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# The Charter for Canadian Urbanism

A MISSION & MANDATE FOR THE COUNCIL FOR CANADIAN URBANISM

## OUR MISSION

THE COUNCIL FOR CANADIAN URBANISM IS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING CITY-BUILDING PRACTICES, RESEARCH, AND EDUCATION IN ORDER TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY AND LIVABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS CANADA.

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## WHO WE ARE:

The Council for Canadian Urbanism, or “CanU,” is a movement of passionate and dedicated practitioners in Canadian city-building, supporting each other across the country and making real contributions for progressive change. We think and work collaboratively across disciplines for a comprehensive, holistic and multi-disciplinary urbanism.

CanU brings together leading city planners, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, engineers, developers, politicians, civic leaders and other multi-disciplinary urbanists from across Canada. Initially emphasizing urban design and physical city-building leadership within city governments, the private sector, the community sector and academia, CanU continues to evolve to encompass all aspects of successful city-making.

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## THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR CANADIAN URBANISM SHARE A SET OF:

### COMMON BELIEFS

#### Canadian Urbanism and Canada’s future

There is a distinct Canadian Urbanism, a shared approach and perspective to cities and city-building evolving over time within our constitutional, socio-political and cultural history, and shaped by our landscape and climate. Canadian cities and communities share challenges and opportunities unique to our country. At the same time, Canadian Urbanism shares characteristics and challenges in common with progressive urbanism movements in other countries and global regions.

Canada is increasingly both an urban and suburban society. Within our special context, we have built some of the world’s most livable cities and have pioneered smarter suburbs, but we have also built costly and unsustainable urban sprawl. The success or failure of Canada depends on the success of our cities and communities.

#### Canadian Urbanism and Canada’s challenges

Canada’s cities and communities urgently require more progressive and creative approaches in order to become more successful, sustainable, creative, livable, healthy and resilient. Implementing a better Canadian Urbanism is key to addressing our most critical challenges, including climate change, ecological integrity, economic health and global competitiveness, energy resiliency, affordability and homelessness, public health, and social inclusiveness.

#### Canadian Urbanism is “by design”

A successful Canadian Urbanism recognizes the integral value of urban design and progressive physical city-building influenced and informed by our ecological, social, economic, historic and cultural values. Urban design must succeed at all scales: regional, city, community, neighbourhood, street, block, site, building and public realm. It must be shaped by city and municipal vision, private sector expertise and innovation, and meaningful community engagement and leadership.

#### Great change is needed and possible

To rapidly realize a more progressive Canadian Urbanism, great change is required. Greater learning, experimentation and the will to challenge the status quo are necessary. Candid dialogue and constructive debate is essential, and must result in meaningful action.

### COMMON PRINCIPLES

#### The four pillars of sustainability

Canadian cities must urgently strive for ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability as the primary goal of city-building.

#### A new Canadian urban model

Canadian cities must implement a consistent and persuasive new urban model, with corresponding approaches, standards and tools. This model is based on complete, compact, mixed-use, interconnected, and vibrant neighbourhoods that prioritize sustainable and healthy mobility choices – walking, biking and transit. This new model will replace the unsustainable, use-separated, low-density, car-oriented model of the past.

#### Regionalism, diversity and authentic sense of place

Canadian Urbanism is based on respect for regional identity and authenticity, with city-making that captures the unique spirit and diversity of Canadian communities from coast-to-coast.

#### Flexibility, resilience and designing for change

Effective city-building anticipates and allows for adaptation to ever-changing conditions and challenges. It is dynamic, not static. It avoids over-prescriptive solutions to complex urban issues.

#### Professional integration and silo-breaking

Collaboration and a shared engagement between the design professions is essential to successfully address our urban challenges. Together, we will champion the further dismantling of specialist approaches to complex urban issues, or “silo-thinking”, in favour of a more holistic approach.

#### City leadership and community collaboration

Municipal governments must take a leadership role in shaping city design at every scale to meet public needs and challenges. Such leadership is built on the strong Canadian tradition of engaged community dialogue in city-building, and a shared understanding of market needs and innovation opportunities with builders and developers.

### COMMON OBJECTIVES

#### To Create Change

We will champion change and promote a new urban model for Canadian Urbanism locally and nationally, with the development of new tools and best practices, and shared learning among cities and communities across Canada.

#### To Lead

We will be a unified, multi-disciplinary leadership voice in the national dialogue and decisions affecting the future of our cities, and the quality of city-building in Canada.

#### To Advocate

We will champion an improved quality of urbanism and urban design across Canada, and support each other’s efforts within government, the development industry, communities, media, and education.

#### To Educate

We will foster learning and discussion about Canadian Urbanism, through public discourse, media, writing, research, teaching, and university curriculum-building.

#### To Convene

We will bring together forums, virtual and physical, among urbanists from diverse perspectives and across professional barriers, to address outdated urban models and support a progressive Canadian Urbanism.

