



# IURC NA - BALTIMORE URBAN REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

Thematic Networking Event

10th – 12th May 2023

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# Takeaways

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## Affordable Housing

### CHALLENGES

- Affordability- housing costs are increasing in almost every city, which makes it harder to create and maintain affordable housing.
- Legislations- The differences between regional, state, and local legislations affect the ability of the city to build housing.
- Limited housing stock- Current shortages of construction materials and a lack of construction impede new housing development.



### SOLUTIONS

**San Diego, USA**, aims to build 10,000 new affordable housing units in the next 10 years and has reduced the barriers to success through planning policies, development processing, and funding. Three new programs are having good results:

- 100% affordable projects receive permit processing in 30 days
- The project Bridge to Home provides funding to build housing and has increased the number of units by 1,000 in 18 months
- Capacity building for new developers so they are more competitive
- Penalizing residential vacant properties to make use of them

Additionally, the City has initiated a process to sell several city-owned properties to construct new affordable housing units, including Civic Center Plaza, which contains City Hall and encompasses five contiguous city blocks of downtown San Diego to drive thousands more units into the market.

**Bergamo, Italy**, also shared that they are regenerating the city by recovering abandoned buildings and areas into residential and cultural spaces.

## Attracting and Securing Population and Talent

### CHALLENGES

- Lack of housing- Retaining locally educated/trained young talent is challenging due to expensive/scarcely housing.
- Industrial changes- Population migration after the collapse of specific industries, such as fishing in St. John's, may lead to a lack of workforce to satisfy growing service markets, such as the development of the energy industry.
- Higher Education Competitiveness- It may be difficult for cities to secure talent when students have better offers abroad.
- Remote work- Cities need help attracting and retaining young talent in city centers since the remaining population is usually older, and the younger talent that can now work remotely is relocating.

### SOLUTIONS

In **St John's, Canada**, the collapse of the fishing industry resulted in the migration of a large part of the population. In its economic development plan, this was highlighted, and one of the areas they identified as an opportunity to assist with immigration retention and community connections was to develop a community "farmers" market to provide a gathering place where people of varying perspectives, cultures, and interests, including tourists, could connect and share.

The food market launched six years ago in a city-owned plot near the university and the city center, attracting many local and international students and introducing local people to new cultures, tastes, and flavors. This project helped people connect to the place, and St. John's population has grown the most over the past 50 years.

**Dortmund, Germany**, has an innovation model, which has grown over decades, where stakeholders focused on neighborhood collaboration to create an innovation network, which includes technological, social, and cultural initiatives. This network consists of many projects and actors who work together to increase the attractiveness of Dortmund as a business and living location and to ensure its continuous and sustainable development. In 2021, Dortmund

was the first German city to be awarded the iCapital Award as "Innovation Capital of Europe" by the European Commission.

Halifax Partnership in **Halifax, Canada**, offers several labor programs and resources to support employers' local and international recruitment and retention efforts. The National Connector Program is based in Halifax, the birthplace of the initial Connector Program. This initiative provides communities a turn-key solution that increases talent retention through intentional networking. It is found in 30+ Canadian Communities, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States, including Detroit, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Portland-Maine. Additionally, employers looking to fill labor needs can use the Atlantic Immigration Program and the Global Talent Stream to hire international talent.

Halifax partnership also offers the Living in Halifax Toolkit, a ready-to-use marketing kit showcasing Halifax's quality of life to support hiring and retention efforts.

**Chihuahua, Mexico**, is building training centres to increase incentives for people to stay and attract newcomers.

## Equity & Systemic Racism

### CHALLENGES

- Lack of community engagement- Economic development practitioners have a hard time making community voices heard.
- Fear- Practitioners are sometimes afraid to talk about the realities of race.
- Systemic Racism- Despite talent and jobs available, racism excludes people from being part of the network of good opportunities.
- Inequitable services and infrastructure- In some cities, there is a difference between the services provided in white and black and Hispanic neighborhoods. For example, in Boston, the train reaches white neighborhoods, but delayed buses go through black and Hispanic neighborhoods.



### SOLUTIONS

The biggest economic development challenge in **Boston** are the intertwined issues of the racial wealth gap and wealth inequality. Mayor Wu has inaugurated a practice for each department to evaluate new programs and policies with a focus on racial equity to ensure all initiatives work to remedy these economic and social disparity. This prioritization has helped expedite roughly \$100 million dollars of investment in sustainable and affordable public housing, grant commitments for entrepreneurs of color to start or scale a small business, and government contracts to minority business owners. Boston is also supporting programs like tuition-free community college, a federally funded Good Jobs program and demanding more proactive plans for diverse hiring from employers.

In **Turin** libraries are becoming important social hubs. There people meet, build relationships, and can work together around policies and culture. This new approach has become a resource to make long term solutions a success. This initiative is part of the Neighborhood Houses national scheme in which there is an investment of approximately 400 million euros in different infrastructures in the city, including creating and refurbishing libraries. For Turin, cooperation amongst stakeholders is key of for the success of urban policies. Therefore, they support programs where the community builds a vision together, manages conflicts and creates paths for collective learning.

## Funding for City Projects

### CHALLENGES

- Continuous access to capital- Access to capital for business development can take time to obtain or sustain after a first investment.
- High-interest rates and inflation- Investors are scared to invest.
- Lack of capacity- Often, local/municipal government needs the technical knowledge or staff to channel resources/funding for development. Also, cities may receive funding, but they also need the capacity to manage and implement it on time and with the right impact.



## Empty Downtowns

### CHALLENGES

- Hybrid or remote work models- The mix of remote and in-person work has become increasingly popular due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing the number of people at downtown offices. This shift in work patterns has also decreased foot traffic downtown, affecting businesses and commercial real estate. Retail and hospitality businesses are particularly impacted, relying heavily on foot traffic and commuters for their revenue.



## Governance & Urban Planning

### CHALLENGES

- Limited room for maneuver- cities are limited by authorities to deliver on specific challenges, and there are concerns if there is a skew to do something which diverts from the policy.
- Working in silos- There is a lack of conversations about the intersection between the city's multiple problems. Also, a lack of integrated planning generates too much focus/bias on some areas leaving others unattended or operating without a good strategy.
- Balancing Sustainability and Economic Development- Balancing economic growth and sustainable urban development is challenging. For example, success in tourism brings new challenges, such as collapsing services, gentrification, etc.

### SOLUTIONS

Cities suggest there should be more awareness about how the main urban challenges (environmental, demographic, urban, geographic) are complex and need to be faced at the same time. They also point out how there needs to be a shift from a quantitative approach to a qualitative approach to development.

Another critical aspect is to have a political leader with a strong vision and commitment to motivate and implement.

## Sustainable Tourism

### CHALLENGES

- AirBnB- In many EU highly tourist areas, the historical centers have displaced long-term residents for tourists since housing has been transformed into short-stay residences. This phenomenon has also triggered gentrification since the goods and services now cater to visitors instead of locals. The hospitality industry has also been affected since historic centers don't have the building typology or available plots of land to convert into hotels.

### SOLUTIONS

In **Rimini**, the new sustainable urban development strategy has been based on a vision encompassing three aspects: environment, seafront development, and enhancement of cultural heritage to attract all-year-round tourism. The City has developed a framework with tangible and intangible actions such as raising awareness about the sustainable use of the sea, community outreach, and school programs to transform how residents perceive the sea, which had been long associated only with seasonal tourism and partying. Some of the actions include:

- Investment in the sewage system which used to give the City a bad image. The new water treatment facility not only solves an operational problem, but it has become an attractive overlook part of the waterfront redevelopment.
- Redesigning the waterfront to incorporate sustainable mobility and recreation.
- The enhancement of cultural and historic places for all-year-round development.
- Awareness campaigns for people to embrace the idea that Rimini is not by the sea but a city of the sea.

## International Cooperation

### CHALLENGES

- Lack of collaboration- Cities compete to attract certain businesses instead of joining forces to solve global issues.
- Lack of global vision- Cities try to reach only their own goals while leaving other municipalities behind.

### SOLUTIONS

Municipalities must be curious about different perspectives and solutions and eager to share with other cities. In programs like the IURC, cities have discovered different approaches to shared challenges and learned about new best practices that can be adapted to their cities.



## Participating Organizations

**Downtown Partnership**  
godowntownbaltimore.com

**Impact Hub Baltimore**  
baltimore.impacthub.net

**Mag Partners**  
magpartners.com

**Sonavi Labs**  
sonavilabs.com

**ABC Construction Education Academy**  
cea.abcbbaltimore.org

**Cross Street Partners**  
crossstpartners.com

**Outlook Studios**  
ovfx.com

**Betamore**  
betamore.com

# Participating Cities

## North America

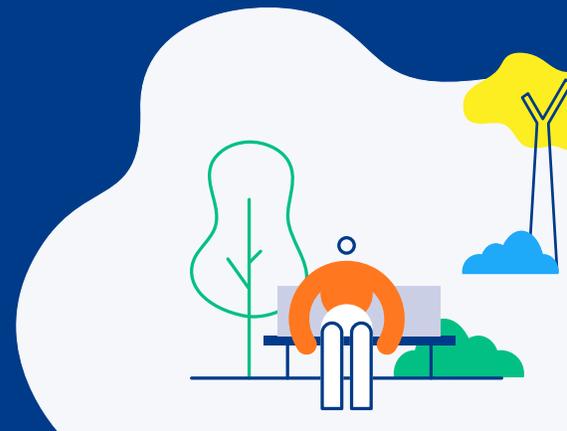
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**Atlanta**, USA  
**Aurora**, USA  
**Baltimore**, USA  
**Boston**, USA  
**Chihuahua**, MEX  
**Halifax**, CAN  
**Metropolitan Kansas City**, USA  
**Newark**, USA  
**Northern Virginia Regional Commission**, USA  
**Ottawa**, CAN  
**Pittsburgh**, USA  
**San Diego**, USA  
**St. John's**, CAN

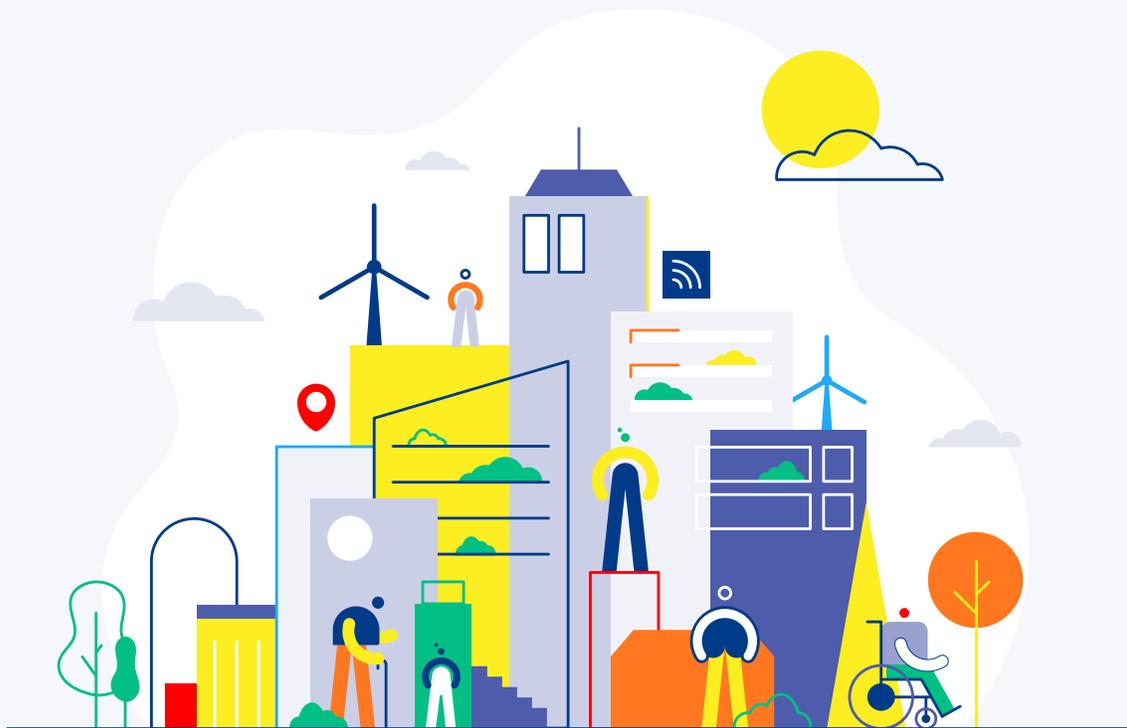
## European Union

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**Barcelona Metropolitan Area**, SPA  
**Bergamo**, ITA  
**Braga**, POR  
**Dortmund**, GER  
**Madrid**, SPA  
**Rimini**, ITA  
**Turin**, ITA  
**Zaragoza**, SPA



# Thank you for joining us!



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