

### Background

**The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU)** is a member-based nonprofit organization championing better design of cities and towns to improve lives and strengthen communities for all. For thirty years, CNU has been the only organization reforming city-building across the country, gathering the broad spectrum of practitioners and advocates who share our mission. By highlighting impactful design principles and lowering barriers to change, CNU amplifies the grassroots power of our thousands of members to build and rebuild their cities and towns in ways that improve sustainability, accessibility, and equity for years to come.

- **We convene** a broad spectrum of multidisciplinary practitioners and advocates working on reforming city-building, driving change in communities across the US and beyond.
- **We share** best practices in urban design, policy, and implementation, opening doors for our members to enact meaningful change in their communities.
- **We amplify** the grassroots power of our members working to build/rebuild their cities and towns in ways that improve sustainability, accessibility, and equity for years to come.

### About New Urbanism

The practice of New Urbanism developed in the 1990s in reaction to the proliferation of suburban sprawl, led by a group of architects and designers who knew the built environment was capable of offering more social, economic, and environmental benefits than the prevailing real estate development patterns could provide. Built on the 27 principles of the [Charter of the New Urbanism](#), New Urbanism is more than a set of design guidelines or policy recommendations. It is an intersectional way of practicing urbanism - *of building community* - that requires policy, design, and development to all play a role in achieving a vision for the future in which intentional design improves the lives of all people.

### About the Congress

Our annual event - called a Congress - has long been CNU's largest and most significant program, and our prime opportunity to further the practice of New Urbanism by convening to discuss, debate, and learn from one another. The Congress is unique among conferences or gatherings in the following ways:

1. **Context Matters.** We move the location of our Congress every year not just so our attendees can see new things. We encourage our attendees to examine and learn from new cities and regions; to see the unique ways in which advocates and practitioners in the local host city have faced issues; and identify commonalities that can inspire change in our attendees' practice, and to look with fresh eyes onto local problem-solving opportunities.

- 2. Collaboration in a Problem Space.** We develop a Focus, or problem space, that highlights an issue or topic in the local context that could benefit from the brain power of hundreds of New Urbanist practitioners across disciplines. The Focus allows the Congress to bring a question, or set of issues, to the forefront of the content - providing education and collaboration that helps evolve the collective practice of New Urbanism.
- 3. Multidisciplinary Perspectives.** The annual Congress is one of the only professional gatherings that cuts across disciplines - our attendees include planners and urban designers, architects and landscape architects, traffic and building engineers, developers and real estate professionals, academics and researchers, and those with expertise in market or research analysis. The opportunity to rub shoulders with someone from a discipline outside your own - and markedly change the way you practice - is unique to CNU's Congress.
- 4. Integration of Design and Policy.** A foundational aspect of New Urbanist practice is in understanding the integration and intersection of design and policy. Good yet siloed design lacks the power to provide the environmental, economic, and social benefits that are otherwise possible. Design must be integrated with policy interventions to be able to genuinely deliver walkable, sustainable, and more equity-supportive urbanism.

### Bringing the Congress Home

Hosting an annual Congress is an incredible partnership between CNU's staff and a dedicated local host committee with an opportunity to catalyze significant change in - and highlight the progress of - your city or region.

### Physical Requirements: Hotels and Venues

#### **Dates:**

The Congress is held in the late spring / early summer, depending on the calendar of holidays or local events, and other major conferences. The Congress goes from Tuesday to Saturday, with Wednesday to Friday as peak days. We often hold shoulder events on the first or last day of the event in partnership with subsets of our group.

#### **Expected Attendance:**

1,500 people

#### **Room Block:**

Each Congress requires one to two main hotels that can accommodate the following number of room nights.

- Monday: 30 rooms nights
- Tuesday: 75 rooms nights
- Wednesday: 375 room nights

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- Thursday: 375 rooms nights
- Friday: 325 rooms nights
- Saturday: 250 rooms nights
- Total: **1,380 room nights**

Exact room numbers to be adjusted based on hotel, space, and Congress planning. Room rates must include a \$10 rebate per room night and 10% commission both issued as a credit to the master account. Previous room pick-ups are in *Appendix I*.

### **Meeting Space:**

CNU requires plenary / general session space for 1100 as well as 6-8 concurrent breakout rooms holding over 100 in theater seating. A combination of private event space (theaters, auditoriums, concert venues, etc.) and hotel meeting space (ballrooms). Additionally, other creative solutions to hosting our audience will be entertained.

### **General Session:**

Plenary / general session timing can be flexible depending on options but typically CNU starts each day in general session from 8:30 to 10:00am.

### **Breakouts:**

Must be available 24/7, capacity is approximate:  
6 rooms for 150 set in Theatre; 2-3 rooms set for 100 in rounds.

### **Show Management Space:**

- Board Meeting: 1 boardroom for 20 people conference style
- Staff Office: Monday through Sunday. Perimeter tables w/ chairs or existing conference set, lockable.
- Speaker Ready Room: Tuesday - Saturday, conference set or a couple rounds
- Registration: Foyer space with room for 4 registration counter/cocktail tables for self-check in stations; CNU information table; volunteer check in table; local CVB information table.
- All needed from Wednesday through Saturday

### **Exhibits:**

Exhibit space for 10-15 six-foot tabletops. We would like these in a foyer space instead of closed off in a room:

- Exhibitors move-in: Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning
- Show Hours: Thursday & Friday all day, Saturday morning
- Exhibitors move-out: Saturday

This area will require space for the following:

- Food & Beverage stations: Bars (4 or 5), break stations, and scattered cocktail rounds.
- Bookstore: 8-10 tables in a U-Shape

### **Food & Beverage:**

CNU's F&B minimum should be between \$60,000 - \$100,000 all inclusive for the conference week.

This will include:

- Continental breakfast w/ protein enhancement: Thurs & Fri
- Hot Breakfast Buffet: Saturday
- Various Coffee Breaks for four days (Wed, Fri, Sat)
- Possible Lunches for purchase on Thursday, Friday & Saturday (if restaurants/concession stands are not readily available)

### Building a Local Host Committee

The partnership between CNU's staff, board, and the Local Host Committee (LHC) is one of the foundational elements to a Congress' success. The LHC serves the following key roles:

1. **Partner:** We rely on the LHC to help us deliver the Congress in fundamental ways. A cooperative, competent LHC is vital to the success of the event from inception to delivery. By taking on the role of LHC, you are signing up to help deliver a major programmatic event across a number of key areas, as described below. Specific focus on cooperative delivery of tours, Legacy Projects, fundraising, and onsite coordination.
2. **Ambassador:** We rely on the LHC to help communicate the unique opportunity that is hosting a Congress to local partners, Legacy Project participants, volunteers, and media.
3. **Local Knowledge Provider:** We rely on the LHC to inform our decision-making around programmatic elements, tours, speakers, venues, events, and engagement.

LHC time commitment and involvement will vary throughout the cycle of developing and delivering the Congress. For the chairs for committee leaders, this averages 10 - 25 hours a month, with the members of each committee having varying responsibilities and time commitments. The recommended committee structure is as follows:

#### Chair, Co-Chairs, or Executive Committee:

CNU needs a main point of contact with whom to work directly throughout the process of development and delivery of the Congress. This can be a single person, a co-chair arrangement, or a small group (less than 5) who together serve as the 'executive' committee for the entire LHC. This depends largely on the working relationships locally and how many people want to be regularly interfacing with CNU. However, we have found that a single or pair of chairs need to be identified from the earliest stages of planning, for efficient decision making throughout the process. Additional key roles on the LHC include:

1. **Tours:** One of the main avenues for the LHC to influence what attendees to the Congress do and see is through the tours program. We recommended that between 20-30 tours are developed that allow attendees to experience the city or region on foot, bike, and by bus. The Tours Committee (or Tours Chair) is responsible for identifying potential tour subjects / leaders and working with CNU staff to refine the concepts and execute the tours. The tour development starts in August of the year prior to the Congress and work continues (with ebbs and flows) through the event. Roles and responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. *LHC:* Develops draft list of tours, reviews and refines with CNU to get final titles and descriptions. Organizes speakers and gets all necessary information for CNU

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to apply for CEUs. Works with tour leaders to develop necessary route information. Recommends transportation companies, if needed. Is available on site at the Congress for help coordinating / running tours in conjunction with volunteers.

- b. *CNU*: Agrees to final tour descriptions and titles. Applies tours for CEUs. Prices out tours. Contracts with transportation companies. Communicates with speakers for registration. Assigns volunteers and coordinates on-site departure / execution at the Congress.
2. **Legacy Projects**: This is the LHC's opportunity to bring the power of CNU's membership and the principles of New Urbanism to actual projects in the host city or region. It is also a significant programmatic effort for CNU and in many way operates on a cycle separate from, but in partnership with, the Congress. Legacy Project work starts in July of the year prior to the Congress at the very latest, with a heavy lift occurring during the week of the charrettes, which can range from the fall of that same year to January-February of the following year. It is recommended that the LHC has a small committee (or a Chair with a group of volunteers) to coordinate the Legacy Projects that will not have other Congress responsibilities to ensure they are able to be focused on leveraging this program. Roles and responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. *LHC*: Identifies a group of local projects that represent issues that are common within the regional context and that tie to the Focus of the Congress. Works with CNU to provide a LOI or RFP process to further understand each project. When projects are selected, works with CNU and project leaders to refine scope and and expectations, ensuring project partners understand Legacy Projects purpose. Once firms are selected by CNU, attend kick-off calls to set up the projects for success. Assist in logistical support as needed leading up to the charrette dates. Assist in communications and marketing outreach as needed leading up to the charrette dates. Represent the Congress and the LHC onsite during the charrette dates.
  - b. *CNU*: Provides Legacy Project information to the LHC to inform project selection. Selects final projects based on knowledge passed on by LHC. Identifies firms for projects, based on type and scope. Organizes kick-off and subsequent calls. Provides logistical support as needed leading up to the charrette dates. Provides all invoicing for projects and firms. Provides catering and resources as needed onsite during the charrette dates. Provides staff to represent CNU and assist the firms as needed onsite during the charrette dates. Works with the firms to deliver final content by the Congress. Coordinates with local project partners to ensure engagement at the Congress.
3. **Venues**: CNU needs local intel on venues - from the hotel, meeting space, plenary space, as well as additional smaller venues for VIP receptions, development events, and socials. The LHC will provide recommendations. CNU will make decisions based on budget in partnership with the LHC. There does not usually need to be a person or committee assigned entirely to venues.
4. **Communications and Marketing**: CNU needs partnership in developing communications and marketing strategies for the Congress that go beyond registration outreach. The LHC will work with CNU staff to identify local stories that need to be told, to connect CNU staff with local media outlets, and to determine the lasting impact we

want the Congress to have. There does not usually need to be a person or committee assigned entirely to communications if there is a strong understanding of the local communications context represented on the committee or amongst the chairs.

5. **Volunteers:** CNU requires onsite volunteers for the Legacy Project charrette dates as well as during the Congress. In return for 10 hours of volunteer time, CNU provides a very discounted registration. Volunteers are identified through a general application online, to which the LHC can direct groups of people they have identified as being reliable volunteers - such as local city staff, university students, etc. A LHC Volunteer Coordinator is generally recommended - who can serve on the broader LHC but not be a Chair. Roles and responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. *LHC:* Identifies local groups that might be interested in volunteering and directing them to CNU's application. Working with CNU staff to determine number of volunteers needed (and where) based on a schedule provided by CNU. Developing a sign-up genius (or similar form) for volunteers to claim shifts. Provides onsite oversight and coordination of the volunteers, in partnership with CNU staff.
  - b. *CNU:* Builds application form, reviews applications, and accepts volunteers. Builds a schedule of shifts to determine number of volunteers needed. Provides onsite oversight and coordination of the volunteers, in partnership with LHC coordinator.

The LHC will start meeting monthly with CNU upon selection of the city - these meetings will generally be short and informational, providing the opportunity for the LHC to ask questions and build schedules / task lists. These meetings will gradually become more frequent as the Congress development evolves. A full draft schedule can be found in *Appendix II*.

### Fundraising

CNU needs to raise a minimum of \$400k to pay for the Congress, which will be done in partnership with the LHC. To apply to host a Congress, you must demonstrate a capacity to raise \$200k in individual sponsorships, complete with prospects and potential giving levels. CNU will work with the LHC to identify foundational partners who are mission-aligned and can support the delivery of outcomes that the Congress programming will bring to the community, in addition to leveraging CNU's own member firms for individual sponsorships. Examples of joint fundraising efforts would be to jointly approach a local philanthropic or corporate partnership to support major programming or implementation of the Legacy Projects, study tours, or some other portion of the Congress. More information is found in the RFP form below.

At the outset of the Congress planning, CNU Executive Leadership will present the LHC Chairs with a draft budget based on base venue and hotel costs. In partnership, they will refine the budget based on local venue and transportation costs, in addition to other costs associated with the specific context of this Congress. Examples of fluctuating costs include: the request of the LHC to host an event, plenary, or party at a specific venue or the need to provide increased transport between locations beyond the usual tours.

Outside of the general LHC meetings, CNU will require the Chairs or Fundraising Chair to meet regularly with staff to chart the progress of sponsorships. CNU will provide and manage a

spreadsheet for organizing asks, invoices, benefits, and recognition. CNU will determine benefits for sponsorship levels.

### Program

CNU will incorporate 1-2 representatives from the LHC into our existing process for program development, which is led by the Congress Program Committee. This process kicks off in September of the year prior to the Congress and will involve 2-3 meetings, with opportunities for review and work between them. The Congress Program Committee is responsible for filling about 85% of the program's meetings and classes.

Outside of this process, CNU staff manages the identification and development of Main Stage discussions, workshops, keynotes, and core educational opportunities. CNU relies on LHC knowledge of their specific local context to inform these, weaving throughout all the Congress content. CNU expects and welcomes ongoing ideas for incorporating local context into program development as well as ideas for engaging and inspiring speakers, issues to be workshopped, and presentations attendees need to hear.

### Responding to the RFP

Please submit the following to CNU ([congress@cnu.org](mailto:congress@cnu.org)), in PDF form, to express your interest in hosting CNU 34. RFP responses will be reviewed on a rolling basis, but must be received by June 30, 2024.

1. **City, Region, or Location**
2. **Point of Contact** for the RFP (including phone number and email)
3. **Proposed Dates** (May 1 - June 30, in order of preference) - avoiding major holidays
4. **The Pitch** - 3-4 paragraphs that cover some of the following:
  - a. Why your city, region, or location?
  - b. Why now? What is happening that requires the attention of CNU attendees, or that they can learn from you?
  - c. What do you love about your city, region, or location that you want to make sure everyone sees?
  - d. Where do you see your city, region, or location reflected in the [Charter of the New Urbanism](#)? What section or sections of the Charter feel particularly important to your context?
  - e. What in your city, region, or location needs work? What have it accomplished?
  - f. What do you stand to gain from having the Congress in your city, region, or location? What are your major goals?
5. **Proposed Tours**
  - a. 10-15 tours you would take us on to show us the uniqueness and complexity of your city, region, or location. Title and short description only (with photos, optional).
6. **LHC Partners**
  - a. Who is on your LHC team and what role will they play? Please include their relationship to the city, region, or location and what skills they bring to the LHC.

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### **7. Fundraising**

- a. A list of prospects totalling \$200k in individual sponsorships that includes name, amount, whether you have contacted them, and likelihood of commitment. Additional list of CNU mission-aligned foundations or corporate prospects that the LHC intends to steward in partnership with CNU.

### **8. Venues**

- a. Any ideal venues for elements of the Congress that you would like us to know about.
- b. Hotel or hotels that can accommodate the roomblock and meeting space described in the above.



APPENDIX I: Previous Pick-ups

**CNU 32: Cincinnati, OH**

5/15/24 - 5/18/24

Hilton Netherland Plaza: Rate \$199/night

*TBD*

**CNU 31: Charlotte, NC**

5/31/23 - 6/3/23

Westin Uptown Charlotte: Rate \$189/night

Contact: Barbara Dragan

*Total pick ups: 1305 (plus 359 outside block)*

**CNU 30: Oklahoma City**

3/22/22 - 3/26/22

Sheraton Oklahoma City: Rate \$169/night

Contact: DeeDee DeVore

The Skirvin Hilton

Rate \$189/night

*Total Pick up: 1,154 (+256 outside of block)*

**CNU 28 & 29** – both virtual

**CNU 27: Louisville**

6/12/19 - 6/15/19

Seelbach Hilton: Rate \$199/night

Contact: Rebecca Brittain

Embassy Suites Downtown: Rate \$195/night

Contact: Dallas Henson

*Total Pick up: 1,183 (+226 outside of block)*

**CNU 26: Savannah**

5/15/18 - 5/19/18

The DeSoto Savannah: Rate \$179/night

Contact: Kim Chambless

*Total: 1,124 (including overflow hotels)*

## APPENDIX II: Sample Schedule

### **CNU 34 | Timeline**

#### **SUMMER 2024**

- CNU Site Visit:
- In June, July or August of 2024, CNU executive leadership will travel to the city, region, or location to tour venues and get a general feel for the potential Congress.
- The goal of this trip is to select main Congress venues (hotel, main stage space) that will determine the Congress days.
- CNU organizes this trip in partnership with the CVB. CNU will provide the CVB with our meeting space requirements and the CVB will plan the venue visits.
- The LHC chair(s) should plan to attend portions of the site visit and inform the following:
  - Charter Awards theater space (400-500 people)
  - VIP reception ideas (125 or so people)
  - 1-2 smaller venues for auxiliary events
  - Any ideas for opening or closing party you'd like us to consider
- The LHC should also plan to share 1-2 meals and/or meetings with the CNU executive leadership to discuss the potential Congress Focus, Tours, and other elements.

#### **FALL 2024**

- CNU has executed contracts with major venues.
- LHC chair(s) begin monthly meetings with CNU
- LHC chair(s) identify and flesh out their committee membership

#### **WINTER / SPRING 2025**

- LHC provides:
  - Promotional language about the city, region, or location
  - Images for CNU to develop logo and branding materials
  - Optional: the LHC can work on a promotional video to be shown at CNU 33
- Full LHC attends CNU 33 to be held in Providence RI in June
- CNU 34 promotion takes place on final main stage / final day of CNU 33

#### **SUMMER 2025**

- CNU schedules an official kick-off call with the LHC chair(s) and any committee leaders that the LHC would like to invite for a full schedule overview and Q&A.
- The following will either be covered in this kick-off or separate meetings:
  - Legacy Projects:
    - Develop and distribute RFP with CNU by July
    - Schedule charrette dates
  - Fundraising:

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- Develop budgeting goals with CNU Leadership
- Tours:
  - Develop initial list of tours / idea for tour scheduling by August
- Program:
  - CNU leadership will work on the focus / problem area for the Congress, and will ask for feedback from CNU Chairs as necessary.

### FALL 2025

- Legacy Projects:
  - Finalize date of charrettes
  - Assist in finding firms, supplementary skills
  - Begin promotion if necessary
- Fundraising:
  - Ongoing
- Tours:
  - Deliver final recommendations for tours (titles, descriptions, times, type, tour guides) for review by CNU - end of September
- Program:
  - Finalize schedule for program content collection, process for review
  - Provide recommendations for Main Stage speakers submitted to CNU leadership for consideration
  - Identify any local government etc. speakers that need to be included.
- Promotion:
  - As needed re: program outreach

### WINTER 2025 - 2026

- Promotion:
  - Legacy Projects
  - Program
- Fundraising:
  - Ongoing
- Legacy Projects:
  - Supporting CNU staff in planning the charrettes, including regular calls, identification of materials, etc.
- Tours:
  - Finalize

### SPRING 2026

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- Legacy Project Charrettes - media outreach, community engagement, support of CNU staff
- Launching registration - promotion
- Finalizing Program - speaker management
- Fundraising - ongoing