

# BE THE CHANGE CIVIC SUMMIT

## MAURICE COX

*Emma Bloomberg Professor in Residence of Urban Planning and Design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design*

Maurice D. Cox is Emma Bloomberg Professor in Residence of Urban Planning and Design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Prior to joining the GSD faculty, Cox was Director of Planning and Development for the City of Detroit between 2015-2019 and Commissioner of Planning and Development for the City of Chicago between 2019-2023, where he focused on the adaptive challenges facing contemporary urban revitalization.

Cox is an urban designer acclaimed for his ability to merge architecture, design, and politics in pursuit of design excellence and the equitable development of cities. His professional biography aspires to present a very different model for what a designer in society can be, demonstrating that planning, architecture, and design operate within a sociopolitical sphere.

To that end his career spans public service, private practice, and higher education, including his tenure as mayor of Charlottesville, Virginia; as Design Director for the National Endowment for the Arts under two presidents; and as tenured faculty member at the University of Virginia and at Tulane University. At Tulane, Cox served as Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Director of the Albert and Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design, Tulane School of Architecture's community design center.

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There he operated at the intersection of design and civic engagement pursuing projects for the rebuilding of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

In his public sector leadership roles, Cox is known for his design-centered approach to urban planning, incorporating active citizen participation into the public process while simultaneously achieving the highest quality of design excellence. In Detroit, Cox built a new interdisciplinary Planning Department that co-authored a series of award-winning neighborhood framework plans to grow Detroit's population for the first time in 70 years. In Chicago, Cox developed a groundbreaking approach to neighborhood revitalization, INVEST South/West, which seeks to reimagine the public realm and civic life of 10 neighborhoods on the South and West sides by commissioning catalytic mixed-use affordable housing developments to fill vacant gaps in disinvested commercial corridors.

Cox has taught at Syracuse University, the University of Virginia, Tulane University, and the Illinois Institute of Technology, in addition to having held visiting professorships at University of Maryland and Harvard GSD. His pedagogical approach marshals the rigor of academic learning and a pursuit of design excellence to foster productive dialogues among the public and private sectors, universities and non-profits, developers, and the public. The goal is to build non-traditional, mutually beneficial partnerships with communities where the city is a living laboratory for





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participatory design. This often requires the integration of different voices and cultural influences and necessitates crossing socioeconomic and institutional boundaries into marginalized communities.

Cox practiced architecture and urban design for ten years in partnership with his wife, architect Giovanna Galfione, while teaching as an Assistant Professor of Architecture at Syracuse University in Florence, Italy.

A recipient of the 2024 Henry Reed Hope Award and of two honorary doctorate degrees from University of Detroit Mercy and the Illinois Institute of Technology, Cox was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2023 for lifetime achievements in architecture. Maurice has lectured extensively on design and democracy, civic engagement, and urban transformation in disinvested communities. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Cooper Union.

Cox received a Bachelor of Architecture from the Cooper Union and a 2005 Loeb Fellowship from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

### LEARNING TO SHAPE OUR CITY THROUGH PLANNING AND DESIGN

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Have you ever wondered: What is planning, urban design and zoning? How can I get involved in shaping the future of my neighborhood? Why does my neighborhood look the way that it does?

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We're excited to dig into these questions and more as we introduce the City of Boston's upcoming Planning Academy—a new learning opportunity for residents who haven't yet(!) gotten involved in planning, design, and development processes. The Academy is designed to help residents better understand how planning, design, and development decisions are made—and to build the confidence to engage in shaping more equitable, connected, and resilient neighborhoods.

This session will offer a preview of the Planning Academy's goals and session topics, and explore how these processes shape the future of our city. We're also inviting you—as Civic Summit participants—to share what you want to learn. Your input will help us refine and workshop the Academy curriculum to better reflect the interests, questions, and priorities of Boston's communities.

***Come be the change—become a more confident advocate for the future of your Neighborhood.***

