

## Creating Inclusive Public Spaces: Lessons from Barcelona and Beyond for Local Leaders in the United States

### Speaker Biographies

**Kimberly Burrowes** is a technical assistance manager in the Research to Action Lab at the Urban Institute. Burrowes's research has focused on advancing racial equity in parks and public spaces, practices and policies for affordable housing solutions, and participatory engagement. Burrowes thinks about how to provide an equity framing to local policy solutions for the built environment, using placemaking and community engagement tools. Within her technical assistance role, Burrowes works with local government agencies and nonprofits to build their capacity to tackle policy challenges. She has advised local agencies on the equity impacts of placemaking, community-based nonprofits focused on housing stability and equity, county-level criminal justice system agencies, and most recently, resident engagement approaches for municipalities exploring financial empowerment plans. Before joining Urban, Burrowes worked with the urban development and disaster risk management unit at the World Bank, focusing on projects in the Caribbean and East Asia. Before that, she worked on affordable housing policy at the Massachusetts Housing Partnership in Boston and the Island Housing Trust on Martha's Vineyard. Burrowes has a BA in geography and international development and an MA in community development and urban planning from Clark University.

**Matt Eldridge** is a policy program manager in the Urban Institute's Research to Action Lab. His research, policy, and technical assistance work center on how innovative public, private, and philanthropic investments can yield improved social and environmental impacts. His work has covered a variety of approaches and models including pay for success and impact bonds, blended finance, performance-based contracting, place-based impact investing, and innovations in local resource mobilization. The principles of equity, impact, and evidence guide his work and interest in this space. Some of his recent work at Urban has included reviewing enabling environments for public-private partnerships, identifying barriers to policy implementation in Africa, researching the role of regional business partnerships in supporting inclusive growth, and evaluating of a federal grant program for African American history and culture. Before joining Urban, Edridge spent two years consulting on financial regulations and three years at the World Bank working on corporate reform and helping manage the Bank's Central Asia portfolio. He holds a BA from Virginia Tech and an MSc from the London School of Economics and currently resides in New York City.

**Maria Sisternas** is an architect and holds a MSc City Design and Social Sciences from the London School of Economics. She is co-founder of Mediaurban, the Urban Content Agency of the Mediapro Group. Mediaurban is currently drafting architectural projects for affordable housing for the Habitat3 Foundation, urban design projects and developing innovative solutions for cities and organizations in urban matters. She is a regular contributor to the Diari Ara, has worked on the urban contents for Betevé and contributes to the Tomorrow.City digital content platform.

**J. Nicholas Williams** currently serves as the Director of Parks, Recreation and Youth Development for the City of Oakland, California. Nicholas has enjoyed an extensive career in Parks, Recreation and Youth Development for over 20 years. Before his 5-year tenure with Oakland, Nicholas served as the Assistant Superintendent for the Minneapolis Park Board, and served in several roles, including Director of Parks, Director of Recreation and Community Engagement, Director for the City of Atlanta. Nicholas started his career in parks as the Director of Community Building for non-profit park advocate agency Park Pride, also in Atlanta, Ga.

**Sam Zimbabwe** has been the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) since January 2019. Sam took the helm at SDOT in a time of both great challenges and significant opportunities. From his first weeks on the job successfully leading the agency through the initial phase of the Seattle Squeeze to the present, Sam has focused on maintaining downtown mobility, delivering on commitments to Seattle’s voters, working with SDOT’s partner agencies to improve transit in Seattle, and achieving Vision Zero goals. He led the agency’s response to COVID-19 and worked to keep our streets safe for all users during marches and demonstrations. He supports staff in the creation of a groundbreaking Transportation Equity Framework. The Framework, co-developed with community members, is an action plan to provide transportation options supporting Black, Indigenous and People of Color and vulnerable populations. Sam came to SDOT from Washington, DC’s District Department of Transportation (DDOT), where he served most recently as their first Chief Project Delivery Officer; before joining DDOT, Sam was the Director of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, a national nonprofit partnership dedicated to leveraging transit investments to preserve and create equitable communities. Sam holds a Master’s degree in City Planning from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Bachelor’s degree in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University.