Mayors' Institute on City Design

INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR

2027-2028 Special Session Hosts RFP



MICD.ORG
INFO@MICD.ORG

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS
arts.gov

THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

RFP Overview

+ Seeking universities with accredited programs in architecture, landscape architecture, and/or urban planning OR nonprofit design organizations
+ Up to $60,000 in funding for reimbursement of hard costs
+ Up to four Special Sessions to occur in 2027 and 2028
+ Deadline: January 28, 2027, 4:00pm ET
+ Full RFP available at micd.org/news

Agenda

+ Our approach
+ What it takes to host
+ Scope of work
+ Budget
+ Submitting a proposal
+ Q&A



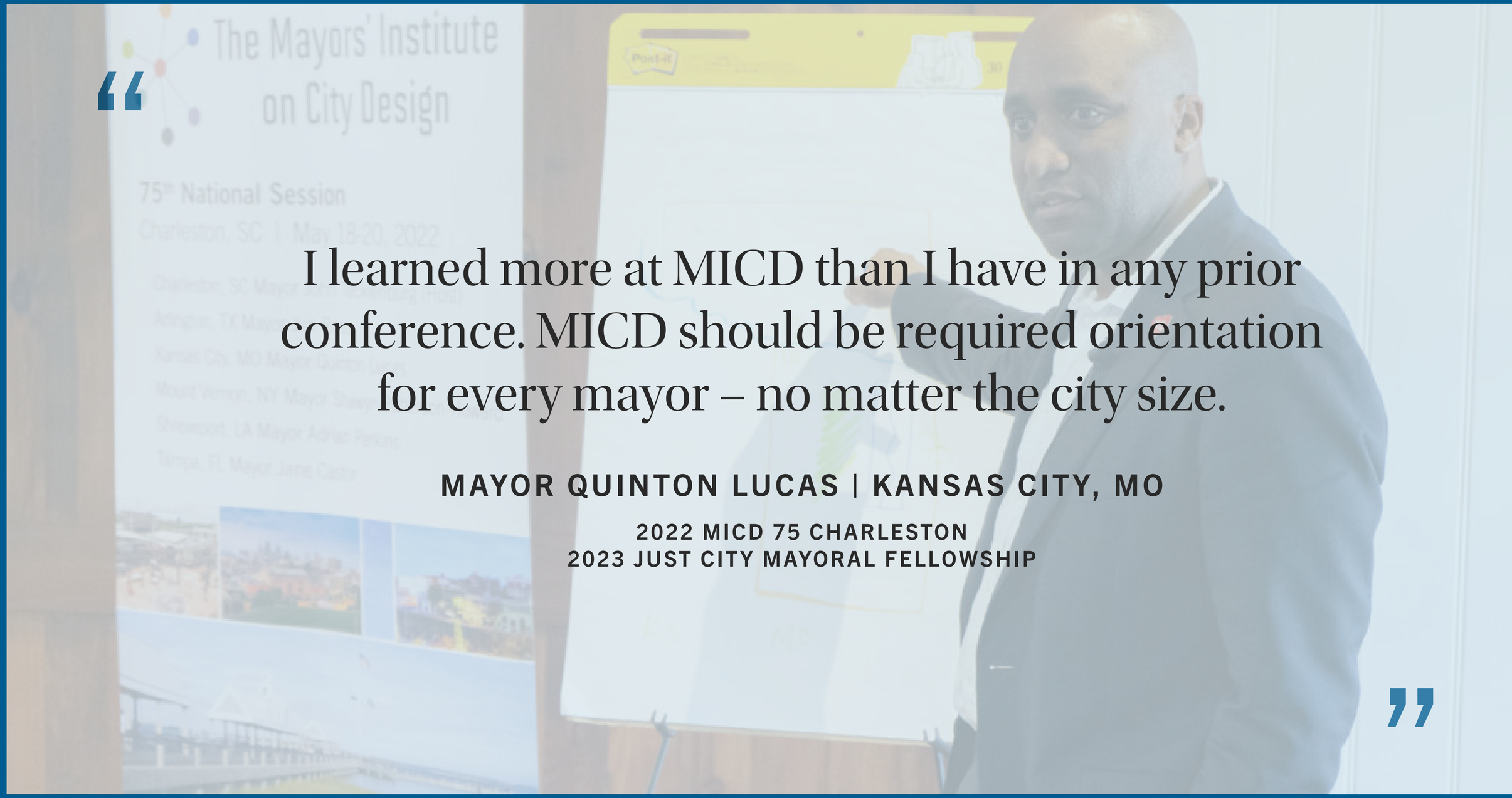




Lead with Design







I learned more at MICD than I have in any prior conference. MICD should be required orientation for every mayor – no matter the city size.

MAYOR QUINTON LUCAS | KANSAS CITY, MO

2022 MICD 75 CHARLESTON
2023 JUST CITY MAYORAL FELLOWSHIP

2027-2028 SPECIAL SESSION HOSTS RFP

Mayors' Institute on City Design

With a belief in the power of city design to transform communities, the Mayors' Institute on City Design (MICD) educates mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities.

MICD is a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors. Since 1986, we've offered collaborative learning programs and resources to mayors in order to make a purposeful, positive impact on America.

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MICD Programs

Institute Sessions

Institute Sessions are the core of MICD. At these collaborative workshops, mayors engage with design leaders to find solutions to their cities' most critical planning and design challenges. Sessions are organized around case study projects: Each mayor presents a project from their city and receives feedback from other mayors and design leaders.

Virtual Seminars

Virtual Seminars are engaging and interactive learning and discussion opportunities for small groups of mayors and city staff. Each one features a deep-dive presentation on a single timely topic from a design expert, followed by a moderated group discussion among the attending mayors and city staff.

Alumni Advising

MICD Alumni Advising helps mayors continue addressing the complex challenges facing today's cities, beyond the traditional Institute Session model. This program matches mayors and two of their staff members with two design experts with niche expertise relevant to the project at hand.

MICD Institute Sessions

Institute Sessions

Our flagship program since 1986.

Institute Sessions are the core of MICD. At these collaborative workshops, mayors engage with design leaders to find solutions to the most critical planning and design challenges facing their cities.

Each mayor presents a project from their city and receives feedback from other mayors and design leaders. Past projects have included the following topics: neighborhood revitalization, transportation planning, arts and culture, district visioning, main street and commercial corridor redevelopment, affordable housing, equitable development, historic preservation, and sustainable development.

Dates

2.5 DAY WORKSHOPS

Location

HOST MAYORS AND INSTITUTIONS VARY



7+7+0



“MICD is a transformational opportunity for elected officials to break away, focus, and truly ideate on specific urban challenges. This is an incredible program that serves as a model for how to pair expert professional counsel with driven & passionate public leaders.”

ANTOINE BRYANT | FORMER DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, CITY OF DETROIT

MICD NEW ORLEANS 2022

HOSTED BY TULANE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE



“Disproportionate impact” is a good way of describing the work of the Mayors’ Institute: a small group of committed people, in a very short period of time, brainstorming alternative futures with significant positive impact potential for the lives of many.

LUIS RICO-GUTIERREZ | DEAN, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF DESIGN

HOST OF MICD DES MOINES 2022

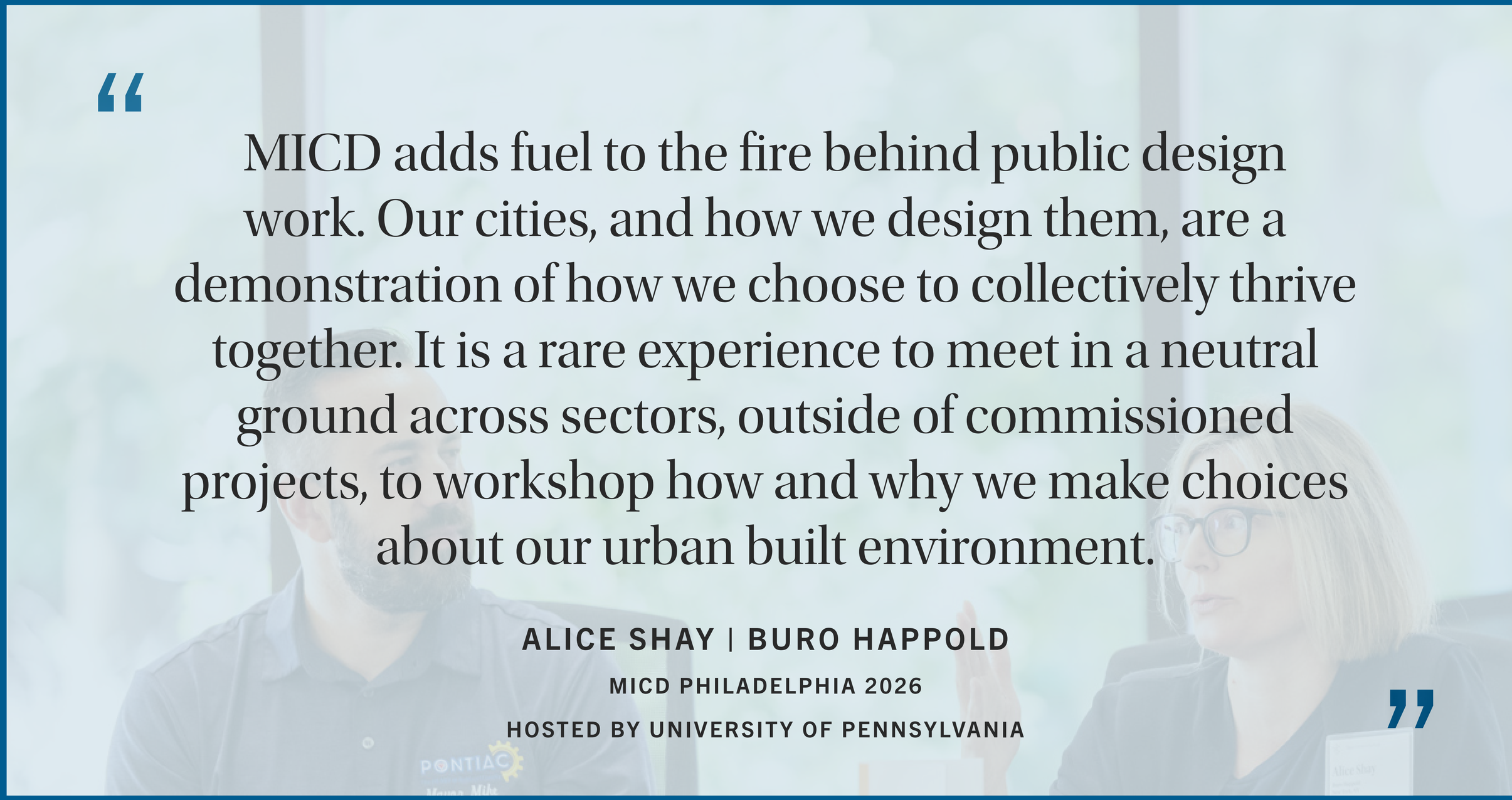


“The opportunity to spend intensive time with mayoral colleagues and the resource and leadership teams was a rare chance for a mayor to have uninterrupted creative time. I learned so much from all the brilliant fresh eyes.”

MAYOR GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA | NORTHAMPTON, MA

MICD PHILADELPHIA 2026

HOSTED BY UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

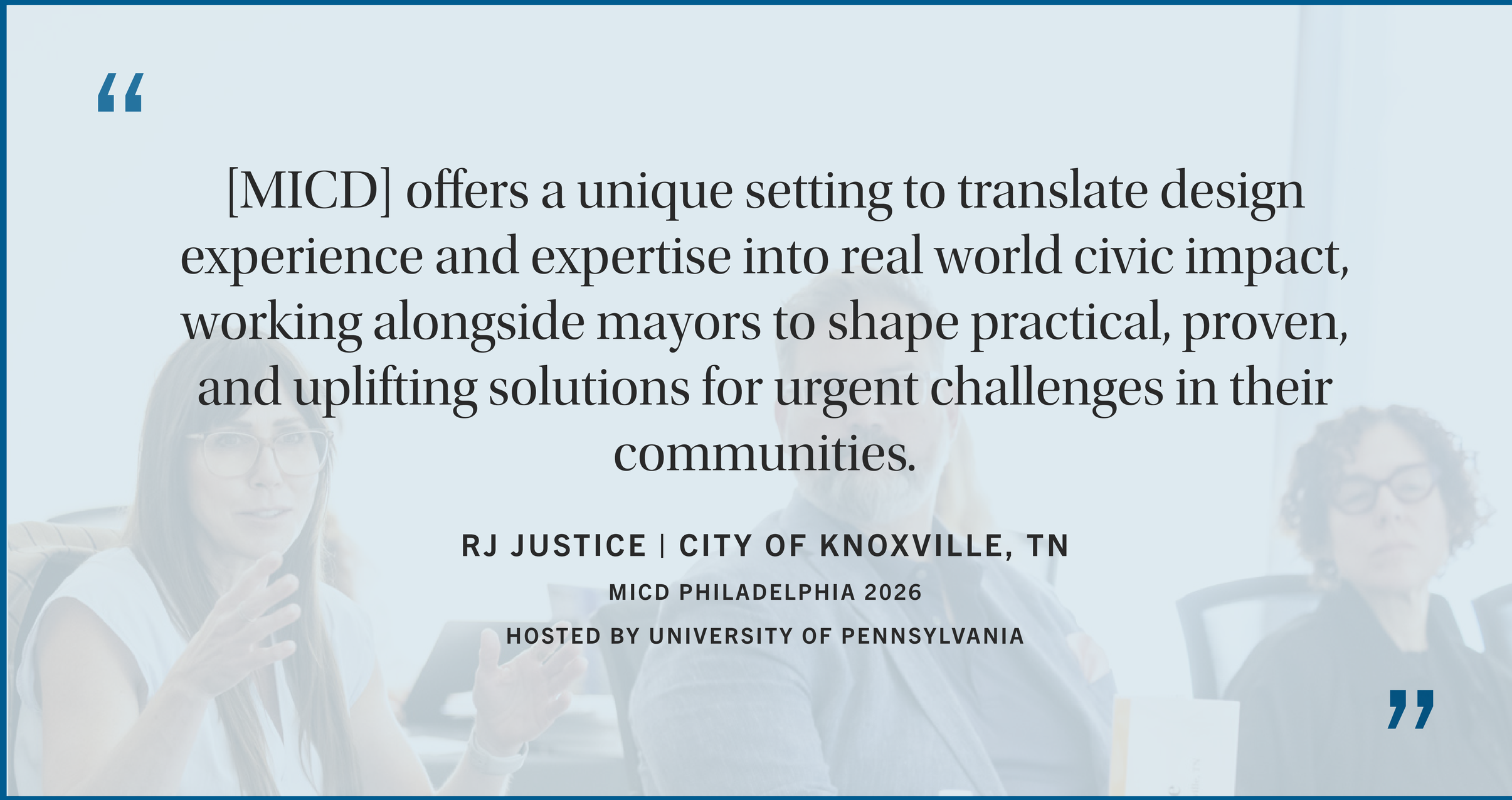


“MICD adds fuel to the fire behind public design work. Our cities, and how we design them, are a demonstration of how we choose to collectively thrive together. It is a rare experience to meet in a neutral ground across sectors, outside of commissioned projects, to workshop how and why we make choices about our urban built environment.”

ALICE SHAY | BURO HAPPOLD

MICD PHILADELPHIA 2026

HOSTED BY UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



“

[MICD] offers a unique setting to translate design experience and expertise into real world civic impact, working alongside mayors to shape practical, proven, and uplifting solutions for urgent challenges in their communities.

RJ JUSTICE | CITY OF KNOXVILLE, TN

MICD PHILADELPHIA 2026

HOSTED BY UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

”

2027-2028 Special Session Hosts RFP



“The opportunity to gather mayors and design professionals around complex topics is exhilarating. We had so many magic moments where transformative discussions took place in an environment unlike most due to the care and unique structure of the session. Hosting a session is a big commitment, but it is incredibly meaningful, inspiring, rewarding and a real honor.”

JULIE ABERG ROBISON | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR DESIGN RESEARCH AND OUTREACH (IDRO), IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF DESIGN

HOST OF MICD DES MOINES 2022

RFP Highlights

+ Selected hosts will run an MICD Institute Session geared towards small to mid-sized cities (“Special Session”)

+ Applicants may incorporate a theme into their proposal, but overall session is also an “urban design 101” education for mayors

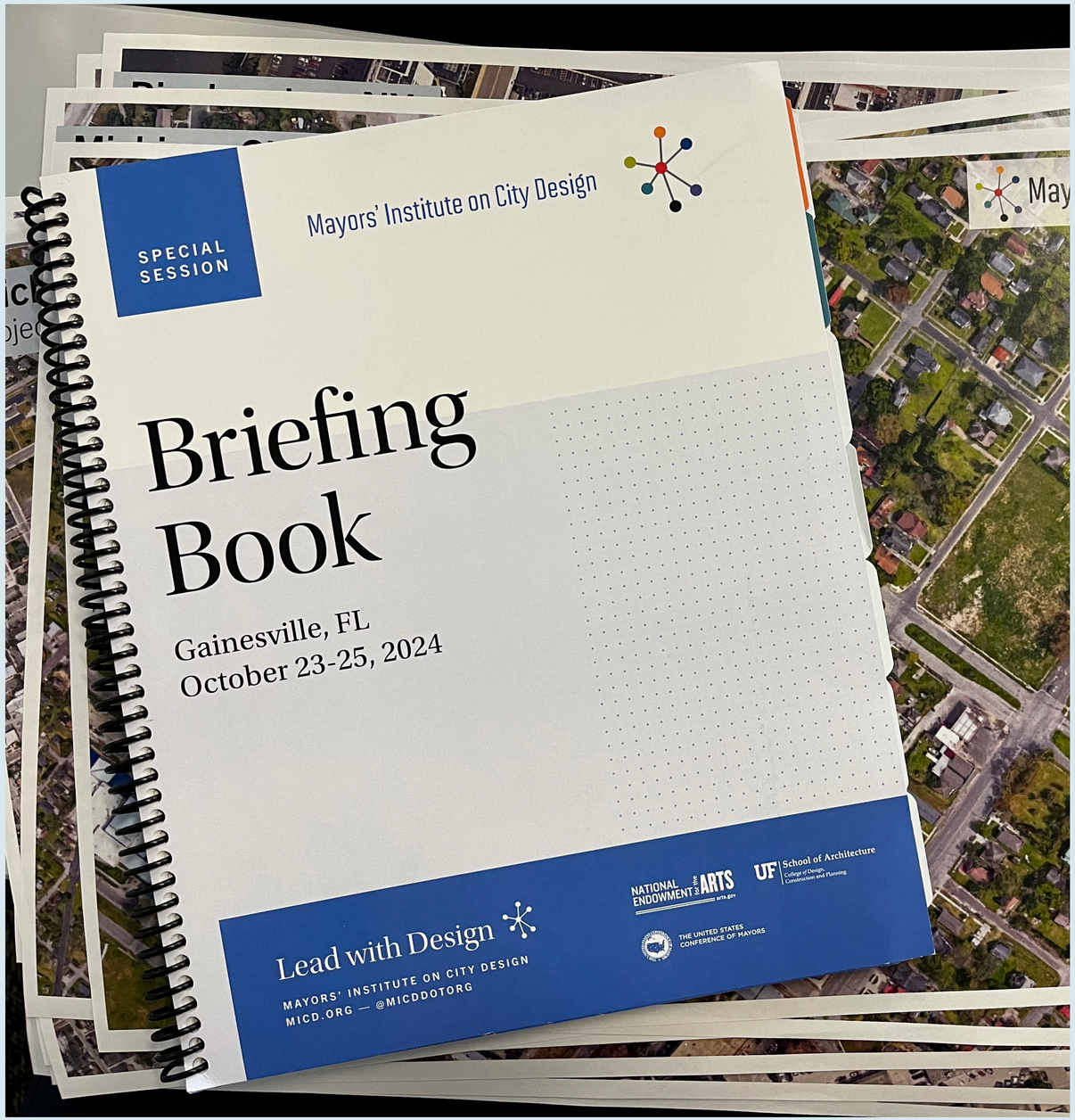
+ Up to 4 Special Sessions to occur in 2027 or 2028

+ Propose a resource team of professionals in allied design fields for the application

+ We will work with selected hosts to choose and invite mayors: you do not need to identify mayors at this stage

Scope of work

+ Significant time commitment: about an 8-month process start to finish
+ Dedicated Project Director + Project Coordinator as well as support staff
+ Biweekly meetings with MICD team
+ Site visits to mayors
+ Polished, thorough briefing materials and follow-up reporting



Budget

+ Selected hosts will be reimbursed up to $60k in direct expenses
+ No overhead or staff time may be charged against the $60k
+ There is no official match requirement, but your proposed budget should show any expected in-kind or donated services



Selection process

+ Proposals due January 28 at 4pm ET
+ Applications reviewed by outside panel of allied design professionals and a member of the public
+ Applications scored on criteria in RFP; panel makes final recommendations to the MICD Partnership
+ Up to 4 applicants will be selected to host MICD Special Sessions in 2027 and 2028
+ Applicants will be notified in March 2027



Selection criteria

+ Institutional interest and alignment
+ Capacity (including letter from institutional leadership)
+ Host city and participant experience (including letter from host mayor)
+ Resource team expertise
+ Budget and institutional support

See RFP for published criteria.



Institutional Interest and Alignment

Submit: A brief statement explaining your institution's interest in hosting, its understanding of MICD's mission and methodology, and the strengths it would bring to the partnership.

Panel will consider: Alignment with MICD's approach to design leadership, commitment to the established Institute model, and interest in connecting design expertise with the challenges of city governance.

Project Team and Organizational Capacity

Submit: Biographies of the proposed Project Director, Project Coordinator, and other key personnel. Include a staffing plan explaining how the institution will dedicate sufficient time and resources to the work, along with a **letter of commitment from institutional leadership (required).**

Panel will consider: Relevant professional qualifications, demonstrated project and event management experience, realistic staffing capacity, and specific institutional commitments.

Host City and Participant Experience

Submit: A description of the proposed host city, including potential meeting spaces, accommodations, opening reception and dinner venue for ~35 guests, dining venues with private rooms for at least 20 guests, site tours, and other elements of the participant experience. Include photographs where appropriate, address accessibility and transportation, and identify any proposed thematic focus. **Provide a letter of support from the host city's mayor (required).**

Panel will consider: Design quality, suitability and accessibility of proposed facilities, logistical feasibility, compelling local learning opportunities, and strength of host-city partnerships. Applicants proposing a theme should demonstrate relevant expertise; proposals without a theme will not be disadvantaged.

Resource Team Expertise

Submit: A preliminary roster of potential Resource Team members, including brief biographies and expertise. Demonstrate access to accomplished professionals across relevant design and development disciplines with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Represented professions must include architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, arts and culture, transportation, real estate development, and economic development.

Panel will consider: Professional distinction, interdisciplinary breadth, diversity of perspectives, and access to expertise beyond the host institution.

Applicants need not contact proposed Resource Team members before selection. All invitations require subsequent MICD approval.

Budget and Institutional Support

Submit: A preliminary budget identifying anticipated session expenses, proposed uses of MICD funding, and cash or in-kind contributions from the institution and community partners.

Panel will consider: A realistic understanding of session costs, institutional financial capacity, and the resources committed to delivering the work to MICD standards.

More tips for a strong proposal

+ Submit a polished package with all required components
+ Include photos where helpful
+ Check for typos
+ Demonstrate support from project director and institutional leadership for time and resources needed
+ Articulate Project Director’s expertise, commitment, and network of experts



Next steps

With selected hosts, MICD staff will...

+ Schedule an in-person meeting to tour proposed venues and provide guidance
+ Work with hosts to determine session dates
+ Provide a list of mayors approved to invite, and work with hosts to finalize the list of design leaders to invite
+ Provide timelines, templates, and guidance for hosting an MICD session
+ Invite Project Director to serve on another session’s Resource Team before hosting



Recent hosts

+ University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design
+ University of Florida School of Architecture
+ MASS Design Group
+ New York University Schack Institute of Real Estate & NYU Urban Lab
+ University of South Florida Center for Community Design & Research
+ University of Hawaii School of Architecture
+ Iowa State University College of Design
+ Tulane School of Architecture
+ University of Oklahoma Institute for Quality Communities
+ Van Alen Institute
+ Landmark Columbus

Questions?

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