

NEWS RELEASE

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Center for Active Design to create guidelines for promoting civic engagement using design with \$115,000 from Knight Foundation

“Designing for Robust Engagement” offers first-of-its-kind guide for cities

MIAMI – Nov. 5, 2014 – To help build cities that encourage citizens to get involved in shaping the future of their communities the Center for Active Design will create a set of design guidelines that use architecture and urban planning to encourage more civic engagement. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation is supporting the initiative with \$115,000.

The initiative, “Designing for Robust Engagement,” aims to foster more social connections, political participation and resident involvement in creating vibrant public spaces and community assets. It will combine urban development with design thinking, a community-centered approach to addressing issues and challenges that focuses on collaboration and action.

The Center for Active Design has developed successful research-based publications that provide practical solutions to promoting urban health, design innovation and citizen engagement. The center advances strategies found in the “[Active Design Guidelines](#),” published by New York in 2010, which provides architects and urban designers with strategies for creating buildings, streets, public spaces and neighborhoods that encourage more physical activity and healthier living. Building on this work, with Knight support the center will develop a set of guidelines driven by principles of design to promote civic engagement.

“Citizens who are fully engaged in their communities are motivated to vote, contribute to their communities, shape politics and act as stewards of public spaces and activities,” said Carol Coletta, Knight Foundation’s vice president for community and national initiatives. “We hope the center can find ways to use the power of design to make it more likely that people will play active civic roles in their communities, in the same way the center developed guidelines for design to encourage healthy behaviors. Our goal is to provide cities with a guidebook for using design to spur people to action.”

“We’re excited to work with Knight Foundation and other industry experts in exploring new frontiers in design and how it can positively impact civic engagement levels and the long-term health of communities,” said Joanna Frank, executive director at the Center for

Active Design. “This funding will allow us to further our mission of changing design thinking to promote the health and well-being of people and their neighborhoods.”

To begin the project, the organization will identify available research and convene an advisory group of industry experts from various professional sectors. This collaborative process will lead to “Designing for Robust Engagement,” a first-of-its-kind guide that will create a direct link between community design and fully engaged community members. It will provide practical strategies and informative solutions for civic leaders, community members, planners, developers and designers to use in creating cities that encourage well-informed and engaged people.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. KnightFoundation.org

About the Center for Active Design

The Center for Active Design is a not-for-profit organization committed to transforming the approach to neighborhood and building design to make health a central priority in development. The Center translates research into design solutions that amplify the role of the built environment in encouraging strategies that engage communities in promoting health and well-being. It serves design professionals, policy makers, community groups, and the real estate community, while maintaining a multidisciplinary perspective in its promotion and expansion of the Active Design strategies.