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IDA Releases Six In-Depth Research Reports on Top Urban Issues

Reports explore homelessness, alley activations, retail, bicycles, urban parks and safety & security.

WASHINGTON, DC – The second annual Top Issues Council reports are now on sale after six months of in-depth research by members. IDA's Top Issues Councils bring together industry leaders to produce research briefs on the top urban issues identified by IDA members in the areas of economy, experience and partnership. This strategic initiative, started in 2016, promotes the expertise of the profession and provides meaningful tools and information to the place management industry.

Over 50 IDA members served on six Top Issues Councils this year, supported by IDA staff and the IDA Research Committee, each exploring a key topic within the industry and authoring a guidebook for sharing trends, case studies, and recommendations. This year's reports cover a diverse range of challenging topics, from homelessness in urban districts to bicycle infrastructure.

"The expertise of IDA members has been pivotal in the revitalization of urban centers for decades. We are once again excited to share that knowledge with the world," said David Downey, Assoc. AIA, CAE, IDA President & CEO. "It's excellent to see the depth of insight and breadth of topics that our industry leaders experience each day."

Each report takes a deep-dive into challenges facing the place management industry, from developing safety and emergency plans to strategies for achieving diverse retail mix, and best practices for creating and maintaining thriving urban parks.

- **Homelessness in Urban Districts: Principles & Implications for Place Managers** *sponsored by Streetplus*

This publication reflects the experiences and analysis of many urban centers throughout North America and is compiled by a council of urban place management practitioners. The need for new, comprehensive approaches in addressing the issue of homelessness has risen to the forefront of conversations in urban centers across the world. While the policy approaches are not simple, the council advocates for a declaration of four principles for urban place management organizations to use, which inspire engaged and active urban centers: Housing First, Partnerships, Stakeholder Balance, and Data, Programs and Policies.

- **From Dumpsters to Biergartens: Case Studies in Alley Activations**

This council decided to address a problem that urban place management organizations can creatively and efficiently address – the activation of alleyways and so-called micro-spaces. The spaces under observation in this report are existing alleys and micro-spaces in the central urban core or downtown districts. This report examines seven infrastructure projects spearheaded by urban place management organizations in North America and Australia. Alleys and other "in-between" infrastructure have long been overlooked but when activated, can change the way we engage with our city.

- **Achieving and Maintaining a Diverse Retail Mix: Strategies & Insights for Place Management Organizations** *sponsored by ICSC*

This report will help urban district managers understand where and how revitalization is happening and how to encourage retail diversity. Urban place management organizations are uniquely suited to champion the diversity of their district's retail offerings, while both affirming the authenticity of the place and focusing the market demand. True diversity means crossover appeal, that a "diverse" retail mix is not just one that contains businesses specifically (and exclusively) catering to the individual subcultures within the catchment, but also, feature concepts that can draw from the full range of them and, in so doing, reflect the larger role of the urban place as a "crossroads" for its community.

- **A Path Towards Better Bicycle Infrastructure: A Guidebook for Urban Place Management Organizations**

Urban place management organizations, such as business improvement districts, can play an important and effective role in improving conditions for bicycling, thus improving conditions of safety and walkability. This report describes three general areas in which these organizations can make significant contributions to improving conditions for bicycling: informing and educating community stakeholders and local government officials; advocating for improvements and partnering with other organizations; and encouraging and incentivizing bicycling through the development of programs and collaboration with local government, businesses and community partners

- **A Practical Guide to Great Urban Parks: How to Benefit from and Finance your Urban Park** *sponsored by MIG*

This publication is a resource guide for both current and potential park stakeholders (government partners, public-sector partners, and private-sector partners) to advance collaboration and capacity building within the management of an urban park to maximize benefits, while equitably and intelligently sharing costs and responsibilities. The results: A dynamic, thriving space that is accessible to all. This report defines a great urban park, how it works, and how it is funded. The report is divided into four sections: Inputs, Activities, Outputs and Impacts, and Case Studies.

- **Downtown Districts at the Table: Planning for Safety and Security** *sponsored by Block by Block*

This guide was developed as a tool for strategic safety planning for urban place management organizations. The council studied the latest crime trends districts face, examined how a district management organization's role in emergency response and crime prevention has grown, and explored how technology is revolutionizing communication between law enforcement agencies and the business community. Several case studies and best practices are shared throughout this publication, with the intent that districts can learn from one another and replicate programs that are a fit for the local place management organization.

The reports are available for purchase as hard copy bundles or digital PDF (bundle or individually) in the IDA [webstore](#).

About International Downtown Association

The International Downtown Association is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city center districts. Our members are downtown champions who bring urban centers to life, bridging the gap between the public and private sectors. We represent an industry of more than 2,500 place management organizations, employing 100,000 people throughout North America and growing rapidly around the world. Founded in 1954, IDA is a resource center for ideas and innovative best practices in urban place management. For more information, visit www.downtown.org.

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