

WEBVTT

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00:00:44.150 --> 00:00:51.910

Anne Christie: Okay, I think we are good to get started. Hello, everyone. My name is Anne Christie and I'm Spurs Policy Associate

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00:00:51.950 --> 00:00:56.770

Anne Christie: for local impact. Thank you so much for joining us for this digital discourse today.

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Anne Christie: Many of you here today are spur members. So thank you for your support.

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Anne Christie: If you are not a member. I encourage you to join to support spurs, ongoing work and using education, policy, analysis, and advocacy to make our cities and region more prosperous, sustainable.

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00:01:12.120 --> 00:01:14.130

Anne Christie: and equitable places to live.

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Anne Christie: Your financial support enables us to continue our work, including the hosting of programs like today's you'll find more information about membership online at Spur Org slash, Join

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00:01:25.250 --> 00:01:36.640

Anne Christie: our next digital discourse is scheduled for this evening at 5 Pm. It is steering. Translate from the Frisco cliff. Join us to hear from experts about how they're planning to avert fiscal disaster

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Anne Christie: as well as how to advance programs and policy changes that can help any agency in the State restore and grow ridership.

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Anne Christie: Today's digital discourse is exploring downtown revitalization efforts in North America. Single-use office districts in North America were struggling before the pandemic.

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Anne Christie: San Francisco is waking up to the reality that it's downtown may not rebound, as hoped. What will it take to jump? Start an area that for generations has been taken for granted as a key source of city revenue.

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Anne Christie: Philadelphia has incentivized housing in their center City for 2 decades. Calgary and Washington, DC. Have recently introduced powerful incentives and policy tools to catalyze transformation of their downtowns.

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00:02:21.570 --> 00:02:34.190

Anne Christie: Today we will be having a conversation with representatives from these cities to learn their vision for the future of downtown. The potential of office, residential conversions and other strategies to diversify

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00:02:34.380 --> 00:02:36.060

Anne Christie: downtown land uses

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Anne Christie: our spur. Our first speaker today is Yashm Sian. The shame is the founding executive director of the DC. Policy Center, An independent nonpartisan. Think tank advancing policies for a growing economy in the District of Columbia.

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Anne Christie: The shame's research interests include economic and fiscal policy, urban economic development, housing and education.

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Anne Christie: She is currently focused on how the COVID-19 pandemic is changing regional and interregional economic interdependencies. And what this means for urban policy.

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00:03:10.300 --> 00:03:20.420

Anne Christie: Our second speaker is Natalie March. It Natalie is the manager of development and strategy for the newly formed downtown strategy business unit at the city of Calgary.

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00:03:20.440 --> 00:03:38.920

Anne Christie: She is leading the implementation of various strategic initiatives towards the revitalization of Calgary's downtown, including the 153 milliondollars downtown Calgary Development incentive program which provides financial incentive to building owners to convert empty office space

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00:03:39.100 --> 00:03:43.530

Anne Christie: into residential units and other uses that support vibrancy.

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Anne Christie: Our third speaker is Prima Gupta

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Anne Christie: Prima joins City Center City district in March, 2,020 as Vice President

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Anne Christie: for parks and public realm. In January, 2,024, she will become CEO of the organization which is the largest bid in the country.

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Anne Christie: She is an extensive background in urban planning and public private real estate development having previously run the redevelopment of the Philadelphia Navy Yard

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Anne Christie: today's discussion will be moderated by John Bella

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Anne Christie: John is an urbanist and designer, whose work encompasses urban strategy, Master Plan frameworks active mobility and transportation, public realm, design and public art

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00:04:24.840 --> 00:04:36.640

Anne Christie: a former partner at Gal and co-founder of Rebar, the creators of parking day. John's passion is to create human scale Neighborhoods great streets and an inclusive resilient public realm.

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Anne Christie: John recently crafted in collaboration with site, lab Urban Studio, and Far and Piers a public Realm action plan for the Sf downtown partnership.

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Anne Christie: We really want this to be an interactive conversation and plan on spending as much time as possible, engaging with you all. So I encourage you to use the chat box to share your thoughts with each other and the speakers. I encourage you to submit any questions that you may have. Using the Q. A. Panel.

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00:05:01.480 --> 00:05:13.360

Anne Christie: It should appear as a button at the bottom of your screen, or on the top of your screen on the mobile app. Within the next few days we'll be sharing a copy of the Recording Transcript and chat with everyone who registered

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00:05:13.480 --> 00:05:17.670

Anne Christie: with that. Thank you so much for being here, and i'll turn it over to Yushim to get us started.

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00:05:19.420 --> 00:05:24.750

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: Thank you so much, and and thank you so much for having me. It's really a great pleasure to talk to you.

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00:05:25.220 --> 00:05:41.910

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: So what's happening in DC. The district's downtown area is very office heavy, and it's one way of looking at it is for every 10 people who are there during the day time. One of them is someone who lives in downtown, and 9

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00:05:41.910 --> 00:05:58.970

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: are people who don't live in downtown and probably have travel there somewhere out from somewhere else in the city or from Virginia or Maryland suburbs. So it's always been very office heavy, and the downtown area was already facing a lot of headwinds before the pandemic heads.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: The buildings there have been largely dealt between 1,970 and 2,000, so they're old and they're happy. New neighborhoods developed in starting early. 2,000. That's offer really attractive

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: nice places to work in more mixed use environments. So vacancy rates were already going up. So when the Covid pandemic hit it's really devastated downtown.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: The one additional challenge that we have here in the District of Columbia is our daytime Pope. We have about 770,000 workers in the district. They're not all residents. Obviously, our recent workforce is about 350,000 people.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: I know if that's 770 plus workers, about 200,000 of them work for the Federal Government, and the Federal Government has not come back to the office at all for the rest of the buildings that that that that are not it leads by the Federal Government. The occupancy rate has not yet

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: past 50 on any day. Generally we are at like twenties on Mondays and Fridays, and anywhere from 40 to 50 in in 3 days. In the middle of the week

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: to support downtown revitalization initiatives. Mayor Bowser, Muriel Bowser, the Mayor for the District of Columbia. She has developed, and it it

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: economic comeback plan that was a part of her effort to create a 5 year economic development agenda that she she she does every 5 years. But there is a very specific part that's focused on the downtown and the main tool that she's using for downtown revitalization is

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: is conversions and specifically tax debatement for conversions. The Mayor has set the goal of increasing downtown's resident population from its current 25,000

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: to 40,000

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: at the end of 5 years. That would mean rather than one resident to 19 employees. It will be 2 residents to 8 employees if this plan is successful, and her longer term goal is to increase the number of business in living in the downtown area to 87,000.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: Now, how do we put our arms around these these numbers?

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: The estimation is that because of the nature of downtown, it will mostly attract

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: couples and singles. So if you think of 1.6 people per household, we're looking at about 9,300 units, and that's about 750,000 square feet per unit, about 7 million square feet of new development. Just to accommodate these 15,000 folks.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: we have about 990 in the pipeline. That's about 3 buildings. We're gonna have to build 47 more. So just to meet that 15,000 call longer term plan, obviously far more aggressive, and and requires in the end about co conversion of 39 million square feet of space.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: The main tools she's using to support conversions is

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: tax abatements and some regulatory. I'll start with the regulatory stuff the mayor is proposing that these conversions

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: they will be getting public money, but they should not be subject to first source requirements for sources. The casual word for when when an entity

receives a DC. Government subsidy. They have to follow the districts hiring rules about creating more jobs for residents

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: in the construction sector. This is a significant challenge, and adds significant delays to a development that's largely because most construction workers do not live in the District of Columbia, and they do. They can't even afford to live in the District of Columbia. So that's the main challenge. So the Mayor is proposing to eliminate that

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: she's also proposing that these buildings, when converted, should not be subject to the District Tenants opportunity to Purchase Act, which basically gives the tenants the first right of refusal. If the owner is selling a building.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: although it's Valentine. It's that's been a very disruptive force in the District of Columbia.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and then usually the affordable requirements in buildings that we see

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: government funding goes down as deep as 60% of Median family income. She's proposing that about 15% of the units the over that 80. So that's a significant relaxation relaxation.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: So these are all very welcome news by the developers, but they're not welcomed by the Advocate. So there's lots of tension there right now. The Council is working through the city's budget, and

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: that that's a lot of folks are come not very happy with these regulatory proposals.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: The other thing she's putting in this is obviously money. Unfortunately for DC.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: This is a very tough fiscal year. We've lost a lot of revenues to commercial because the commercial property markets has tanked, and we lost population and jobs. So our revenues are running much lower than what we would have expected prior to the pandemic for this year.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and also. The second thing he's very experience is saying is that that we are also losing Federal phones and lots of money rain from the sky, as you all know, during the first 2 years, 3 years of the pandemic. So the physical environment is very difficult.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: I'll just say one other thing about about the the the challenges with this program.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: The

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: The problem in the District of Columbia for conversions is the structure of the buildings. I looked at it on the list, so I don't need to tell you about like what kind of buildings are most appropriate for

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: conversions into the District of Columbia. We do not have that many of them we have buildings with large footprints. There is one conversion project cutting a courtyard into the existing building, for example, but that adds to the coast.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: So, just as a mental exercise, I kind of said, okay, I'm going to look at

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: buildings that are older, built before 2,000 on smaller lots like less than 25,000 square feet of land area and with high vacancy rates, maybe 30% on more. And



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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: Taylor, it says that is not greater than 50 million iphone 33 in the downtown area. So there is going to be a challenge in meeting the goals through conversions that you know with.

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Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: We will to meet those numbers. My expectation that there will have to be total tear downs. So it is a challenging environment. But I think these kinds of instances are important and necessary to take a 15 year old, 15 year long, downtown and recovery, and hopefully make it the 5 year long downtown recovery. Thank you so much.

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John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Thank you, Ashim.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Hello, everyone, Natalie, march it with the city of Calgary. So i'm going to be talking today about

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: the city's new initiative to incent office to residential conversion in the downtown. We're doing a whole lot of other things. But this is really the the big one right now for us, and has quite a lot of municipal investment. So.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Jackson, i'll just let you know when to advance the slides. If that's okay.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: So

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: really, the city of Calgary right now is leading the charge. When it comes to office residential conversion projects in Downtowns

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: in 2,021. We initiated the downtown Development center program, which, as was noted, provides financial incentives for these kinds of projects.

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The program represents just one of a number of major initiatives that are underway as part of our overall strategy to revitalize our downtown

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: and to date. Our city council alone has invested over 450 milliondollars towards downtown's. Revitalization

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: next slide, please.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: So it's important to first understand why the city of Calgary is investing so much money into our downtown and specifically into the office conversion program.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Like many cities, Calgary is experiencing significant, base vacancy in the office sector.

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Unlike other cities, however, our problem did not begin with the pandemic.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: It began almost 6 years earlier from the oil and gas recession in 2,014, 2,015. Covid then, of course, has compounded our problem. And today, currently in our downtown alone, there's roughly 14 million square feet of vacant office space.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: which represents roughly 32, 33% vacancy.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: This has resulted in a massive decrease to our property values, and of course has impacts to our tax, base and revenue, so that impacts the city as a whole. This isn't just a downtown problem.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Next slide, please.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: The downtown Development Center program was established to address this crisis head on and effectively partner with industry members to reinvest in these properties towards the new vision for our downtown.

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The ultimate goal of our program is to remove 6 million square feet of vacant office space from the downtown core by 2031.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: So that's nearly half of the existing vacant inventory.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: The program offers a rate of \$75 a square foot for every square foot of office that is converted to residential use, and on average this is leveraging about 150

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: to 200 square feet \$200 per square foot in private investment

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00:16:09.410 --> 00:16:10.760

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: next slide, please.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: So far the success of our program has been really remarkable. We've been oversubscribed since we first launched the program in the fall of 21

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: to date. We have publicly announced 5 approved projects to the program, and you can see them here on this map and the associated metrics of those projects.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: You'll notice that all of them are strategically located in close proximity to major capital improvement projects in the downtown as well. So this isn't a requirement to the program, but it certainly was something that we took into consideration when selecting our top candidates

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: next slide, please.

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So, as I said, the program's been hugely successful. I mentioned the 5, but there's a whole bunch of other that we have in the pipeline, so we have another 6 that are approved that we're going to be able to publicly announce next week

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00:16:59.350 --> 00:17:12.420

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: mit ctl, and and then there's 3 more that are currently in the approvals process. So if all 14 of these projects go forward, and we do expect that they will, it's going to remove close to 2 million square feet of that 6 million goal that we have 150,

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: and it's going to provide over 2,000 new dwelling units into our into our downtown core. Next slide, please.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: The success of our program is, I mean, obviously largely due to the incentive itself, but but it has to do with a whole bunch of other things that Calgary is doing to support development.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: We, our big thing in at the city of Calgary is moving at the speed of business.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: and one of the most significant ways that we're doing this is by removing the requirement for development permits for these conversion projects. So this not only saves developers time and money, but it also provides them the certainty of use approval,

and it removes any possibility for appeals. So that's huge for developers when they're coming in for permitting.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: We also have a dedicated downtown team, and so that provides that consistency and that knowledge base that developers look for when they're submitting applications. And we also are

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: applying reasonable discretion when it comes to code requirements, understanding that these are existing buildings, and in certain cases it may not be feasible to meet all you know, current date code requirements

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: next slide, please.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: So the initial intention of our program was really straightforward and basically remove office in the downtown, Replace it with residential. And you're pretty much eligible to receive funding. But we've gotten so much more out of these projects than we expected. We have projects offering affordable housing units. We have others that are protecting heritage buildings.

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00:18:41.790 --> 00:19:00.340

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: We have everything from micro units all the way up to 3 bedroom suite. So we're getting so much more benefit to our downtown and to that housing, mix, and choice and affordability than we set out to achieve this. We this has come forward because our program is so competitive, so applicants know that they need to

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: put in something, you know, pretty compelling in order to be ranked really high on our list, because there's there's such competition for our funding

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00:19:07.760 --> 00:19:11.900

the big thing with the conversion program as well is the

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: the impact with cl to with climate mitigation measures. So

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00:19:15.860 --> 00:19:32.430

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: you know, the most expensive, the most costly building, and and the building that has the biggest impact on climate is the one that you have to build right. And so, by keeping all these buildings, not requiring them to be demoed for redevelopment across the 14 projects alone we're estimating that it's a savings of approximately

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00:19:32.740 --> 00:19:38.380

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: 60 million kilograms of Ght emissions that are saved by not having to build that same scale of development

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00:19:38.850 --> 00:19:40.150

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: next slide, please.

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00:19:42.430 --> 00:19:53.630

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: So that's a lot in one program. But we're we're not stopping there. So just last week, actually, we we launched 3 new incentive programs to address our office vacancy, crisis

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: mit ctl. And so we've we've revised the existing incentive program. So we've added the uses of hotel school and performing arts centers. So those now are all incentivized uses in addition to residential 150

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00:20:04.730 --> 00:20:20.500

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: mit ctl. And we've also introduced a a specific program to attract post secondary institutions into our downtown core, and we're also introducing a demolition program. So I talked about trying to save buildings, and not dumb with them. But the reality is some of our stock in Calgary there is no future one

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00:20:20.500 --> 00:20:36.040

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: for some of the buildings. They are truly at end of life, and the best thing to do is bring them down, and then look at You know. What do we do with the land now do we redevelop this new res? Do we actually acquire that land and turn it into parks space for all the residents that are now coming in? So

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we're excited to see what comes in through through that program, and I think it it's going to open a lot of really cool opportunities for downtown to to reinvent itself.

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: So all these programs together are really critical to driving the implementation of our new vision for downtown in Calgary. We believe

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Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: the first step is to increase housing choice and to increase our resonant population. And now that that's really underway, we're moving to explore these new initiatives as well to really start diversifying amenities, services, offerings for those residents, and visitors as well. So

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00:21:07.480 --> 00:21:11.860

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: happy. Take any questions if there's if there's time at the end. Thank you.

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00:21:14.240 --> 00:21:20.020

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Thank you, Natalie. Just so excellent. What really Quite a model program for us to hear about? Thanks so much.

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00:21:30.230 --> 00:21:48.320

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: Hi! Good Good afternoon, everyone. I'm prima gupta. I. I live in Philadelphia. I work at Center City District, which is our downtown bid, and i'm going to tell you a little bit about what our tax abatement program which started in the year 2,000 has yielded for our downtown, particularly post pandemic

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Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: next slide.

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Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I was gonna say that I'm. From the future to tell you how this can work out. But i'm going to start with the past with 1,682, because I think there's a through line here, and why why this has been successful.

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00:22:03.920 --> 00:22:22.750

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: So I mean, if you studied urban planning, you've probably seen William Pence and Thomas Holmes grid for Philadelphia, 4 square City Hall at

the center. But City Hall, so symbolic importance in this plan has done something kind of interesting for the city's development. Next slide, please.

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00:22:25.340 --> 00:22:33.830

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: And here's a a kind of a contemporary picture. But if you look all the way to the right, you can see William Penn's statue on the Top of City Hall.

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00:22:33.860 --> 00:22:53.360

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and for about 100 years, from about 1,894 to 1,985. There was a gentleman's agreement that one would not develop taller than William Penn's head, or William Penn's half. And so we have this really nice inventory of office buildings our formerly office buildings, because where i'm going

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00:22:53.440 --> 00:23:19.260

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and before that era, that over the last 25 years because of this tax abatement program have turned into largely residential buildings, 150. I I will. I will say this, and I think some of their panelists have mentioned this too, like you know. I think that our tax abatement was was incredibly successful. We now have the second largest downtown residential population in the country, we believe, and I'm going to show you some statistics about our foot traffic coming out of the pandemic.

130

00:23:19.260 --> 00:23:35.840

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: but you know it. It's probably important to talk about how the vintage of the building and the sort of building typologies really are suitable for conversion. It's not really an if you abate it, they will come. The building really has to work, and so we can talk a little bit about that more. And I think we're gonna talk more about Philadelphia's tax available program

131

00:23:36.150 --> 00:23:37.370

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: next slide.

132

00:23:39.630 --> 00:23:49.680

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: But what that has yielded is since 2,000. Since the start of that program our downtown population has increased by 40%, a residential population which has been incredible.

133

00:23:49.760 --> 00:23:59.940



Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and I think you know one of the things that we start to think a lot about is, I think, downtown should be like your retirement savings they should be, you should be diversified.

134

00:23:59.960 --> 00:24:11.400

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: And because we've had a few different types of populations coming to Center City with recurrence over the last few years, I think our downtown is fair, reasonably well. Next slide, please.

135

00:24:13.360 --> 00:24:30.250

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't show some advertising pictures of Philadelphia. But really this is right now. Square, which is one of our one of the lovely squares in that in that original plan. But you know, quality of life being a really important driver, and being able to being able to manage some of those issues downtown, I think it's something that

136

00:24:30.280 --> 00:24:42.600

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: we've all been grappling with, particularly over the last 3 years. But I think you know our organization does this clean safe? We manage Parks. It's absolutely it undercurds. Any success at downtown can have next slide, please.

137

00:24:44.360 --> 00:24:58.560

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: mit ctl. And so going back to Center City District. We are a business improvement district by assessment. I believe we're the largest business improvement district in the country, and this is our our sort of our territory, and I will go through some statistics but 250.

138

00:24:58.560 --> 00:25:14.660

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: Now you'll notice that sort of on the top left. That's where you see the office district where the tall buildings are. The the 1,985 stuff. We'll come to come back to that minute. But this kind of gives you a sense of the geography downtown that i'm going to talk about as I go through some statistics. So next slide, please.

139

00:25:16.430 --> 00:25:35.980

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: we have been using this data. Call this software called Placer. I'm sure some folks on this call are familiar with it. I think a lot of folks in the real estate industry use it, but it's an anonymized aggregated cell phone data that kind of divides users into different types of population groups sort of dependent on the patterns

140

00:25:36.020 --> 00:25:45.020

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: of their I guess their cell phones movement. It's one of those things you probably don't want to think about too much. But like once you get over that, it's incredibly useful. And so this

141

00:25:45.260 --> 00:26:00.150

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: divides the people coming to downtown into 3 different categories, and I think these categories are really important. So the dark blue one you see at the bottom is residential population. So since January of 2,019 sort of constant. It's actually grown a little bit

142

00:26:00.300 --> 00:26:07.270

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: yellow or non resident workers. So these are people who come to Center City for work

143

00:26:07.270 --> 00:26:21.850

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: on a on a on a pre a regular basis, and then Tl. Or visitor. So it might be. It might be somebody who comes to work a couple of days a week, but it also might be a tourist. So no, no pattern detected by sort of by their algorithm so 3 different populations.

144

00:26:21.920 --> 00:26:23.490

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: if we go to the next one, please.

145

00:26:24.730 --> 00:26:42.330

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and you get a sense of where each of those groups are compared to the same month of 2,019 right. So we've got a lot more residents, and we'll talk about the residential pipeline that is continued even during during Covid. But you know we have 77% of visitors from the same month in 2,019,

146

00:26:42.330 --> 00:26:59.640

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: but only 62 of of of workers. So that continues to be an issue. I mean we we're fortunate we've got to make for institutions downtown. A lot of health care. Those folks have stayed alive, the Central Workers, but I think we're grappling with the same issues of office workers and municipal workers and other cities are

147

00:27:00.380 --> 00:27:01.360

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: next, please.

148

00:27:02.950 --> 00:27:13.320

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: Okay. So remember, I mentioned that geography where there were taller office buildings. We're gonna look at data for that area in particular, because this continues to be what we're thinking a lot about.

149

00:27:13.470 --> 00:27:21.320

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: So you know the large largest polygon here is Greater Center City. If you look at that, I don't even know what shaped like that purple, maybe like a

150

00:27:21.370 --> 00:27:27.650

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I don't even know that purple polygon, the small one that's really the office district. So if you go to the next slide.

151

00:27:27.790 --> 00:27:41.010

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: this is where those sort of eighties, nineties era, tall buildings are. Start to see that even this, when you analyze it, is a little bit more diversified than you might expect. So blue are the office buildings.

152

00:27:41.290 --> 00:27:52.580

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: We've got some apartments starting to come orange our proposed con conversions to residential again. A lot of these buildings don't work because they're awfully big, but a lot of them do

153

00:27:52.660 --> 00:28:04.930

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: mit ctl, and and we've seen some single tenant buildings come to the market, which I think makes for a pretty efficient transition. The building works. So we're starting to see more diversity, more diversification of uses here 250,

154

00:28:04.970 --> 00:28:09.610

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and it's been it's been great to see the next one, please.

155

00:28:11.180 --> 00:28:18.750

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and i'll. I'll just leave with these 2 slides, because so if we take that, the small geography, the office district within the larger Center city district.

156

00:28:18.780 --> 00:28:36.820

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: This gives you a sense of where we are, and you know our hypothesis, and if you go to the next slide is really I don't think we Plato Yet you know we were at 47. Of how many people were in the office before the pandemic. But you you sort of see it's still creeping up.

157

00:28:36.910 --> 00:28:51.900

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: And and again, there are a lot of reasons to come to the office, You know innovation, community meaning purpose, mentorship. and we're seeing more and more. I think some things are are different, but

158

00:28:51.930 --> 00:28:58.490

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I think we're hopeful that that will continue to trickle up especially. You know we're looking at numerical leadership, you know. Maybe

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00:28:58.560 --> 00:29:11.260

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: our next mayor will be more energetic about getting folks, you know, encouraging folks and giving them reason to come back downtown as well. But we need a lot more people to come downtown, and but we're continuing to see that number trickle up, and that's why we're optimistic

160

00:29:11.490 --> 00:29:23.460

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: overall. I would just say our retail is doing pretty well. We had a really difficult 2020, with civil unrest with, you know, very long closures, not in like San Francisco.

161

00:29:23.560 --> 00:29:31.940

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: but in both, you know, in 2020. In the last 2 years we've had more retail openings and closing, so it's starting to triple back.

162

00:29:31.980 --> 00:29:44.920

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: But you know what downtown is, I think, to all of us is it's recurring economic activity. It's not the person that goes to the theater once it's the person that comes to the comes to work every day and buys coffee at the same small business

163

00:29:44.930 --> 00:29:55.730

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: every day, and how we can sort of rebuild some of those habits that sort of support. Everyone. Everyone who works downtown, I think, is is is a lot of our focus these days. So we're optimistic.

164

00:29:55.730 --> 00:30:08.400

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: Yeah. And our residential population has helped us great deal in in keeping Philadelphia strong and and kind of promoting downtown vitality. But you know we've all we've all still got a lot more work to do.

165

00:30:12.630 --> 00:30:25.210

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Thank you, Prima. That's just just amazing, and so glad you could join us today. Thank you as she, Natalie and Prima for all sharing these brief snapshots into your cities

166

00:30:25.310 --> 00:30:37.100

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: over the last year or so in the city of San Francisco. I think we're coming to face the reality that we're not gonna experience a return to downtown office work on the way that we get hoped

167

00:30:37.140 --> 00:30:47.010

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: in San Francisco in particular, and this is outlined very well in a recent spur report about office to residential conversion. What are some of the obstacles a particular downtown has been booby by

168

00:30:47.070 --> 00:30:53.620

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: the tech industry, which I think is pretty well understood now. And so we're now San Francisco, now, at the outset.

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00:30:53.680 --> 00:30:59.340

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: i'm trying to put in place what your cities, and have already put in place; and in the case of

170

00:30:59.440 --> 00:31:09.260

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Philadelphia it's been underway for 20 years. In the case of Calgary it's been 4 to 5 years, and in in in in DC. Also a similar amount of timeframe.

171

00:31:09.280 --> 00:31:14.370

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: So I wanted to start with a question for you, she.

172

00:31:14.660 --> 00:31:34.590

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: So my understanding. Is that actually DC. Started experiencing office downturn, maybe 10 or 15 years ago, when the Federal Government actually back, then started to relax. You know, policies regarding working from the office. Actually, that that sort of

173

00:31:34.590 --> 00:31:55.140

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: you know, flexible work started in DC. 10 or 15 years ago. There was already downward pressure on the office market already made worse by the pandemic. Of course. So DC. Is a few steps ahead of San Francisco in terms of having done the policy research done the office to conversion analysis, and you've just released in January your tax evading program.

174

00:31:55.410 --> 00:32:17.960

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: So you know you, You said something. What is that was really interesting in your talk machine that we're hoping to transform a 15 year process of adaptive reuse in our downtown to a 5 year process. Could you just unpack that a little bit. What other tools incentives, do you think may be necessary to accelerate that process? In addition to the DC's tax abatement program?

175

00:32:18.650 --> 00:32:22.310

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: Absolutely thank you for the question. I think.

176

00:32:23.230 --> 00:32:38.300

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: when we are thinking about reimagining a place, there's certain factors that are really important. Right? First, you want to have some sort of a shared vision. You will have community input you want to have buying from the people who are nearby. You want to have political buy in.

177

00:32:38.500 --> 00:32:40.170

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and then you need to have money.

178

00:32:41.540 --> 00:33:00.760

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: Getting all these things together and getting them together quickly is very difficult, especially the money part is particularly difficult. Because of this, the fiscal squeeze. The city is experiencing the due to lost commercial property values and commercial taxes which I paid over 16% of our local funds.

179

00:33:00.800 --> 00:33:02.260

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: expenditures

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00:33:02.630 --> 00:33:21.730

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: historically. So one idea, we thought we have been thinking through and working on that to DC. Post to answer is something like the creation of an economy to open corporation. So what is an Economic Development Corporation? It's essentially an in spending entity, and has, like 2 2 features to it. One. It's, it's

181

00:33:21.730 --> 00:33:31.740

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: it has essence. and that's particularly useful in the years like this. When you don't have the money. your budget. But you could have governments that that can be a part of this.

182

00:33:31.930 --> 00:33:44.870

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: I think the Federal Government, I said, can be a part of this. For example, the Federal Government's FBI headquarters in DC. Occupies an entire city block. It's a brutal structure. It's not friendly.

183

00:33:45.020 --> 00:33:49.440

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: in fact, it does everything it can to repel people away from it.

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00:33:49.450 --> 00:33:53.910

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and and the first thing he was moving away from there. So

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00:33:53.920 --> 00:33:59.840

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: can that be the property that can be redeveloped for first to

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00:34:00.060 --> 00:34:05.740

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and I mean it's huge, so it can have housing. It's kind of a parking. It can have many things in us.

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00:34:05.770 --> 00:34:15.790

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: so the Federal Government has other buildings on which it has long term leases, and the last source of assets is. Yeah, if you look at

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00:34:15.840 --> 00:34:23.830

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: like, maybe make a list of 200 largest office buildings in the districts downtown area and write the names of owners next to it.

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00:34:23.880 --> 00:34:36.080

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: And you look at the same list next to you. In 6 months you're going to find lots of banks. because the lots of the properties are under water. There we have value is not as large as they are as

190

00:34:36.270 --> 00:34:47.780

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: loans. Refinancing is very difficult. The capital markets are not particular interest in District of Columbia right now. So that's another partner, the future owners the the banks that can be a part of this.

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00:34:48.040 --> 00:34:48.989

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and

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00:34:49.750 --> 00:35:07.270

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: I think an independent economy to open corporation like this can quickly create a vision. The the thing that I love about the Calgary program is how specific the goals are in terms of Really, it's very specific. And it those metrics you you either meet them or you don't.

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00:35:07.440 --> 00:35:13.280

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: And I think, having those metrics in place through an entity like this, it can be

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00:35:13.500 --> 00:35:25.070

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: one way of taking this long recovery and turning it into into a shorter recovery. Otherwise the capital markets are not favoring district. The population flows are not favoring the district

195

00:35:25.120 --> 00:35:34.950

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and those 2 things together, and and because of remote work the connection between where we live and meet where we have, where where we work has broken down.

196

00:35:34.970 --> 00:35:40.710

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: So the number of people employed. I mean another area we think about deeply at the



197

00:35:41.220 --> 00:35:55.870

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: How do you measure employment right now, like, how do we measure job activity there's 772,000 people employed in the District of Columbia. But most of that job activity takes place in the suburbs that people are not coming in.

198

00:35:58.270 --> 00:36:06.700

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Yeah, quite a quite amazing. I wanted to turn to Natalie in in in Calgary for a second, and

199

00:36:06.810 --> 00:36:16.290

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: thank you for your your excellent overview. Yeah, you. You talked about downward pressure in the office market started 8 years ago with the changes in oil and gas industry.

200

00:36:16.360 --> 00:36:31.570

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Calvin has laid the groundwork for the vision that you talked about Yashim for for your downtown with the greater downtown vision or greater downtown Calvary vision which talked about wanting a more diverse mixed use downtown. And then you've managed to

201

00:36:31.570 --> 00:36:40.090

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: create this really powerful incentive program, which yeah, as we're all struck by, it seems so. Laser focused on. As you said, we're going to remove 9 million square feet office.

202

00:36:40.120 --> 00:36:50.330

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: and that seems to be the target. What i'm struck by is how you in in in Calendar's political context

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00:36:50.460 --> 00:37:05.550

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: kind of generated the political will among your mayor and our among your Council leadership to get behind something like a direct development incentive program where you're literally granting developers, private property owners money to do these conversions.

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00:37:05.670 --> 00:37:15.450

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: and you know, Yashim referred to removing the obstacles right, in addition to the incentive so removing some of the obstacles for

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00:37:15.470 --> 00:37:43.120

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: for workforce and and and other other tools that are often bound to some kind of incentive program. I haven't heard you speak so much about what those additional sort of constraints are in terms of the individual. You know, proponents for the program. You You talk about a response to the program coming because of the competitive nature of your incentive program versus actually having some a specific regulatory tools like

206

00:37:43.120 --> 00:38:01.710

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: a, you know, a mandated percentage for affordable housing. I I I could you speak to that a little about how you have managed to stay? Laser focused on the office office removal as well as what were some of the factors that generated the political will in Calgary to to set up this really powerful incentive program.

207

00:38:01.940 --> 00:38:22.700

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Yeah, sure, thanks. So we got a lot of push back internally from some of our colleagues in other groups. Climate team. Right? How could you not have climate requirements If you're putting city investment in these buildings affordable housing team. How could you not have a minimum requirement for affordable housing if it's city, My, you know. And the list went on.

208

00:38:22.750 --> 00:38:30.650

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Those Certainly our priorities are absolutely critical in the city. Those are city of Calgary priorities. We just felt that.

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00:38:30.730 --> 00:38:31.560

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: you know

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00:38:32.190 --> 00:38:49.220

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: we were addressing a very specific crisis, and it. It is a crisis, and it's a point in time for us in our downtown that we had to address as soon as possible, and without muddying up our goal with a whole bunch of other city priorities. So

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00:38:49.930 --> 00:38:53.380

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: that was sort of our our thinking around. Well.

212

00:38:53.430 --> 00:39:02.600

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: why not add other requirements and get a whole bunch of other things through these projects we wanted speed to. Delivery was really the the the most important thing.

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00:39:02.710 --> 00:39:09.100

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: So, as I said my presentation. You know, we took a 16 billiondollars hit and property values because of this vacancy.

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00:39:09.750 --> 00:39:24.670

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: That's a huge impact to our tax revenue base for the city of Calgary, and because of that we did have to have a tax shift, because we weren't making enough any more from our downtown base that you know we had to spread that elsewhere. And so

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00:39:24.870 --> 00:39:30.830

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: that was the critical piece, and that then ties into your second question about how do we get political buy in.

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00:39:30.910 --> 00:39:41.270

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: We showed them the numbers, and we also projected out what those numbers would look like if we just state status quo. There was

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00:39:41.470 --> 00:39:44.920

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: a lot of misconception that the market would correct itself.

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00:39:45.070 --> 00:39:52.180

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: And so we had been watching since 2,014. What was happening in the market and year over year over year.

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00:39:52.550 --> 00:40:03.730

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Vacancy was just climbing. There was absolutely no absorption happening in the downtown office sector, and so if we ran that across, you know, the next 5 years, 10 years.

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00:40:04.040 --> 00:40:09.040

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Those property values and vacancy rates and everything else just get worse.

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00:40:09.580 --> 00:40:24.740

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: And so, when those numbers were presented to our council, it was shocking, and I think frankly, a little frightening to see. And so the message from us, but also from our partners. We worked hand in hand with industry on this this wasn't a

222

00:40:24.740 --> 00:40:35.880

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: city-led initiative, you know. This was a collaboration across, you know. Yes, administration but industry. Our civic partners, you know a whole bunch of other people that are.

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00:40:36.260 --> 00:40:41.400

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: you know, understand the downtown context, and what needs to happen? Everybody came together.

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00:40:41.400 --> 00:41:01.680

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: and really we it was those voices at council that that led that message. Administration was really kind of in the background to support on questions and stuff. But we let those partners in industry speak to council about how they saw the crisis and the need for this program and that really resonated. So I think that that was a huge piece of our success was was letting

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00:41:02.010 --> 00:41:05.140

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: the community sort of do the talking to our council.

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00:41:06.150 --> 00:41:09.090

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: That's really powerful. Thank you for sharing that.

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00:41:09.230 --> 00:41:24.880

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: I want to turn to to pre month for a moment, and when we spoke on the phone 2 weeks ago about this, you know, you said to me, hey, adapt over us is not new. We've been doing this for 20 years in Philadelphia. You know you have 200,000 residents in your downtown.

228

00:41:24.880 --> 00:41:33.890

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: You you converted 9 lanes Square, if you office to to to hotel or residential over the last 20 years, you know, I think one of the questions for

229

00:41:34.020 --> 00:41:50.980

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: all of the cities who are kind of at the outset of some of these infective incentive programs is, you know, how long does it really take to go from a single use office district to a diverse, you know 24, 7 city. What's what's realistic in terms of a time? Horizon to do that.

230

00:41:51.230 --> 00:41:57.130

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: And what were some of the key pieces that enabled that kind of transformation in Philadelphia.

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00:41:59.360 --> 00:42:13.730

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: Yeah. Great question. And you know, I I don't think there's any way like a lady from Philadelphia can like comment on velocity in a way that's like relevant to folks in San Francisco. I mean. Jb: I think you know my family's in the bay area, and like every time I go visit like I

232

00:42:13.750 --> 00:42:16.000

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: don't recognize what's next to the Bay Bridge

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00:42:16.060 --> 00:42:24.930

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: so, and we're a slow growth city. And I would say, like, you know, we've we've referred to ourselves a little bit like over the last couple of years. It's the tortoise and the hare.

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00:42:25.120 --> 00:42:34.870

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and I think that we have sort of. It's been slow and gradual, but steady, and it feels stable right now.

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00:42:34.970 --> 00:42:39.170

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: so I think, like I I think there are a couple of things right, I mean, I think.

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00:42:40.250 --> 00:42:50.410

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and and just sort of speaking. Personally. I moved to Philadelphia 20 years ago to graduate school, and you know. At that time I lived in Center City because it was very affordable and more fun.

237

00:42:50.540 --> 00:43:01.370

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and I think it's Still, it might be a little less affordable. But there's still a lot. It's still the place where young people live, though you know, I think a lot of them are choosing West Philadelphia as well

238

00:43:01.370 --> 00:43:15.720

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: now, and it's just it's it's alive. It's there more people out all the time every single season, and it's been really nice, particularly in the winter. You know we do a lot of. We manage it. We mean several downtown parks.

239

00:43:15.940 --> 00:43:31.300

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and amazingly our busiest season in some of the parks is December, because of all the holiday activities that we program and Philadelphia sort of sort of have fallen in love with, You know. I see my colleague from from Calgary, nodding like Winter Spot, if you, if you sort of celebrate it right.

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00:43:31.300 --> 00:43:36.510

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: And all this is just radically changed, because it's very, very different populations.

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00:43:36.630 --> 00:43:55.560

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: You know one of the things that we use that place or data for us to see who comes to our parks and our parks are city wide. It's not set our city residents, not people who live in apartments or condos downtown. It's folks. It's, you know it's. It's not unlike our employment profile. It's because we are sitting on top of

242

00:43:55.560 --> 00:44:03.810

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: the region's transportation infrastructure. Folks come everywhere for something fun free, and that belongs to everyone. So I think you know

243

00:44:03.830 --> 00:44:16.080

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I I the phrase 24, 7 city seems a little bit cliché. It's probably like an 18 h today, but I think we've become that in a way that we haven't, we weren't when I when I moved here 20 years ago, and it's exciting to see.

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00:44:16.240 --> 00:44:18.910

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I think we talked about the tax abatement.

245

00:44:19.260 --> 00:44:23.180

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: You know it's something that we started in 2,000.

246

00:44:23.320 --> 00:44:40.100

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: It's on new residential construction for developers and for homeowners, and also for improvement on improvements of existing properties. and it's it's phasing out now. Interestingly enough, for a variety of reasons.

247

00:44:40.550 --> 00:44:59.650

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I I guess it's been a success. I think there are lots of folks who probably would have preferred it to be continued, but you know, the value of it is decreasing 10% a year until it completely phases out which is unfortunate, but you know it. It's understandable, but I think it's it's sort of seen as a success in a in a great model for other other places.

248

00:44:59.650 --> 00:45:11.670

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: you know, i'll just say that, you know, in one of one of the things that's been really nice to see us. We've looked at housing data, and I think my colleague, Lauren Smith, is on this. She's done. A lot of this work

249

00:45:11.830 --> 00:45:23.440

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: around housing is how much of the housing starts have been in our city and Greater Center city to get 72% of total permitted housing are kind of in that, like the core, and and what's right around the floor.

250

00:45:23.680 --> 00:45:35.080

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: which you know again, if you're gonna develop sustainably, makes a great deal of sense. So I think we're pleased to see that. But I would just say that you know the abatements has has been incredibly successful. But don't forget about the basics.

251

00:45:35.180 --> 00:45:44.860

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: Don't forget about clean. Don't forget about safe, and you know, really just take care of quality of life. So it's a place that people want to live

252

00:45:46.530 --> 00:45:47.700

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: fantastic.

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00:45:47.770 --> 00:45:53.510

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: One of the questions that we grappled with with the My, my

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00:45:53.750 --> 00:46:02.980

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: collaborators at Site lab Urban Studio, and Fer and Peers. When we were looking at best of downtown partnership, which is our sort of downtown. Core. It currently has about 300 residents.

255

00:46:03.070 --> 00:46:16.880

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: and was in terms of public own investment. And what's happening at the ground floor? Well, you know, in terms of a vision for this downtown. What what type of downtown identity are we designing for?

256

00:46:17.030 --> 00:46:31.410

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Are we just designing for a sort of business as usual, return to dominant, You know. Kind of workforce 9, 5 culture. Or are we designing for attempting to design for a mixed use neighborhood that has families and children, and probably has a lot of different

257

00:46:31.410 --> 00:46:48.820

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: different kind of needs in terms of services and amend these, then, a more sort of single use Office district focus has, and I guess my question. I want to ask this to all you and and and just please raise your hand or wants to start, you know. Is. Do you believe that's the situation that build it, and they will come. So build the residential.

258

00:46:48.860 --> 00:47:08.310

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: and eventually the an amenities, the grocery store, the schools, the the the playgrounds will eventually be provided by, you know, either by private sector or city, or what you know. What is it important to also focus on creating that kind of complete neighborhood. In addition to focusing on incentivizing residential.

259

00:47:08.310 --> 00:47:09.430

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: If I want to start.

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00:47:10.760 --> 00:47:12.020

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: go ahead, and she

261

00:47:14.450 --> 00:47:26.280



Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: this is my because to worry about it. Conversions strategy is that we are assuming that the demand is there. I completely agree with now that you have to have quality of life.

262

00:47:26.460 --> 00:47:30.770

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: It is things in place, safety and and

263

00:47:31.060 --> 00:47:38.860

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: cleanliness. Those things have taken a big hit in downtown area because of our really debilitating sort of

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00:47:39.220 --> 00:47:57.990

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: homelessness problem that we like. We have a lot of individuals in DC. Experiencing homelessness, and you're less likely to be in shelters and more more likely to be sleeping in parts. That's a really, you know, difficult problem to solve. Crime has become a big problem in DC. So, though that needs to be sold, and I think the other thing in terms of

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00:47:58.440 --> 00:47:59.800

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: planning is.

266

00:48:00.430 --> 00:48:17.790

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: how do you create these buildings? So they actually create a purchasing power to incentivize it. A grocery store. Maybe you need a childcare center. You need the dry cleaner. So those are the kinds of things that we take. Grant granted in historically residential neighborhoods

267

00:48:17.880 --> 00:48:27.530

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: A, and that needs to be a part of the picture. And I'm really curious about you know the the Philadelphia experience or the Calgary experience on those things.

268

00:48:33.200 --> 00:48:48.000

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Yeah, I can share in Calgary. We are. We're not leaving it to say the market entirely. We do think that it is a bit of a If you build it. They will come scenario in in some cases.

269

00:48:48.120 --> 00:48:57.340

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: But but you know particularly on the public amenity and green space, and all of those good things that you have to have to, you know, to support residents and families and children and

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00:48:57.390 --> 00:49:13.590

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Mit, Ctl. And you know, dog owners and everybody, You know we really need to drive that. And so we're looking at a land strategy specifically around providing the appropriate amenities for all the residents that we're going to be asking to come and live in our downtown. We've also revised our incentive program such that we're now also in sending 2

271

00:49:13.590 --> 00:49:19.690

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: specific amenity use at ground floor and at plus 15. So in Calgary we've got the plus 15 bridges that connect

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00:49:19.860 --> 00:49:30.070

mit.

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00:49:30.350 --> 00:49:41.880

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: you know fitness facility. Rec. You know all those kinds of things. So we're really actually trying to influence what what gets built and offered. We hope that as

274

00:49:41.910 --> 00:49:54.830

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: residents do arrive, and you know that that will then create the business case, for you know developers to come in and start adding in other amenities and services on their own, because it just makes good sense to do so. So

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00:49:54.920 --> 00:50:02.930

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: we're. We're moving with sort of what we see and pivoting as we need to to make sure that we're filling in those gaps where we can across the downtown.

276

00:50:06.590 --> 00:50:25.760

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I might just add to that. I think some of it takes care of itself, and some of it really needs to be managed by a third party. I would I had the number. I would just try to look it up. We have a plethora of downtown grocery stores now, because of our residential population. That's an area that's been really great, really successful at different scales.

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00:50:25.760 --> 00:50:31.390

I'm not in any way. I'm sort of poaching from reading terminal market, which is, you know, in the great markets in the country.

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00:50:31.990 --> 00:50:48.640

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: But at the same time, you know, the public realm, I think, is really important, because even if you know, you've got the like most progressive zoning code in the you know in the world. That kind of you know, forces your developers to build these like Copenhagen style. Like I, You start I'm mixing metaphors, I guess, different countries.

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00:50:48.670 --> 00:50:58.840

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: but somebody needs to maintain that, and somebody needs to power, wash it and pick up trash and like, have outreach folks, if you know. If it's the If people who are in the house

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00:50:58.920 --> 00:51:09.300

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: arrive and need something need need services. So there's a management aspect of it that it really needs a lot of attention again to create a condition for all

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00:51:09.340 --> 00:51:19.970

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and what I really really excited about? All right. I should start with this, like, you know, on calls with, you know, colleagues from business improvement districts around the country, and I think one of the things that we sort of

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00:51:20.000 --> 00:51:25.820

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: complaint about in our sort of group therapy sessions, if you will, is that in a lot of our cities.

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00:51:26.280 --> 00:51:44.480

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: particularly in progressive blue cities. There's this really like annoying and false dichotomy between, like city between downtown and neighborhoods. And and this sort of like again totally false assumption that, like downtowns or places that like have resources in the neighborhoods, Don't.

284

00:51:44.750 --> 00:51:51.740

and it's something very pervasive in Philadelphia and pervasive and other cities, for where where there are serious poverty issues.

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00:51:51.970 --> 00:52:06.320

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: and you know what what I get really excited about is the idea that downtown is everyone, and it belongs to everyone. It's not necessarily. Yes, we have a large residential population. It's dwarfed by the amount of people who came to work

286

00:52:06.320 --> 00:52:18.400

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: every day pre pandemic, and we need to get those back to restore our ecosystem. It's the visitors. It's everyone else. But i'm so struck by the fact that you know going back to the Park and knowing who our park users are.

287

00:52:18.450 --> 00:52:36.010

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: The greatest areas of park users or neighborhoods in West Philadelphia, where folks don't have access to these parks. So I think you know, I think some of the the market stuff, the you know, the grocery stores, and those sort of services like the market will take care of it if you've got enough enough enough people.

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00:52:36.010 --> 00:52:40.980

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: but as far as public realm, and like what makes a city sort of magical and connective.

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00:52:41.400 --> 00:52:44.400

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: so that he used to be pretty thoughtful and intentional about that.

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00:52:46.180 --> 00:52:49.620

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: And that's why you have the Center City did right.

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00:52:49.800 --> 00:52:51.200

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: sir.

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00:52:52.280 --> 00:52:55.470

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: We do our best. But there's lots of work to do, as you know.

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00:52:56.350 --> 00:53:01.490

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Great. Well, i'm going to turn to some some questions from the audience.

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00:53:01.500 --> 00:53:04.770

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: and and this is a pretty interesting one. So

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00:53:04.840 --> 00:53:22.170

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: with the new residential properties being created in your cities, are are you? How many of them are permanently occupied versus owned by businesses or sector residences. And how do you ensure that that this new housing market rate, housing and some potentially subsidized housing

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00:53:22.170 --> 00:53:32.780

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: will be, you know, the primary residences for folks of all income levels, and not use the second or third homes, who just aren't, actually Aren't going to contribute to public life and public wrong in the way that permanent residents Would

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00:53:33.480 --> 00:53:35.530

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: anyone want to try to tackle that one

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00:53:42.680 --> 00:53:46.650

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: I can, I can take start? I don't have a great answer

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00:53:49.160 --> 00:54:02.680

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: for our conversion projects. I mean, we don't have we? As the city like? We don't have controls on who occupy space? A big thing that we talk about is use, not user right. And so, you know, we approve the use we support the use we don't

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00:54:02.860 --> 00:54:12.770

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: really get involved with who's using that space. So certainly it is possible that you know a unit downtown could be

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00:54:12.850 --> 00:54:14.150

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: a vacation

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00:54:14.300 --> 00:54:21.780

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: home. I suppose I will say that so far all of our projects are our rental.

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00:54:21.950 --> 00:54:42.860

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: their rental units. None of them are condo. So maybe less likely as a as a vacation home type thing. And then, of course, with the ones that are providing the affordable housing, which again was their choice to do. You have to meet certain income levels, to be eligible for those units. So those are. Those ones are largely protected through that system.

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00:54:43.160 --> 00:54:47.060

But it's a great, it's a great question. Curious to hear what what my colleagues have to say.

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00:54:50.050 --> 00:54:52.910

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: yashim prima any thoughts on that.

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00:54:54.840 --> 00:55:07.020

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I don't understand that to be a big issue in Center City most of our housing stock most of the multi-family is rental, and we've got a few kind of buildings, but not many so I don't see that happening as much.

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00:55:07.380 --> 00:55:08.070

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Right?

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00:55:10.980 --> 00:55:22.690

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: Yeah, it's similar in this the most rental housing in the downtown area. It's always subject to runs control. They're kind of like they're in the downtown area, but they're out to

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00:55:23.100 --> 00:55:25.730

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: margin of the downtown area.

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00:55:25.840 --> 00:55:38.580

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: So the real the debate is how much affordability requirements there will be in new buildings, and that's really it. It's kind of a show stopper, because you. if you are to. If you think that this

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00:55:38.590 --> 00:55:42.720

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: instances are required to experience the conversions.

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00:55:42.870 --> 00:55:52.000

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and you can't just add more costs to to it like that. Now, down the a basement amount has to increase, not to the discussion we're having right now.

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00:55:54.020 --> 00:56:01.360

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Great. Well, we have just about another minute here, and I wanted to ask the the 3 of you to

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00:56:01.410 --> 00:56:19.120

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: if you have any message for the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco. You know, we've talked about. We've talked about incentive programs which, since that is not yet crafted, we've talked about removing the obstacles which in spurs, policy paper talks about the obstacles that we could potentially remove to incentivize

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00:56:19.120 --> 00:56:31.950

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: would have to reuse them. We talked about, you know, trying to incentivize employers to ask people to come back to work. Those are 3 kind of broad tools that are seem to be in play, but if you could send, you know, you know what's the most important thing

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00:56:31.950 --> 00:56:41.800

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: to focus on San Francisco, because you know where we are at the outset, actually of putting some of these policy tools in place to incentivize it after we use in our downtown.

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00:56:48.270 --> 00:56:57.500

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Anyone want to take that one? What's the most important thing we should focus on in the next. You know a couple of years to get some of these policy tools and incentives in place or or other approaches.

318

00:56:59.040 --> 00:57:17.630

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: I I think this based on what we are experiencing here in DC. It completes quote, collaboration and coordination between the Mayor and the City Council. It's absolutely necessary, and having civic organizations, trade organizations, and such involved in this and

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00:57:17.630 --> 00:57:37.360

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and the business building owners also. Part of this initiative is absolutely necessary. This is not the kind of stuff that will happen if only the Council wants. But the mayor doesn't want to, or if the Mayor wants but the Council doesn't want it, there has to be a unified vision, and I think that's like the most important thing to in my mind to put forward.

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00:57:37.360 --> 00:57:48.850

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: Otherwise you just keep spinning your wheels and some other groups comes and says, No, we want the buildings to be bird friendly, I mean we. I've heard that in DC. We want to buildings to be this and that.

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00:57:48.860 --> 00:57:53.430

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: So this is not to say that those social issues are not important, but

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00:57:53.900 --> 00:58:04.330

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: th there is a cost to delay, because at least in DC. These office buildings have been the cash, c. And the revenue from them has been paying for social support programs.

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00:58:04.630 --> 00:58:07.170

Yesim Sayin / D.C. Policy Center: and we are just losing that really fast

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00:58:08.450 --> 00:58:14.790

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: same thing in San Francisco. The case in San Francisco as well. Natalie, want to give us your final final

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00:58:15.990 --> 00:58:31.820

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: sure, I mean I for us in Calgary, you know, for all downtowns. This is a really complex problem, you know. It is not simple, this isn't simple stuff we're dealing with. But for us in Calgary. Our approach has been to propose simple solutions, right like.

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00:58:31.970 --> 00:58:33.310

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: you know.

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00:58:33.640 --> 00:58:45.880

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: we took a lot of time to really identify what our problem was with the problem was we were trying to solve, and then through solving that problem, what was



the what was the main goal? And then just stay. Laser focused on that main goal, and how you're going to get there.

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00:58:47.560 --> 00:58:58.260

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: It's been super successful for us, and I totally agree with you, shim you. You've got to have that political support, and everyone needs to be on the same page and driving in that same direction.

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00:58:59.490 --> 00:59:04.980

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: What can you tell us from from the future. You've seen this. You've seen it unfold in your city.

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00:59:05.350 --> 00:59:21.620

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I think the basics are really important. I mean, you know I've set it before, but i'll say it again clean, safe. Make it a place that everybody you know, everybody with, you know vulnerable people. Everyone feels comfortable, and then I think you win.

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00:59:21.850 --> 00:59:39.670

Prema Gupta / Center City of Philadelphia: I was. Think of the Loreal, and quote, You know, Philadelphia landscape architect, where you know we all of Paris as well for Parisians, you know, build for the people that are there meet people where they are, and you know don't give up, and I think you you you can get what you want. If you start, you know, if if you focus on that.

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00:59:40.700 --> 00:59:57.610

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: Thank you so much guys for joining this program for all the attendees and for yashin Natalie and Kramer for joining us and imparting your words of wisdom for us here in San Francisco. The recording of this will be up on this for website in the week or so.

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00:59:57.610 --> 01:00:07.520

John Bela / Bela Urbanism + Design: just really want to express my gratitude for the 3, you sharing your knowledge with them, and look forward to further for for future conversation with you about the future of downtown San Francisco. Thank you.

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01:00:07.980 --> 01:00:09.150

Natalie Marchut / City of Calgary: Thanks for having us.