

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO **NACTO CAMP**

What is NACTO Camp?

NACTO Camp is an “unconference” where all sessions are proposed, programmed, and then led by the attendees. It’s a chance to create space where we can be hands-on, flexible, candid, a little casual, and of course, have fun! NACTO Camp is also a chance to flip the script on who is an “expert”—it’s a time to talk about thorny questions, even when there aren’t yet “best practices” or solutions we can name.

NACTO Camp is made up of longer sessions and shorter social-style gatherings, all of which are open for City and Transit Agency staff to define and lead. Long sessions and short socials can take almost any form. Each lasts no more than 75 minutes in length (if the conversation is flowing after 70+ minutes, leave a little time to schedule a follow-on discussion!). You can organize on your own, or invite collaborators from any sector.

NACTO Camp is a place for you to have the conversations that you need to have when you need to have them, and to meet people you want to follow up with. It’s not necessarily about high turnout or finding perfect solutions, but about the conversation itself and engaging with (and even forming) the NACTO network. If you propose an idea and four or five people show up and engage in an excellent conversation, that’s a huge success! It gives you the opportunity to share your experiences, projects, questions, and passions with others in a collaborative, thoughtful way.



Sessions can be about a transportation-related topic and/or be a space for building affinity with others who share your professional focus, geography, identities, or personal interests. The [Designing Cities 2020 participant directory](#) includes areas of knowledge that transcend transportation mode or technical role, including:

Arts & Culture Strategies Change Management / Emergent Strategy Community Engagement

Budgets / Public Finance Communications / Public Relations

Economic Development Emergency Response / Operations Equity: Disability / Accessibility

Equity: Economic / Class Equity: Gender Equity: Race

Human Resources / Staffing Tactical Urbanism / Pop Ups / Temporary Design

Public-Private Partnerships Interagency Management / Partnerships



How Does NACTO Camp Work?

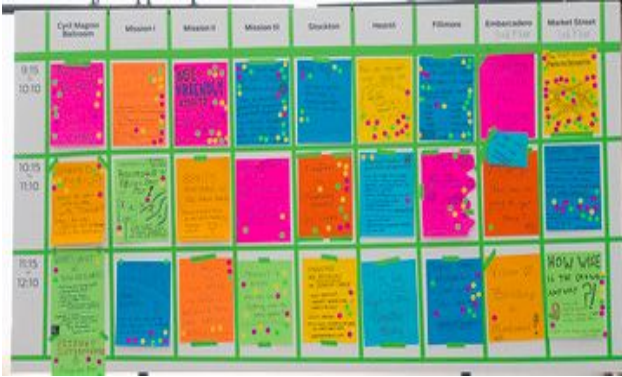
Any City or Transit Agency staffer who is attending Designing Cities as a “Participant” is welcome and encouraged to [propose a NACTO Camp long session or social gathering idea](#) between December 1st and 3rd. **The full submission process is explained [here](#)**, but here are some additional ground rules:

- **Only City or Transit Agency staffers can submit ideas**, but hosts are welcome to invite in speakers and/or attendees from anywhere and any sector (even if they’re not attending Designing Cities otherwise).

- Before you submit, be sure to **check the [current board of ideas](#)** to see if your idea has already been submitted.
 - Reach out to the host or make a comment on the idea board if you'd like to be a co-conspirator.
 - Duplicate session topics are ok if joining forces doesn't make sense, but avoid having two sessions on the same topic running in the same time slot.
- Ē **You as the host get to decide who is welcome to attend your session, and how many folks you can handle.** For instance,
 - Ē If you're hosting Beers with Black Engineers, you could say that only folks who identify as Black engineers can attend and that there is room for 20 people.
 - Ē If you're hosting a session on intersection design, you could say that the session is open to designers for all modes and there is room for 100 people.
 - Nobody knows everything, and everyone knows something. But it's ok in some cases to center conversation among participants with deeper knowledge of a topic. If you're hosting a session for seasoned community engagement practitioners, you could say that it's a skill-share for 30 people who want to go beyond the public engagement "101" conversation.
 - A way to make an "advanced" conversation more inclusive is to invite all interested people to listen in, while encouraging participants with more introductory knowledge to respect the intention of the session.
- Ē **You as the host also run the virtual meeting platform** (zoom, google meet, microsoft teams, whatever you have access to and prefer). Please be sure you have a meeting link ready to go before you submit, and check out some host tech tips below.

Don't want to submit an idea, but want to attend? Great!

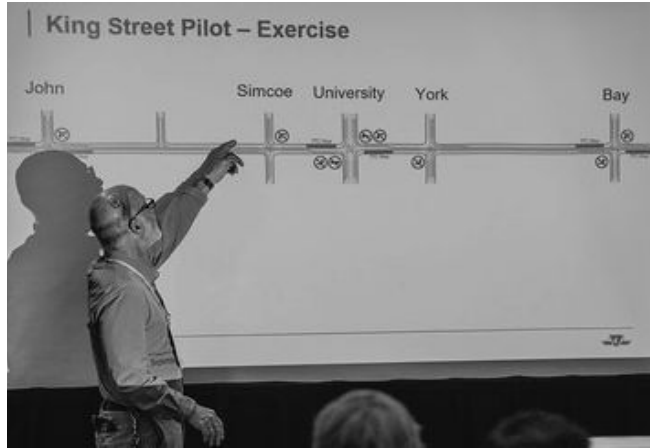
- As a registered "Participant" of the Virtual Convening, you are able to see the schedule of NACTO Camp sessions and socials [in the event lobby](#) starting Monday December 7, regardless of your sector. **You will need to [register](#) for the sessions and socials that you plan to attend.**



How can I make the most out of NACTO Camp as a participant?

If you're not formally leading a session at NACTO Camp, it doesn't mean you're not also a leader. Here are a few tips to make the most out of your participant experience:

- **Set aside time to be fully present.** Treat NACTO Camp as you would an in-person conference when it comes to scheduling. Prioritize your time or create a calendar to offer full attention to NACTO Camp sessions you are most interested in.
- **Take a break.** We don't expect anyone to attend ~~all~~ the NACTO Camp session slots. So be fully present when you're with us, and then take some real breaks! We're all experiencing digital fatigue. We encourage our attendees to get up, walk around, stretch, and have some superfoods nearby to keep you engaged.
- **Be active and speak up.** Sitting in front of a computer with multiple tabs open may tempt you to zone out of a session. Instead, help start and guide the conversation!
 - Commit to an active presence at the onset by introducing yourself or by using the meeting chat to make new connections. If you have a question for the host, connect with them.
 - If you want the discussion to consider a new nuance or remind the host that they're nearing the end time, say something. It's likely that other people will feel the same way! You'll help clarify the content focus or the logistics for everyone.
- **Introduce yourself.** State your name before speaking so everyone knows who is talking and rename yourself on the video conferencing platform to include the City or organization you are representing.
- **Always follow the NACTO Code of Conduct.** If you're questioning your own behavior or someone else's, please refer back to [NACTO's Event Code of Conduct](#), which all attendees, speakers, sponsors, and volunteers must agree to abide by to participate in Designing Cities 2020. Hold others accountable to the Code of Conduct too, and if you don't feel comfortable approaching someone directly, you can email events@nacto.org so that a NACTO staffer can step in.



How can I run a smooth and engaging session as a host?

NACTO Camp is a place to talk about what's been on your mind, whether celebrating successes or troubleshooting a challenge with peers. **Here are a few tips for selecting a topic and facilitating an engaging conversation:**

- **Dream up sessions that make time and space for ALL session participants to contribute knowledge and perspectives.** How can a peer-to-peer conversation enhance your own expertise and practice? Sometimes the best topic is a question that you don't know the answer to yet!
- **Choose a format and/or create an agenda for your session** to help keep things organized and achieve your desired outcomes. For example, if your goal is to foster new relationships, you could prioritize breakout group conversations so folks get a chance to talk to peers more deeply. If your goal is to hear from a specific subject-matter expert, you could run a podcast-style interview.

YOUR SESSION COULD BE A....

ride-along on bike

walking tour

coffee chat to discuss a favorite transportation topic

wide-open brainstorm

"Fresh Air" style interview

yoga class

affinity discussion

cocktail hour where you show off your bike

slide presentation followed by Q&A

culinary demonstration

group discussion about a single question

panel discussion

acoustic performance

book club gathering

design charrette for a challenging intersection in your city

guided meditation

.....OR ANY OTHER FORMAT OF YOUR DESIGN.

Keep in mind that a clearly articulated format helps that participants know what to expect ahead of time.

- When submitting your idea, **be specific and descriptive** of the topic you will be covering and the general format and outcomes so attendees know what to expect.
- During the session, **be mindful of time** - consider designating a volunteer time keeper.
- If applicable, **set norms for confidentiality or sharing**.
 - Sometimes the best conversations happen when participants know that what is said will stay in the “room” (while what is learned leaves to inform all participants’ work).
 - Other times, the purpose of a session can include publicly lifting up ideas, case studies, or accomplishments from session participants. This could include recording the session or publishing notes online afterward.



For all NACTO Camp sessions and socials, **we encourage the hosts to appoint a dedicated tech person so you don’t have to juggle too much at once**. That said, if your structure is super simple, you might be able to handle tech on your own. Either way, here are some **basic tech tips** to keep your session glitch-free:

- **Select a video conferencing system that you’re comfortable with**. You as the host will provide the meeting link when you submit your session idea, so feel free to make it a zoom, google meet, microsoft teams meeting, or whatever else you have access to.
- **Leverage some video conferencing tools & features**. There are tons of creative tools and features available on video conferencing these days. For NACTO Camp, simple conversation is often best, but a little digital creativity can make the dialogue more engaging and inclusive. Here are a few of our favorite interactive tech options:
 - **Live polling** can be a great way to bring in voices and opinions from a large group. There are straightforward polling options on [Zoom](#), [Google Meet](#), and [Mentimeter](#) (which can be used alongside any video conferencing platform).

