milestone Adaptation Process for cities
 1. Initiate climate resiliency effort
 2. Conduct a climate resiliency study
 3. Set preparedness goals and develop a plan
 4. Implement preparedness plan
 5. Measure progress and evaluate the plan

Speaker: Katherine Burgess, [Urban Land Institute](#) (ULI)

Presentation Points:

- ULI is informing membership about climate resilience and helping cities increase capacity
- [100 Resilient Cities](#) program has allowed cities to address resilience with the introduction of Chief Resilience Officers
- Resilience is interdisciplinary, and needs buy in from multiple stakeholders
- Some cities have been keeping a log of local extreme water levels through the years, to visualize the future impact of water on development
- While local mitigation strategies are different, the value of the work does not decrease when applied to different locations
- Smaller cities are hungry for the knowledge, but limited their capacity makes them difficult partners, whereas but larger community groups and planning departments have more capacity for this type of work

Speaker: Daphne Lundi, [NYC Dept of Planning](#)

Presentation Points:

- There has been a lot of effort in translating federal regulations to NYC scale
- Educating the public on the natural history behind their location allows cities, developers, and individuals to better plan for the impacts of these natural characteristics. (i.e. Manhattan was originally a swamp and will continue to experience flooding in the future.)
- Building ownership and tenants may have different priorities for planning for natural disasters

Speaker: Laura Clemons, [Collaborative Communities](#)

Presentation Points:

- How do you build a city back better?

- There are lots of regulations with FEMA money, and if a municipality is not able to follow all the guidelines with regard to timeline and process, they are liable to miss out on hundreds of thousands of dollars
- FEMA money recipients need to know the regulations in order to hack them and build more resilient cities

Panel and Discussion Takeaways:

This session addressed the importance of scale in CNU's climate change work. Members have the greatest local impact on their communities, but there are limits. The process is top-down with state and federal regulations and guidelines directly impacting local projects with limited channels for feedback. Because of these limited feedback channels from local projects back to state and federal regulations, local projects are forced to work within parameters that may or may not lead to the best outcome for their situation. Translating best practices not only from locality to locality, but up and down the political scale can make a huge difference on ease of implementation and belief in the city administrative and political system.

PANEL | Domestic and International Approaches

Moderator: Anne Tate, University of Rhode Island

Speaker: Don Hall, [Transition US, Transition Towns](#)

Presentation Points:

- Sustainable agriculture is better for people and the environment than traditional methods
- By connecting all the parts of a systemic transition, change over time is allowed and expected
- Each transition initiative is different but has a set of rules and lessons learned that can be applied in other places
- The Transition Towns framework is so ubiquitous that it works around the globe and is successful because it focuses its projects at the community and grassroots level
 - Project examples-
 - Trash catchers carnival, transition street groups, alternative currency, renewable energy cooperatives

Speaker: Elizabeth Beardsley, [United States Green Building Council](#)

Presentation Points:

- Urban professionals need to refine how they will scale up sustainability work
- USGBC wants green to be "normal", beyond professional standards
- LEED is a tool to build better for the community, environment, etc - but it has to be about people. Engage the community where they are and with topics they are interested in
- USGBC uses its network of members and partners and their tools and resources to support green and sustainable projects
- It can take a long time to implement green and sustainable building standards in existing construction
- New construction and building ownership changes trigger the requirements to update to current building standards and codes

- Urban professionals need more local champions and partners, boots on the ground

Speaker: Lynn Englum, [Rebuild by Design](#)

Presentation Points:

- Rebuild by Design tackles social vulnerability as well as built environment
- Rebuild by Design used funds allocated after Superstorm Sandy to rebuild more socially and sustainably
- The goal is to turn vulnerable places into hotbeds of design
- Urban professionals should create a foundation that can build on top of, not scrapped once it becomes ineffective

Speaker: Janice Barnes, Perkins + Will

Presentation Points:

- Perkins +Will talking with clients on how investment in green infrastructure can bring in high returns in the long run
- Perkins + Will has created voluntary resilience standards for their clients and projects
- There are many ways of speaking with your clients that can lead to sustainable designs in the project
- It's not about what you can do, but about the network of professionals in other professions that you can tap to accomplish a common goal
- Resilient design can shift a conversation from building a landfill to reducing poverty

Panel and Discussion Takeaways:

This session highlighted the work that is being done as place based initiatives try to become problem based initiatives. When working with problems at the national scale, grassroots goals can often get lost. The language divide between different professions is another barrier to collaboration within the sustainability field. Allowing innovative approaches to create normative results and talking beyond comfortable professional bubbles can create more closely aligned language and goals.

Saturday | September 30, 2017

PRESENTATION | Housing + Transportation Affordability Index

Speaker: Jennifer McGraw, Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT)

Presentation Points:

- CNT's modeling efforts have been effective visual educational tools when communicating the links between land use, access to public transportation, and affordability
- Cities are tackling energy use in buildings, but not transit and emissions
- Rural households drive 10 times more than urban households, as density grows vehicle miles traveled reduces
- CNT is working to use information to quantify transit information and decisions, and turn that into financial decisions made by developers and bankers
- Cities have seen tremendous growth in the past four years, but they have become places that are not resilient. If bad change can happen that fast, good change can happen at the same speed.
- Cities like to copy best outcomes, and producing good outcomes for one city will spur others to follow suit, accelerating the rate of positive change

PRESENTATION | UrbanFootprint

Speaker: Peter Calthorpe, Calthorpe Associates

Presentation Points:

- Location and lifestyle can be measured with this tool
- If you have too much inventory, the only way to move it is to discount it, leading to the affordability of the suburbs
- With this tool, you can explore, build scenarios, analyze metrics and build consensus
- Along with converting the grid, cap and trade, energy retrofits, and California's SB372, regional changes to land use will reduce carbon emissions, so Calthorpe Associates thinks regionally
- To be successful at the regional scale, planners must change the language to reflect the work that CNU members are already doing at the local scale
- Modeling tools have to be neutral, but they also have to be used

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Attendees formed working groups to address the identified impact areas. These impact areas were identified by moderators with input from attendees. Working groups discussed goals and outcomes for their respective impact areas.

BREAKOUT | Relocation

Discussion focused on how cities can prepare now for disasters - including how and where to relocate. Participants discussed different scenarios for dealing with climate refugees, and how to help areas that may be more affected by extreme weather events in the future.

- 5 scenarios
 - Relocation: purposefully move an entire town

- Accidental New Town: Katrina Villages were supposed to deal with this, lots of new opportunities
- Retreat: absorption of communities that were left behind because they did not have the resources to move into established communities
- Permanent Camps: informal settlements became permanent cities
- Good Intentions: Sweden created more space than was necessary for refugees, now refugees have to adapt to unfamiliar circumstances
- How best to help relocation-prone areas:
 - Identify places prone to disasters
 - Is there an option to move? Where and when?
 - Talk to the town to confirm awareness of situation, preferred path (relocation, retreat, etc.), and plan of execution

BREAKOUT | Real Estate Endgame

Discussion focused on scenarios for how the real estate market and home owner's insurance could be motivating factors for climate refugees as individuals and groups. Factors include whether or not the city could be updated to handle future disaster conditions, what it would take to get shrinking cities interested in becoming receiving cities for climate refugees, and group vs. individual moves.

- Elevate and Harden
 - Financing for mitigation has become more favorable with insurance premiums on the rise in places like Miami
 - Measures include elevating an entire short building, sacrificing lower floors in taller buildings, and raising infrastructure
- Individual Relocation: Insurance Funding
 - People will walk away from homes when homeownership costs, including insurance, gets too expensive
 - Insurance coverage could cover relocation to Receiving Cities
 - Receiving Cities compete with each other to attract climate refugees
- Individual Relocation: Government Order
 - Move mandated by the government
 - Government would need force, money, and resources to counter disruptive nature of a mandated relocation
- Neighborhood Relocation: Insurance Funding
 - Strong family and civic bonds could prompt neighborhoods to move together

BREAKOUT | Heat

Conversation addressed how excessive heat can affect how the built environment is used and how to combat the effects of excessive heat.

- Climate change can be mapped by studying the expansion of hot climates
- Increasing temperatures will lead to a decrease in usage of public realm and social cohesion
- Simple factors in the built environment can make a big difference (e.g. operable windows, shading elements, trees, etc.)

- A green electrical grid will allow AC to combat the problem, but a dirty grid will exacerbate the situation

BREAKOUT | Drought

Discussion addresses the connection between drought and other extreme weather events, including both sudden emergencies or slow changes in the environment.

- Stressors: slow and constant
 - Engineered inefficient water usage
 - Changing weather patterns,
 - Failure to reuse clean water
- Shocks: sudden impact or event
 - Water table depletion
 - Fire
 - Economic Decimation
- Drought is an indicator of larger ecosystem problems

BREAKOUT | Data

Group Discussion focused on the barriers to information sharing at the local level, and what would make information more useful to other urban professionals.

- A wiki: collaborative website where multiples users can add and modify content
 - This could be a useful resource to compile stories, experiences, best practices, etc. that speak to broader issues
 - A place to tell stories and share information
- Collect data that answers the following:
 - What are the sources and where to find them?
 - Are there multiple portals?
 - How much does the data cost?
 - How can one access the data?
 - What graphics software is needed?

BREAKOUT | Flooding

Discussion about how cities are currently planning for flooding, and how to improve the planning process.

- Need to integrate water planning into city planning
- Needs vary by transect, but lessons can be shared between similar transects in different localities
- Stakeholders, such as residents and local planners, should strategically act in places where the risk is greatest

NEXT STEPS FROM SUMMIT

Membership can:

- Update the [CNU Canons](#) to reflect positive effects of New Urbanist work while focusing on people

- Create a write up of the New Urbanism and the Climate Crisis session from CNU 25.Seattle to put on the website
- Maintain and update a wiki-style database for members with case studies, best practices, tools, etc.
- Create worst case scenario descriptions of extreme weather events and their effects on the built environment for public engagement to demonstrate the consequences of not being prepared
- Help local chapters mobilize member volunteers after an extreme event to help with recovery, clean up, and educate municipalities on FEMA regulations
- Create Open Innovation session on rebuilding after a disaster
- Think about what their region/membership could look like in 10/20/50 years and work backward to move toward that vision.
 - What programs and activities will enhance that vision?
 - Are you able to offer what people are interested in and want to be a part of?

CNU National can:

- Create and maintain databases that include projects and research on New Urbanist related topics
- Create a press pass for the Congress in return for media coverage
- Create Disaster Recovery certification in addition to CNU-A

RECURRING THEMES

- Hope is an important ingredient in planning for climate change, but so is adaptability and the willingness to try and fail.
- There is no silver bullet to solving climate change, but we already have the necessary tools for success.
- Resilient communities¹ are better able to withstand sudden shocks and plan for present and future stressors.
- If you can plan for the future, and plan for change, you can plan for the most vulnerable and build more equitable communities.
- No one person can solve the problems of climate change, but when our individual efforts at all scales are compiled the impact is amplified.

¹ CNU defines a resilient community as one that is able to rebalance itself after a shock, or adapt to a stressor.