



Columbus Learning Expedition Report

Columbus, Ohio

October 23 & 24, 2018

A summary report capturing
the key learning outcomes.

Prepared by:

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Lead partner



Supporting partners



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY



What is **New Urban Champions**?

New Urban Champions is the first global initiative to look beyond megacities and focus on secondary, small, and medium-sized cities.

Using our whole-city approach, the initiative has been established to provide a platform for participants to showcase successes, problem-solving challenges, and collaborate on potential solutions. We do this through events, research and the curation of content from influential contributors.

“New Urban Champions is a heterogeneous intellectual ecosystem; fostering ideas for education, sustainable development, human interactions, urban planning, and new economic models”

Jean-Marc Ogier, President,
La Rochelle University

Key to the initiative is our Learning Expedition model. A NewCities Learning Expedition is a curated two-day event gathering 30 to 35 participants from a range of settings and sectors from around the world to a host city. Activities include site visits to key partner locations, facilitated debates, exploration of business development models, networking, and hands-on training.

Why Columbus, Ohio?

In October 2018, NewCities held its first New Urban Champions Learning Expedition in Columbus, Ohio, in partnership with ENGIE, the Ohio State University, and Smart Columbus.

Columbus is rapidly increasing in prominence as a leading smart city; a reputation grown following winning the 2016 U.S. Department of Transportation's Smart City Challenge Award. The region has a strong ecosystem for post-secondary education, with the Ohio State University (Ohio State) standing out as an internationally renowned research institution. The city has also been identified as a national leader for entrepreneurship and continues to expand its community of local start-ups.

There is more behind Columbus' increasing magnetism as a place to live, work, and play. The smartest thing underway in the city might just be the "Columbus Way": a belief that a successful Columbus requires strong collaborations across sectors.



Program Recap & Who Was There

The two days provided plenty of opportunities for discussions and networking. The full program is available via the [NewCities website](#).

Tuesday October 23

Fireside chat

Alex Fischer (President and CEO, Columbus Partnership)
Joanna Pinkerton (CEO, Central Ohio Transit Authority)
Shannon Hardin (President, Columbus City Council)

The Revitalized Scioto Mile (Tour)

Guy Worley (President & CEO, Columbus Downtown Development Corporation)

Writing the Playbook for Smart Mobility

Courtney Falato (Smart Cities Relationship Director, Ohio State)
Brandi Braun (Deputy Innovation Officer, City of Columbus)
Mark Patton (Vice President, Smart Columbus & Columbus Partnership)
Jordan Davis (Director Smart Columbus, Columbus Partnership)
Jodie Bare (Deputy Program Manager, Smart Columbus)
Mandy Bishop (Deputy Director of Public Service/Smart Columbus Program Manager, City of Columbus)

Wednesday October 24

Welcome

Dr. Bruce McPheron (Provost, Ohio State)

Designing for Collaboration between Ohio State and ENGIE

Scott Potter (Senior Director, Comprehensive Energy Management, Ohio State)
Kate Bartter (Director, Office of Energy and Environment, Ohio State)
Serdar Tufekci (CEO, Ohio State Energy Partners)

Key address

Crafting a 30-year Strategic
City-Region Vision

Honorable Andrew Ginther (Mayor, City of Columbus)

Kerstin Carr (Director, Planning & Environment, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission)

Reversing the Brain Drain: Recruiting and Retaining Talent to Columbus Clean Energy on Campus (Tour)

Dr. Dorota Grejner-Brezinska (Associate Dean for Research, College of Engineering, Ohio State)

Jordan Davis (Director, Columbus Partnerships, Smart Columbus)



Clockwise from top: Mayor Andrew Ginther with Rajani Nar of San José, Melanie Batke of Memphis, Judy Martinez-Faye of Siemens, Daffney Moore of East St. Louis, Jordan Payson and Christina Willingham of Austin, and Tori Russo of Syracuse.

Our first panel of the LEX featured Alex Fischer, CEO of Columbus Partnership, Shannon Hardin, City Council President, Joanna Pinkerton, CEO of COTA, and moderated by NewCities manager of research, Michael Woodbridge.

Columbus, OH airport.

Sébastien Turbat of NewCities, Charlie Wolff of Spokane, Tory Russo of Syracuse, Jordan Payson of Austin, Kathleen Krolak of New Haven, Daffney Moore of East St. Louis, Michael Woodbridge of NewCities, Christina Willingham of Austin, Melanie Batke of Memphis, and Jean Marc Ogier of University of La Rochelle.

Mayor Andrew Ginther and Sébastien Turbot of NewCities.

Key Learning Outcomes

“We believe mobility is the great equalizer of the 21st century, and will be vital in Columbus’ effort for connecting the disconnected, opening ladders of opportunity, and growing and sharing our prosperity”

Mayor Andrew Ginther, Columbus

At the end of the Learning Expedition, we dedicated time to identify key takeaways to share more widely.

A spirit of collaboration can become a way of life

The ‘Columbus Way’ has become a brand identity and is synonymous with the success of the Columbus city-region. This collaborative approach to public-private partnership hinges on the belief that a city the size of Columbus (under one million residents) has the great advantage of being able to efficiently get business and community leaders in the same room together to advance on vital social, economic, and environmental issues.

The value of thinking inside the box... by having key stakeholders share an office

The Smart Columbus Experience is home to over 50 employees from 5 different organizations, the City of Columbus, Columbus Partnership, The Ohio State University, American Electric Power, and Pillar Technologies. This physically breaks silos between different organizations in Columbus leading to strong internal communications and strong collaborations.

How a university can function as a city within the city

With 1,800 acres and a student population of over 60,000 (not including faculty, staff and peripheral businesses) Ohio State represents a city within a city. United by a desire to attract and retain talent, Ohio State and the City of Columbus work together to integrate campus and city life and develop world-class facilities, such as the nascent district energy network.



Above: Participants broke out into group discussions hosted at the Smart Columbus Experience Center

The power of revitalized urban spaces

The improvements to Scioto Mile have created a vibrant public space reconnecting downtown Columbus to the Scioto River. Integrated parks, boulevards, bikeways and pedestrian walkways revitalize the area and set the foundation for high-density, transit-oriented and mixed-use development in downtown Columbus.

Transport improvements can enhance social equity

A major factor for Columbus winning the 2016 Smart City Award was the demonstration of how the City would use the award to improve social equity. Mayor Andrew Ginther reinforced this during his attendance at the event, stating “we believe mobility is the great equalizer of the 21st century, and will be vital in Columbus’ effort for connecting the disconnected, opening ladders of opportunity, and growing and sharing our prosperity”.



Above: Representatives from local governments and universities in the U.S., France, and Mexico attended the Learning Expedition

ENGIE's Perspective

By Matthieu Besson, Strategic Partnerships and Institutional Relations, Solutions for Cities and Territories

As Lead Partner of the Columbus Learning Expedition, ENGIE was excited for the opportunity to showcase one of our flagship projects, and curious to discover more about Columbus' increasingly prolific urban innovation ecosystem.

In Columbus, we indeed discovered a city which was actively working on making itself an attractive place to work, live and play. The city has revitalized its downtown area, engaged in various smart city projects, actively worked to improve inclusivity and equity, and developed opportunities for the students at Ohio State to settle locally after their graduation. This commitment to retaining and attracting talent goes a long way to explaining the culture of entrepreneurship in Columbus.

It was very impressive to learn about and experience the energetic community of public, private and civil society actors. Beyond the infectious enthusiasm of people we met there, two days provided enough time to learn of the great extent to which everyone we spoke to is united by a shared vision of making Columbus a better place. This unity is a key success factor and translates concretely into the "Columbus Way" of pursuing cross-sectoral partnerships on a wide range of topics.

We found the same spirit at Ohio State in the way they designed the 50-year energy management contract - thanks to which they will rely on the Ohio State Energy Partners (OSEP - a joint venture between ENGIE and Axium) to optimize the production and use of energy on campus in the long-term. We were very excited to showcase this unique contract and talk about how the relationship between the university and the ENGIE-Axium consortium extends beyond energy management into academic collaboration and developments such as OSEP organizing a hackathon with OSU students and improving wifi coverage whilst simultaneously revamping light poles.

Following the Learning Expedition, ENGIE looked at the experience as an organization and talked about how we too are an exemplar of the Columbus Way. And while we discovered the extent to which technology is the basis for a lot of the improvements underway in the city, we also walked away with the certainty that a shared vision and alignment towards developing an inclusive and attractive city is the most essential success factor.



What's Next for New Urban Champions?

There is growing excitement around expanding the New Urban Champions initiative, and a clear appetite among our partners and existing community of participants to get more involved. In 2019, we will explore several themes, including how good ideas spread and scale, strategies to incentivize entrepreneurship, new ways to finance improved infrastructure, and the importance of leveraging the presence of academic institutions. For more detail about the New Urban Champions initiative and ways to get involved, visit the NewCities website.

“This was one of the most amazing and gratifying conferences that I have attended. The NewCities team was so thoughtful in every step of the way to expose, encourage, and share how we can create a better city”

Rajani Nair, Smart City Manager,
City of San José

2018

MAY

Editorial Content Track

OCT

Learning Expedition (LEX) Columbus, Ohio

DEC

Summary Report

2019

Q1

Editorial Online Features

Q2

LEX - Europe

Editorial Content Track

Q3

LEX - United States

Q4

Annual Forum

Summary Report

2020

Q1

Editorial Online Features

Q2

LEX - Location tbd

Q3

LEX - Location tbd

Research Project Launch

Q4

Annual Forum

Summary Report



NewCities is a global nonprofit committed to shaping a better urban future. We envision a world where cities drive economic, social and environmental progress. We seek the most progressive and innovative ideas that will drive positive change in cities, large and small. We create a global dialogue and develop cutting-edge knowledge on the world's most pressing urban issues. We connect and empower businesses, governments and civil society to accelerate the transition to sustainable cities. We leverage our unparalleled network to showcase how technology and innovation can tackle urban challenges.

www.newcities.org  [@NewCities](https://twitter.com/NewCities)



ENGIE is a global energy and services group, focusing on three core activities: low-carbon power generation based on natural gas and renewable energy, global networks, and customer solutions. Driven by their ambition to contribute to a harmonious progress, Engie take up major global challenges such as the fight against global warming, access to energy for all, mobility, and offer their residential customers, businesses and communities energy production solutions and services that reconcile individual and collective interests.

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