



DIY URBAN PLANNING

Empowering Public Spaces
Through Community-Led Projects



A G E N D A

9:00 AM

Welcome: Justin Bower

Director of Community & Environmental Planning, H-GAC

9:15 AM

Keynote Address

Mike Lydon & Tony Garcia, RA

Co-Founders, Principals, Street Plans

Co-Authors of Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change

10:00 AM

From Pop-Up to Permanent: Tactical Urbanism for Environmental Justice

Ed Pettitt

President, Friends of Columbia Tap

Graduate Research Assistant, Bullard Center, Texas Southern University

10:40 AM

Transforming Utility Cabinets into Community Landmarks

Elia Quiles

Co-Founder, Principal, UP Art Studio | Mini Murals

11:20 AM

Fake Bricks for Safe Streets: A Grassroots Campaign from Vision Zero Vancouver

Margie Sanderson & Luke Solvang

Co-Organizers, Vision Zero Vancouver

12:00 PM

Closing Remarks & Adjourn

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, H-GAC provides reasonable accommodation for persons attending H-GAC functions. Requests should be received by H-GAC 24 hours prior to the function.



This event is available for 2.5 CM Credits from the American Planning Association.



Houston-Galveston
Area Council

2025 Annual Planning Workshop

DIY Urban Planning- Empowering Public Spaces Through Community-Led Projects

December 12, 2025

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM CST

TODAY'S PRESENTERS

Justin Bower



Justin Bower is the Director of Community and Environmental Planning at H-GAC, where he leads the agency's natural resources, disaster resilience, community planning, and public safety programs. Justin holds a master's degree in urban affairs and public policy from the University of Delaware and has spent over 20 years leading natural resources and urban planning efforts for a variety of local government and non-governmental organizations. For the past 13 years, Justin has worked at H-GAC to further the agency's mission to support our local communities in improving water quality, flood resilience, and conservation efforts. Justin has a passion for bringing together partners and resources to enhance our region's natural and community resilience. As part of a lifelong love of the natural world, Justin is actively involved in many leadership roles with natural resource and wildlife efforts in the region. Together with his wife and two young daughters, Justin enjoys exploring the diversity of our region's landscapes, wildlife, and communities.

Keynote: Mike Lydon



Mike is an internationally recognized planner, writer, speaker, and advocate for livable cities. NPR, The New York Times, The Guardian, ABC News, Bloomberg Cities, Salon, Next City, Wired, and Monocle have featured his work, among many other publications. Having delivered more than 250 keynotes, workshops, trainings, and lectures since 2009, Mike has exerted a global influence on how people think about city transformation. In 2018, Mike was named by Planetizen as one of the top 100 most influential urbanists of all time. Mike is the creator of *The Open Streets Project* and the globally acclaimed *Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action, Long-Term Change Vol. 1 – 5*. With Tony Garcia, Mike is the recipient of the 2017 Seaside Prize and co-author of *Tactical Urbanism* (Island Press, 2015), named by Planetizen as one of the top planning books of the past decade. Mike collaborated with Andres Duany and Jeff Speck in writing *The Smart Growth Manual* (McGraw-Hill, 2009).

A founding member of the New England Chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism, a Board Member for CNU New York, and a steering committee member of the Next Generation of New Urbanists, he remains active in both local and national planning, design, and smart growth advocacy issues. He lectures frequently and leads workshops and trainings on the topics of smart growth, tactical urbanism, public space, and complete streets/active transportation. Mike received a B.A. in American Cultural Studies from Bates College and a Masters in Urban Planning from the University of Michigan.

He encourages you to trade four wheels for two.



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Keynote: Tony Garcia, RA



Tony is a Co-founder of Street Plans and leads the day-to-day operations of the firm. Considered one of the foremost experts in the field of placemaking and street design of his generation, he is a licensed architect and has delivered hundreds of presentations, lectures, and workshops during his 20-year-long career. Having completed over 150,000 street murals around the country, he is one of the most prolific asphalt art muralists in the world, is the author of the *Asphalt Art Guide*, and serves as the technical advisor for over 30 cities as part of the Bloomberg Asphalt Art Initiative.

Tony is coauthor of the globally acclaimed series *Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action, Long-Term Change*, co-author of *Tactical Urbanism*, published by Island Press in March 2015, and together with Mike Lydon is the recipient of the 2017 Seaside Prize. In 2018, Tony was awarded the CINTAS Foundation Fellowship for Architecture & Design for contributions to the field of urban design.

Tony is a native Miamian and is regarded as a leading advocate and voice in the development of the city's growing list of renowned public spaces and trails, first as the managing editor of the transportation blog *TransitMiami.com*, then as Chairman of the largest bicycle pedestrian advocacy organization in South Florida, Green Mobility Network. As part of this effort he co-founded the Ludlam Trail project, which will result in the addition of over 50 acres of new park space in Miami-Dade County, and helped prototype and build support for the creation of Biscayne Green, a one-mile park in downtown Miami currently under design. Tony is a former part-time faculty member at the University of Miami School of Architecture, holds a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture and Urban Design from New York University, and a Masters in Architecture from the University of Miami.



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Edward D. Pettitt II, MPH



Ed Pettitt is a Ph.D. student in the Urban Planning and Environmental Policy program at Texas Southern University. He received his B.S. degree in Human Biology, Health, and Society from Cornell University in 2006 and his M.P.H. degree in Healthcare Management with a concentration in Global Health from The University of Texas School of Public Health in 2016.

Mr. Pettitt served as a Community Capacity Builder with the U.S. Peace Corps in Botswana and worked as a Senior Project Coordinator with Baylor College of Medicine Pediatric AIDS Initiative at Texas Children's Hospital. He has also worked as a consultant for the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), John Snow International (JSI), and Family Health International (FHI). Locally, Mr. Pettitt has served as a technical advisor for The Trust for Public Lands' Park-Smart Precinct 1 program, through which he helped develop a decision support tool on parks and social determinants of health; the City of Houston's Complete Communities initiative, through which he chairs a work group on Parks and Neighborhood Character; the Health Equity Collective, through which he helped to develop a Community Voice strategy for community engagement; and Nature and Eclectic Outdoors' Healthy Outdoor Communities project, through which he is currently helping to implement a grant from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health to promote equitable access to urban greenspace as an intervention to mitigate health disparities.

Mr. Pettitt is actively involved with the Third Ward neighborhood, a frontline environmental and climate justice community, where he has successfully spearheaded initiatives to build a tactical urbanism chess park, convert a city-owned illegal dumpsite into a pocket park, and install safety and wayfinding signage along a rails-to-trails conversion called the Columbia Tap Hike and Bike Trail.

Mr. Pettitt serves on the U.S. Department of State IREX Community Solutions Program (CSP) Partner Advisory Board (PAB) and is a member of the Equity in a Clean Energy Economy (ECEE) Collaborative, Emancipation Economic Development Council (EEDC), Project Row Houses (PRH), and Third Ward is Home Civic Club. Mr. Pettitt is a member and director of the Rotary Club of Houston Skyline, Rotaract Chair for Rotary District 5890, and a member of the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG), RPCVs for Environmental Action, and Partnering for Peace. He has been recognized as a Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow and an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Fellow for Life.

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Elia Quiles



UP Art Studio principals and founders, Noah Quiles and Elia Quiles, are a husband and wife team who curate, create, manage, and implement public art plans and projects. Together, they and their associates offer proven experience in all areas of program and project management and delivery. They are passionate about harnessing the power of art and placemaking – and the creativity of artists – to uplift people, neighborhoods, and underserved areas.

UP Art Studio is a public art and creative placemaking consulting firm founded in Houston in 2012. The firm has successfully managed hundreds of projects since then. The firm facilitates transformative award-winning projects – achieving the goals of its mission of “Civic Pride through Civic Art” through collaborative efforts with artists and the people in communities. They facilitate projects in communities nationally, engaging people and achieving community development via the work of local and international artists.

Vision Zero Vancouver

Vision Zero Vancouver is a volunteer citizen advocacy group with the goal of reducing the number of traffic crashes resulting in death and serious injury to zero in the Lower Mainland. We aim to do this by raising public awareness and advocating that municipal and provincial governments implement systemic traffic safety changes, with an emphasis on safe street design, active transportation, and prioritization of human life above motorist convenience. VZV is a 100% volunteer-based grassroots organization.



Presentations and a recording of this event will be available at:
<https://www.h-gac.com/sustainable-development-workshops/fall-planning>



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