



For Immediate Release
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The Sustainability of Small and Mid-Size Cities

Following our foundational Urban Thinkers Campus conference focusing on small and mid-size cities in preparation for Habitat III, the Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities has been working to establish a consortium of cities comprising what is known as the BIG 10 conference in the United States. These 14 cities, located within the upper Midwest and Northeast of the country, have in common these factors:

- All are small to mid-size cities with universities at their cores.
- They all face the challenge of sufficient affordable workforce housing, as well as workforce development that meets the demands of a changing economy.
- Food systems are playing an increasingly important role in development and attainment of a vital city and its rural surroundings.
- These cities, like cities around the world, must deal first-hand with the challenges wrought by climate change, population migration, increasing demand on resources with less help from federal and state agencies in terms of policies and revenues.

To that end, the Joslyn Institute convened an inaugural meeting of these cities' administrators and sustainability managers to address many of these issues in 2018.

Cities are the vanguard in addressing immediate effects of climate change, population migration and growth, and infrastructure modernization in the United States. Amidst a general atmosphere of federal and state political deadlock, cities now face frontline and more urgent demands with fewer resources to address them. Universities, on the other hand, are virtual laboratories of Big Data, technological breakthroughs, and innovative sustainability research and modeling.

Resilience, long-term sustainability, and new approaches to communication, community engagement and finance, leadership, metrics and data, regional food systems, affordable housing, job growth and workforce

training are issues common among all cities. How cities and universities can work together to achieve best practices and a stronger voice in influencing and driving public policy and quality of life has been at the core of our quest. Cities and universities working in tandem are seen as engines of innovation, and a key to a creative, sustainable economy.

The conference included these cities' best practices and cautionary tales in terms of transportation, housing, infrastructure. Particular focus on food systems, housing and workforce development, and rural-urban synergies was brought by several panels and guest speakers. Various cities' initiatives and innovations were presented, with an eye toward scalability and transferability. W. Cecil Steward, President and CEO of the Joslyn Institute, demonstrated how the use of **Sustainometrics**® is ideal for avoiding unforeseen consequences in design, planning and assessment of all civic projects.

The Joslyn Institute plans to continue building upon the relationship with the BIG 10 city managers and sustainability coordinators, bringing a strong and vital consortium together to address the issues we all face due to climate change, population change and migration, and stress on our resources. Global implications are always forefront as we explore ideas, innovations and solutions for cities and their interdependent rural regions.

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