



A note from the Executive Director

This year, the Mayors' Institute on City Design turns 40.

When Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. founded MICD in 1986, the program began with a powerful idea: mayors are the chief urban designers of their cities. They may not draw the plans or design the buildings, but the decisions they make every day shape how their cities look, feel, and work for generations.

Forty years later, more than 1,300 mayors have come to MICD with a challenge facing their city and a willingness to think differently about it. They have brought us downtowns and waterfronts, neighborhoods and highways, civic buildings and public spaces. They have wrestled with growth and disinvestment, connection and displacement, and the difficult work of turning ambitious ideas into reality.

And through it all, some questions have endured: Who is the city for? What makes a place worth caring about? How can public investment create greater public value? What can a mayor do to make good design not the exception, but the expectation?

Over the coming months, we're going to use our 40th anniversary as an opportunity to explore those questions and many more. We'll dig into four decades of MICD cases, revisit projects and people who have shaped the program, share stories from mayors and resource team members, and look at how the challenges facing cities—and the role of mayors in shaping them—have evolved. We'll also ask what the next 40 years might demand of cities, designers, and the people who lead them.

None of these forty years would have been possible without the mayors, resource team members, session partners, and friends who have contributed their ideas, experience, and time to MICD, or without the enduring partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts and the United States Conference of Mayors.

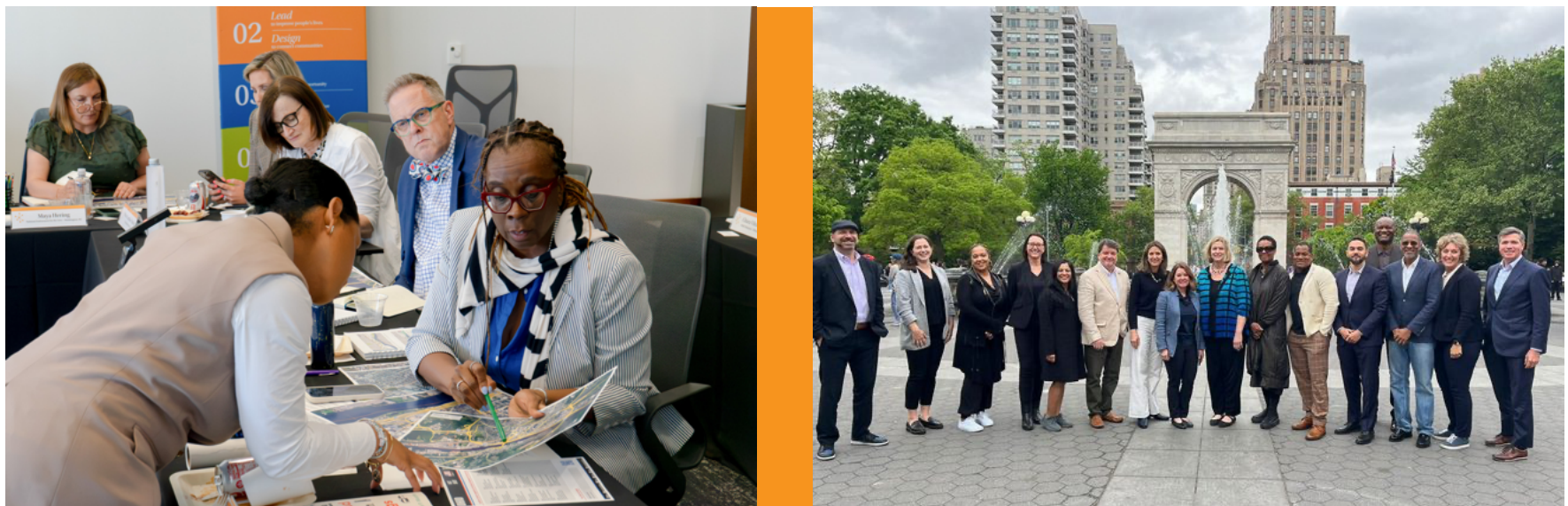
As we begin looking back, we'd love to hear from you: **What is one idea from MICD that has stayed with you?** Send us a few words, a story, a photo, or whatever comes to mind. We may share some of your reflections as we celebrate 40 years of MICD over the months ahead.

Trinity Simons Wagner

*Executive Director
Mayors' Institute on City Design*

“A city should be the place where the hearts of all citizens can sing.”

Former Charleston, SC Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. | MICD Founder



“Ultimately, design and design thinking are the processes of not accepting what the world would do if nobody cared.”

Nashville, TN Mayor Freddie O'Connell

“Design makes a mayor's priorities visible. You can announce a value in a speech; a building or a block demonstrates it for decades.”

Richard McCoy, Landmark Columbus Foundation



“Design thinking is an act of public service.”

Lenexa, KS Mayor Julie Sayers

“When practiced fully, design is also strategic, not purely a matter of aesthetics. This means that it involves addressing the *why* and *how*, not just *what*.”

Roger Sherman, Gensler, Urban Impact Group

We want to hear from you!

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we'll share some of our most meaningful moments and we'd love to hear about yours. We invite you to share your reflections by replying to this email or clicking the button below.

What is one idea from MICD that has stayed with you?

EMAIL US

The [Mayors' Institute on City Design](#) (MICD) is a leadership initiative of the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) in partnership with the [United States Conference of Mayors](#).

Since 1986, MICD has helped transform communities through design by preparing mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities.



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