



Future Cities

Through our new initiative, Future Cities, the National Building Museum investigates how communities, industry, and government are working together to shape the greatest reimagining of the American landscape since World War II. Globally, rapid urbanization and population growth are putting enormous stress on our civilization, fueling a whole host of economic, social, and environmental crisis. As cities tackle these critical challenges, the National Building Museum is inspiring a healthier, more vibrant, and resilient future for all urban residents.



We will explore today's most pressing issues **with cities as the centerstage of action.**

Over 82% of the U.S. population calls cities their home. While today's cities face challenges like the affordability of housing and transit, extreme weather, and concerns around public health and safety, they remain vibrant centers of culture, creativity, and economic opportunity.

The National Building Museum's Future Cities initiative is bringing a voice of optimism to telling the stories that shape us, challenge us, and empower us to reimagine our future urban home.

The Future Cities initiative aligns our exhibitions, programs, and activations to amplify an inspiring story of our shared urban future across three plotlines:

**Thriving
Communities**



**Healthy
Spaces**



**Creative
Systems**



Our Unique Value



The Museum has always been a place for convening and conversation by providing a neutral space to encourage dialogue between the many people who are building our world – from architects to engineers, urban planners to policy makers, and community advocates to the public.

The Museum is uniquely positioned to convene critical conversations from across sectors and create a public-facing platform of exhibitions, programs, conversations, and events. Only the Museum has the story-telling expertise, creativity, and credibility to pull everyone from policy to the public into a dialogue and advance collaboration for measurable impacts.

Our Impacts

The Future Cities initiative fills critical gaps in the work being done within industry, government, and the public to create a better future for all. We serve as the classroom, the lighthouse, the roundtable, and the platform where the future of cities is unfolding. Through our combination of exhibitions, programs, and activations **we will reach over 2.5 million people with this work.**

Equip

We are demystifying and lowering barriers to the planning, governance, and development processes that result in the making of our cities.

Inspire

We are disrupting defeatist narratives and disseminating stories that highlight positive and innovative actions in cities.

Convene

We are bridging the gaps among all professional sectors and the public that are taking action to transform the future of cities.

Uplift

We are amplifying the voices of all Americans and creating pathways to expand their participation in urban development.

Our story starts in the heart of cities — downtown, where the pandemic has restructured how we live, work, and play.



Exhibition: Coming Together (Opening Fall 2025)

The *Coming Together* exhibition explores how American cities are reimagining and reshaping their downtown districts in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic generated profound and lasting changes in work, housing, mobility, entertainment, and recreation. These factors have informed new spatial behavior patterns in American city life. Today, with high vacancies in office buildings, housing shortages, and vacant storefronts, the traditional central business district is the target of a new wave of policy proposals and design ideas.



Programs: The Power of Partnering

This year is all about coming together in the spirit of collaboration and coordination of our shared ambitions and action to meet the transforming demands of cities. The National Building Museum is honored to be the convener that breaks down silos by bringing together the businesses, non-profits, government agencies, and general public who are passionately dedicated to a vibrant urban future. Programs will include an industry oriented Future Cities Forums, adult programs on topics such as 'How Decisions About City Are Made,' and more!



Activation: City Action Hall

The City Action Hall at the National Building Museum offers an engaging, functional space for community organizations, nonprofits, and local governments dedicated to the revitalization of urban downtowns. Located within the *Coming Together* exhibition, which reflects on the transformative impact of the pandemic on city centers, this Hall seamlessly connects inspiration with action.

Next, we will find and follow the threads that **weave together the diversity of our nation's cities.**



Exhibition: Seeing Cities (Opening Fall 2026)

As the nation commemorates its 250th anniversary, the National Building Museum will open the *Seeing Cities* exhibition, tracing the nation's history through the development of its built urban environments. This immersive experience will invite visitors to explore the evolution of urban life, tracing how our cities have developed into what they are today, examining the transformative changes they are currently undergoing, and inspiring reflection on the vital role each of us plays in shaping their future.

We land in our neighborhoods, with the intimacy of our homes **and the pursuit of a livable future.**



Exhibition: Housing Affordability (Opening Spring 2027)

The Museum will open an exhibition focused exclusively on housing affordability. This thematic exhibition will present stories about housing including access to home ownership, climate, health, vulnerable populations, and housing insecurity, the complexities facing Americans and the innovative solutions that are helping attack these issues.

Each of these exhibitions will be complemented by programming and activations to expand the impact of the initiative beyond the Museum's four walls.

Join us as we *reimagine the future* of cities

Become a sponsor today of Future Cities! When you join us as a supporter, you will receive over ten years of recognition across all outlined exhibitions and public programs. You will also have access to Institutional Roundtables, at a high-enough level of giving, a seat on our Advisory Council, opportunities for speaking roles, and more!