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Accelerator Model Operating System

BLUEPRINT >

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The Canyons. Photo Credit: Marcus Kaufman

FOREWARD

A Message to City Leaders and Innovators

Cities sit at the center of the most urgent challenges of our time—housing affordability, economic competitiveness, climate resilience, and the need to build healthier, thriving communities. You are also where innovation happens first. New ideas become real projects in your neighborhoods, and the benefits of renewable, biobased, and low carbon construction are felt most immediately by your residents, workers, and local businesses.

Across the country, cities like Boston, New York City, Atlanta, Portland, Santa Monica, and others have shown what's possible when local governments, building officials, fire services, developers, design teams, and community partners align around a shared goal: **building better, faster, cleaner, and more sustainably with innovative lumber-based building systems.** These cities didn't wait for perfect conditions. They built momentum by starting with a few catalytic projects, aligning their networks, and providing teams the tools and confidence to try something new.

This Accelerator Model is designed to help your city do the same. It distills lessons from leading Accelerator Cities, integrates guidance from national experts, and provides a flexible roadmap you can adapt to your own priorities—whether you're focused on housing, jobs, climate, innovation, or all the above.

You don't need to start from scratch. You don't need to have all the answers. You simply need a clear path, the right partners, and the willingness to take the first step. Just as important, you don't have to do it alone. By becoming an Accelerator City, you join a peer network of other cities who will share, challenge, and support you along the way.

Your city can lead the next chapter of sustainable building in America. The Accelerator Model is here to support your effort.



Cities as Catalysts for Change

Cities today face urgent, overlapping pressures—the need to deliver more housing, strengthen local economies, reduce emissions, modernize permitting, and build a skilled workforce. Renewable, cost-effective, biobased, appealing, and low carbon building systems give cities a new set of tools to meet these demands with greater speed, predictability, and public benefit.

Across the country, cities of all sizes are already demonstrating what's possible. Advanced light-frame, hybrid, and mass timber building systems are being used in multifamily housing, commercial development, civic buildings, higher education, and mixed use projects. These systems can help cities build faster and more cost effectively, reduce embodied carbon, improve construction site efficiency, and strengthen local manufacturing and supply-ecosystems. They also create new workforce pathways and deliver buildings that support user wellness, economic development, and positive community impact.

The Economic Opportunity for Cities

Beyond the environmental and housing benefits, renewable and biobased construction unlocks significant economic value. Cities that adopt these systems see new jobs, stronger local businesses, expanded tax bases, and deeper regional economic ties—especially between urban markets and rural manufacturing communities.

Strengthen Your Local Economy and Workforce

The U.S. lumber industry has deep roots and is a growing advanced materials sector. Renewable construction expands opportunities for land-owners, local mills, fabricators, logistics providers, and contractors. It also creates new training pathways for architects, engineers, and skilled trades. Cities benefit from:

- Job creation and workforce development
- Stronger regional supply chains and ecosystems
- Expanded tax base

Build Housing Faster and More Predictably

Lumber based systems—including advanced light-frame, hybrid, and mass timber—enable faster construction timelines, quieter job sites, and more predictable costs. For cities facing housing shortages, these systems shorten the path from concept to occupancy and reduce the friction that slows traditional development. Cities recognize:

- Accelerated housing delivery
- Reduced delays and cost escalation
- Faster activation and increased density options for underused sites, greenfield, and brownfield sites

Meet Climate and Sustainability Commitments

Lumber-based systems offer one of the most proven, scalable pathways to decarbonization. They store carbon, have lower emissions than those associated with concrete and steel, and align with rigorous sustainability standards already adopted in leading cities, driving toward:

- Lower embodied carbon
- Progress toward climate action plans
- Compliance with sustainability policies

Leverage National Expertise and Catalytic Funding

Cities don't have to do this alone. Accelerator programs connect local teams with national technical experts, federal and philanthropic funding, and proven best practices from leading cities providing access to:

- Technical assistance for local project teams
- Early-stage feasibility support
- Funding for pilots and demonstration projects

Who This Blueprint Is For

This Blueprint is designed for the people and organizations who will bring an Accelerator to life. It is written for the champion—the individual or entity responsible for applying to the program, coordinating partners, and guiding implementation. Champions may sit inside city government, an economic development corporation, a planning or buildings department, or a civic organization with the authority and networks to convene stakeholders and move projects forward.

It is also designed for cities that want to use the Accelerator Model without requiring direct funding. Many cities choose to adopt the Blueprint as a self-guided roadmap, using the tools, templates, and best practices to advance renewable and biobased construction at their own pace. Whether your city is seeking formal Accelerator support or simply wants a structured way to accelerate innovation, this Blueprint provides the guidance to get started.

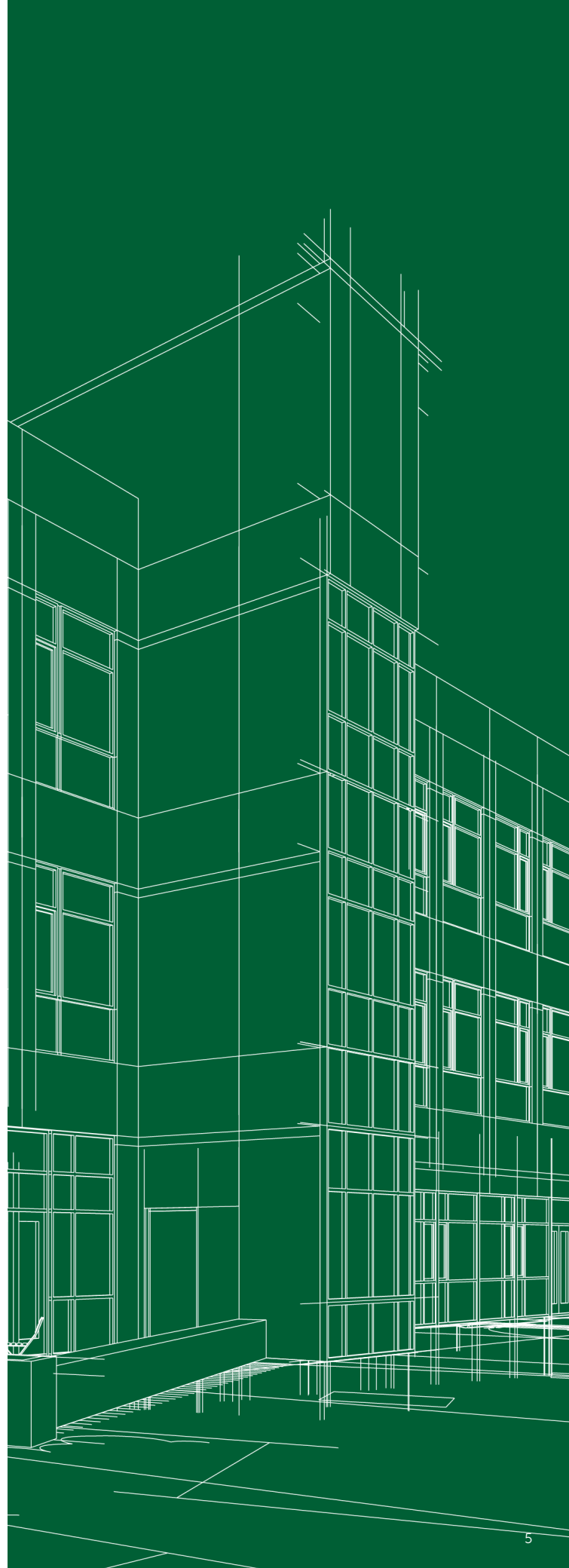
What the Blueprint Helps You Do

The Blueprint is built to be practical, adaptable, and easy to use. Its purpose is to help cities:

- Provide a comprehensive, easy to use roadmap for exploring and deploying renewable and biobased construction
- Empower local champions with the clarity, tools, and authority needed to lead execution
- Integrate national experts and programs with local priorities, ensuring cities get the right support at the right time
- Offer adaptable resources and pathways based on what each city cares about most—housing, jobs, climate, innovation, or all of the above
- Ensure all essential components are covered, including code and permitting, technical guidance, workforce development, communications, and community engagement
- Build a national peer network where cities can share lessons, align language, troubleshoot challenges, and accelerate impact together

This Accelerator Model helps your city capture and co-design opportunities to drive economic development. It offers a practical roadmap to explore renewable and biobased building systems, build a pipeline of demonstration projects, modernize permitting and code pathways, strengthen workforce and manufacturing ecosystems, engage developers and design teams, and communicate benefits to elected officials and the public.

The path is proven. The benefits are real. And the opportunity is ready for cities that want to lead and become an Accelerator City of the next era of sustainable building.



GETTING STARTED

Every Accelerator City begins with a clear answer to one question: **What building or development problem is your city trying to solve?** Your priority shapes everything that follows—your narrative, partners, demonstration projects, permitting strategy, and the way renewable and biobased construction becomes a tool for impact.

Cities typically anchor their Accelerator around one or more core priorities:

- Housing affordability and supply
- Economic development and job creation
- Climate and sustainability commitments
- Forest health and rural–urban economic connections
- Workforce development and training
- Permitting modernization and regulatory efficiency
- Innovation in construction development systems
- Neighborhood revitalization and community wellbeing

Your priorities should be explicit—something city leaders and the community can understand and embrace, and something renewable and biobased construction can help you better achieve. This clarity helps partners understand why the Accelerator matters—and why it matters now. It becomes the foundation for your narrative, coalition, and early wins.

Cities that succeed make this connection clear. They say:

We are using sustainable construction to accelerate affordable housing.

We are using renewable materials to strengthen our local economy.

We are using biobased systems to meet our climate commitments.

Once your city has defined the problems you want to solve, the next question is whether the conditions are in place to move quickly and confidently. The City Selection Framework helps evaluate your readiness, understand where you're strong, and see where additional alignment or capacity may be needed before becoming an Accelerator.

CITY SELECTION FRAMEWORK

Cities that accelerate renewable and biobased construction share a common set of strengths. They have aligned public agencies, active development markets, motivated private sector partners, and a network of civic and workforce organizations ready to collaborate. The City Selection Framework helps cities understand how these strengths are evaluated—and how to position themselves to become a high performing Accelerator.

The ability to scale Accelerator Cities depends on choosing markets where early wins are achievable and long-term momentum is likely. Cities vary widely in political priorities, permitting culture, development activity, workforce capacity, and stakeholder alignment. This framework provides a clear way for funding partners to assess readiness, compare cities objectively, and prioritize those best positioned to accelerate adoption of renewable and biobased construction.

**PUBLIC SECTOR
CAPACITY**

**PRIVATE SECTOR
CAPACITY**

**STRENGTH OF
NETWORK**

**MARKET
FACTORS**

**ALIGNMENT
TO FUNDING
PARTNERS**

Accelerator City Readiness Matrix

The framework evaluates each city across five criteria that predict success. Each dimension includes clear indicators and a standardized scoring system so cities can understand how they will be assessed—and where they may want to strengthen capacity before applying.

Public Sector Readiness:

Cities accelerate when public agencies are aligned, motivated, and capable.

Indicators include:

- Clear city priorities (housing, climate, economic development)
- Strong local champion
- Openness of permitting and fire services to using lumber-based building materials
- Existing sustainability or housing mandates
- Predictable policy environment
- Ability to host demonstration projects
- Willingness to participate in a structured Accelerator

SCORING (0–5):

- 0–1: No priority, no champion
- 2–3: Emerging interest
- 4–5: Strong alignment and readiness

Private Sector Capacity:

Accelerators succeed when developers, architects, engineers, and contractors are ready to deliver.

Indicators include:

- Contractor openness
- Developer interest
- Design firm capability
- Access to capital
- Access to construction and building insurance
- Demonstration project candidates
- Active development markets

SCORING (0–5):

- 0–1: Weak market
- 2–3: Some interest
- 4–5: Strong interest and pipeline

Stakeholder Network Strength:

Accelerators require a collaborative ecosystem. Indicators include:

- Willing champion(s)
- Philanthropic or civic partners
- Universities or trade schools
- Workforce unions or boards
- Business/Professional associations
- Community development organizations
- Convening capacity

SCORING (0–5):

- 0–1: Fragmented
- 2–3: Some partners identified
- 4–5: Strong, coordinated network

Market Conditions and Opportunity:

Partners should invest where the market can support early wins. Indicators include:

- Active development pipeline
- Housing demand
- Favorable building and zoning codes
- Proximity to lumber or mass timber manufacturers
- Economic development incentives

SCORING (0–5):

- 0–1: Weak opportunity
- 2–3: Moderate opportunity
- 4–5: Strong early win potential

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Cities with the strategic alignment to advancing lumber-based building adoption should be prioritized.

Indicators include:

- Secured funding or matching resources
- Potential to demonstrate and repeat lumber-based building systems (light-frame, mass timber, and hybrid buildings) at scale
- Regional or national influence to help amplify success
- Rural urban economic ties
- Storytelling potential
- Alignment with goals for the program

SCORING (0–5):

- 0–1: Low alignment
- 2–3: Moderate alignment
- 4–5: Strong alignment

Weighted Decision Support Matrix Example:

Dimension	Weight	Score (0-5)	Weighted Score
Public Sector Readiness	30%		
Private Sector Capacity	25%		
Stakeholder Network Strength	20%		
Market Conditions & Opportunity	15%		
Alignment to Strategic Priorities	10%		
Total	100%		_/5.0

Interpretation

4.0–5.0

High-readiness city

3.0–3.9

Medium-readiness city

BELOW 3.0

Low-readiness city

Strategic alignment is the decisive filter in the readiness matrix. It signals whether a city's priorities, influence, and market context meaningfully advance the broader goals of scaling renewable and biobased construction. Cities with strong alignment rise to the top even if other scores are moderate, while those without it are not prioritized. This ensures investment flows where impact will be most catalytic.

Funding Resources

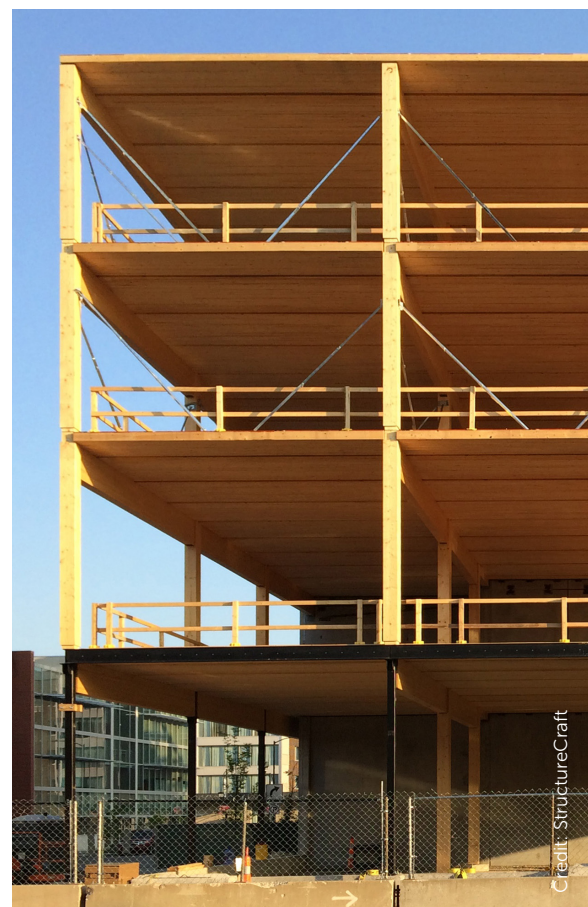
Accelerators succeed when cities assemble a mix of funding and support that matches their priorities and pace. Most Accelerators combine several sources—city dollars, philanthropic support, federal or state grants, in-kind contributions, developer participation, and technical assistance from national programs. The goal is not to secure perfect funding before starting. Cities that move fastest begin with what they have, then layer in additional support as momentum builds.

Funding should focus on the activities that unlock early wins and build long-term capacity, including early stage feasibility studies, cohort coordination, technical assistance, community engagement, workforce and training partnerships, communications and storytelling, and events or convenings that bring partners together. Even small amounts of catalytic funding can accelerate project delivery, strengthen partnerships, and signal that the city is committed to advancing renewable and biobased construction.

Optional Considerations: Evidence for Each Assessment

- Interviews with public sector leaders
- Developer and design team clusters and influence
- Workforce development and university engagement signals
- Philanthropic partner readiness
- Market data (pipeline, zoning, housing demand)
- Policy and climate commitments
- Demonstration project candidates
- Letters of interest

This framework is the entry point to the entire Accelerator Model—funding partners will select partners based on the criteria outlined later on. Once the ecosystem to support an Accelerator is outlined, city representatives should apply.



Credit: StructureCraft

What Makes a Strong Accelerator City and Operator(s)

Cities are most likely to succeed when the Accelerator Model aligns with their highest priority goals and is driven by committed local operators. The goal of the matrix is to help funders assess whether the city has:

- A clearly articulated city priority (housing, jobs, climate, etc.)
- Committed local champions
- Strong stakeholder density and willingness to collaborate
- Opportunities for demonstration projects
- Policy or market momentum
- Alignment with existing city initiatives

Cities that see themselves reflected in these strengths are well positioned to apply—and to succeed.



Purpose of the Framework

The Accelerator City Readiness Matrix is a decision support tool used by funders to help evaluate candidate cities. It demonstrates the standardized method used to compare markets across structural readiness, ecosystem capacity, and strategic impact potential, evaluating each city across five criteria that predict success. Each dimension includes clear indicators and a standardized scoring system so cities can understand how they will be assessed—and where they may want to strengthen capacity before applying.

If your city is strong across these dimensions, you are likely to rank highly when applying for funding and should consider applying.

The framework helps:

- Identify where early wins are most achievable
- Assess readiness across public, private, philanthropic, and civic sectors
- Understand whether demonstration projects can advance quickly
- Determine how well local priorities align with the goals of the Accelerator
- Deploy resources with consistency, clarity, and impact
- Build a national network of Accelerator Cities that reinforce one another



Credit: StructureCraft

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACCELERATOR MODEL BLUEPRINT

Cities do not accelerate renewable and biobased construction by chance. They accelerate because they build systems—systems that create clarity, reduce risk, align partners, and turn early projects into lasting momentum.

The Accelerator Model captures the best practices that have worked in leading cities—New York City and Boston, specifically—and translates them into a flexible framework any city can adapt to its priorities, capacity, and local landscape. It provides the internal structure needed to choose the right projects, engage the right partners, structure governance, streamline workflows, measure progress, and sustain momentum over time.

Cities that use the Accelerator Model move faster, reduce uncertainty for developers and design teams, strengthen their workforce and manufacturing ecosystems, and build a pipeline of demonstration projects that show what is possible—and inspire others to follow. Cities become more equipped with tools, alignment, and discipline needed to lead the next era of sustainable building.



Chattahoochee Nature Center, Rendering Credit: Houser Walker Architecture

STAKEHOLDER NETWORK STRUCTURE

Cities accelerate renewable and biobased construction when the right partners work together in coordinated alignment. This section gives a structured way to identify the essential players, define their roles, and activate them in a sequence that builds trust, reduces risk, and accelerates project delivery. This stakeholder network architecture becomes the backbone of your Accelerator—the network that carries the work forward long after the first cohort ends. It ensures that every partner knows their role, understands how they contribute, and sees how their work connects to the broader system. The visuals and narrative in this section help:

- Understand the full set of partners required for success
- Clarify expectations and responsibilities
- Identify gaps in local capacity
- Structure engagement and activation
- Build trust across sectors
- Accelerate project delivery

Identify a Champion

Every Accelerator needs a champion—the person or organization that identifies and connects all the core elements of a successful program and keeps momentum moving. In practice, the champion must bring institutional authority, familiarity with development and regulatory processes, and the ability to receive and distribute funds—capacities that allow the role to leverage existing networks, accelerate decisions, and manage the financial components of the program. This individual or organization sits at the center of the ecosystem, translating the Blueprint into action, coordinating across stakeholders, and ensuring early wins turn into durable progress.

The champion is the primary interface with the program funder, the point of accountability for implementation, and the steady hand that guides the Accelerator through complexity. With a clear mandate and the authority to convene partners, the champion becomes the force that speeds adoption, reduces friction, and transforms the Accelerator’s vision for more renewable and biobased construction to reality.

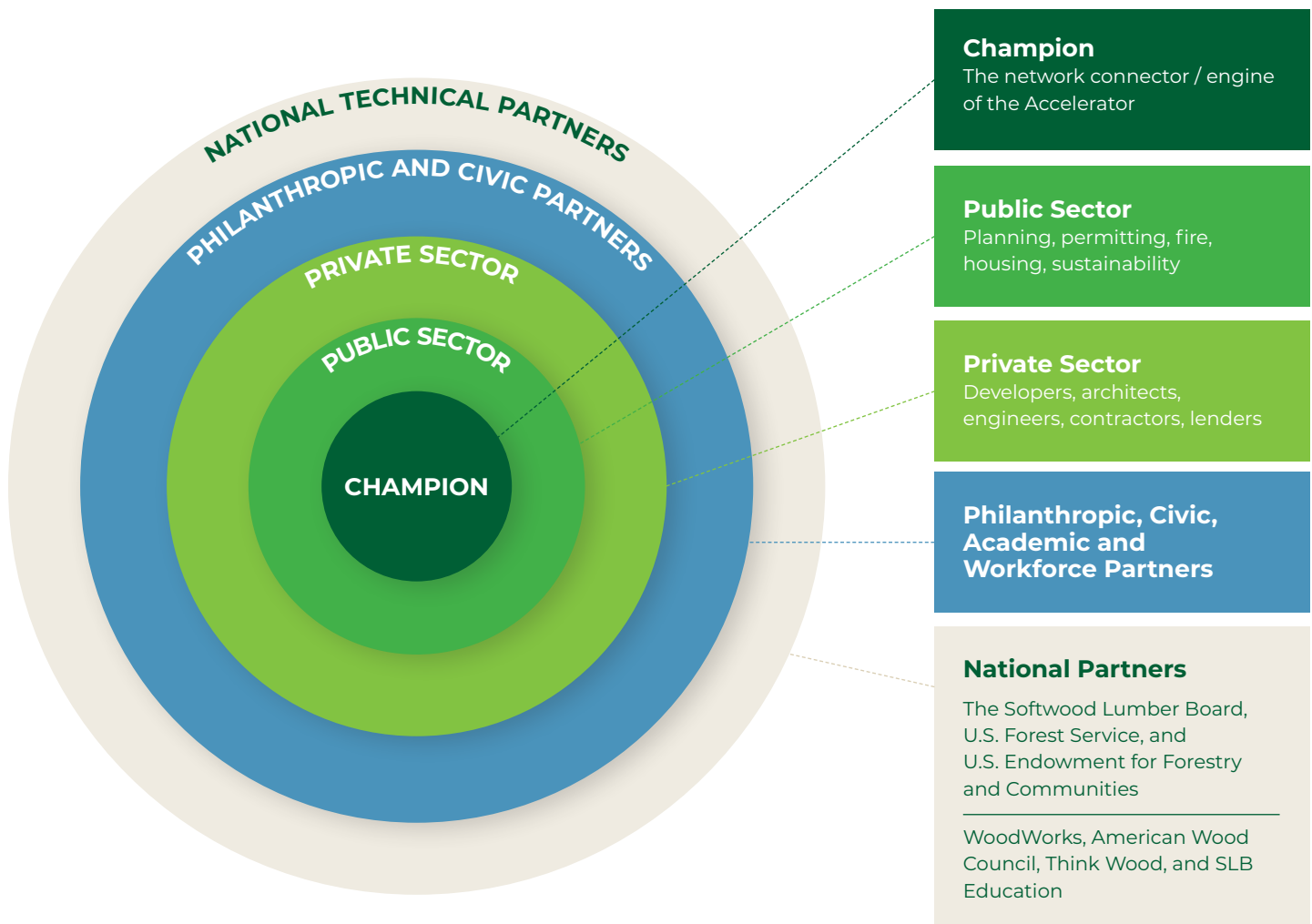


Map the Core Ecosystem

Every Accelerator has a predictable set of partners. This ecosystem is the foundation of your Accelerator. You may not engage everyone at once—it is important to understand who matters, why they matter, and when they matter.

Public Sector	Private Sector
• Planning • Permitting and building departments or authorities having jurisdiction (AHJ) • Fire services or local fire department • Housing agencies • Sustainability and climate offices • Economic development agencies • Mayor's office or city manager • Local Forest Service personnel	• Developers and owners • Architects and engineers • General contractors and specialty trades • Lenders and investors • Insurance providers • Manufacturers and suppliers
Philanthropic and Civic Partners	Academic and Workforce Partners
• Foundations • Nonprofits • Business associations • Community development organizations • Industry groups	• Universities • Community colleges • Trade schools and unions • Workforce boards • Apprenticeship programs
National Technical Partners	Others / NGOs
• WoodWorks • American Wood Council • Think Wood • SLB Education	• C40 • Architecture 2030 • U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities • Binational Softwood Lumber Council

STAKEHOLDER NETWORK STRUCTURE



The Stakeholder Ecosystem demonstrates the partners as a set of interconnected, concentric rings. The champions are the network connectors of the program. Their role is essential to build adoption of renewable and biobased construction materials and a pipeline of projects—the tangible proof points that build confidence, reduce risk, and inspire replication.

Surrounding the projects are the public sector partners who provide the enabling environment: planning, permitting, fire services, housing, sustainability, and executive leadership. Their clarity and alignment are essential for reducing uncertainty and creating predictable pathways for development of successful projects.

The next ring represents the private sector, which delivers the projects. Developers, architects, engineers, contractors, lenders, and manufacturers bring the technical expertise, financial capacity, and market insight needed to move projects from concept to construction.

The outer ring includes philanthropic, civic, academic, and workforce partners. These organizations provide catalytic funding, convening power, research, training, and community alignment. They strengthen the ecosystem and help ensure the Accelerator delivers broad public benefit.

Finally, the perimeter includes national partners—including the funders (the Softwood Lumber Board, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities), and supporting programs (WoodWorks, the American Wood Council, Think Wood, and SLB Education)—who provide technical assistance, national best practices, and strategic support.

The ecosystem is a networked system where influence flows inward (policy, support) and outward (impact, storytelling), and where each partner plays a distinct but interconnected role.

Define Roles and Responsibilities

A clear role architecture reduces confusion, accelerates decision making, and helps partners understand how they contribute to the Accelerator's success.

Public Sector	Private Sector
• Provide permitting clarity • Modernize code pathways • Identify public sector demonstration sites • Integrate renewable construction into housing and economic strategies • Support community engagement • Distributes funding to projects	• Deliver demonstration projects • Validate feasibility • Optimize design and engineering • Strengthen supply chains and ecosystems • Provide peer to peer confidence • Inform policy and permitting improvements
Philanthropic and Civic Partners	Academic and Workforce Partners
• Provide catalytic funding • Convene partners • Support research and workforce development • Produce case studies and public education • Sustain collaboration	• Train architects, engineers, and builders • Support research and innovation • Provide design studios and technical workshops • Connect residents to high quality jobs • Expand hands-on training pathways to ensure a skilled, job-ready workforce
National Technical Partners	Others / NGOs
• Provide project level technical assistance • Support code and fire safety training • Strengthen communications and storytelling • Support curriculum development and workforce training	• Provide material capacity • Support cost predictability • Strengthen rural urban economic ties • Attract investment

The Stakeholder Roles provide a detailed view of what each partner contributes to the Accelerator. While the ecosystem map shows how the system fits together, the grid assigns accountability and responsibilities.

The public sector establishes the enabling environment—zoning clarity, permitting pathways, fire and life-safety alignment, policy integration, and political support. Their role is to reduce friction and create predictable conditions for project delivery.

The private sector delivers the projects. Developers, design teams, contractors, and lenders validate feasibility, optimize design, manage cost and schedule, and bring demonstration projects to life. Their role is to prove the model through real projects.

Philanthropic and civic partners provide catalytic support. They convene stakeholders, fund early work, support research and workforce development, and help ensure community benefits. Their role is to strengthen trust and fill gaps that neither the public nor private sector can address alone.

Academic and workforce partners build long-term capacity. Universities, community colleges, trade schools and unions, and workforce boards train the next generation of architects, engineers, and tradespeople. Their role is to engage emerging and technical experts, and to ultimately, prepare the talent pipeline needed to scale future growth in the market.

Together, these roles form a complete operating architecture for the Accelerator. The champion will help connect the various stakeholders to one another and to potential funding partners. Each partner has a clear mandate, and the intersections between them—where planning meets development, where workforce meets industry, where philanthropy meets community—are where the Accelerator gains its strength.

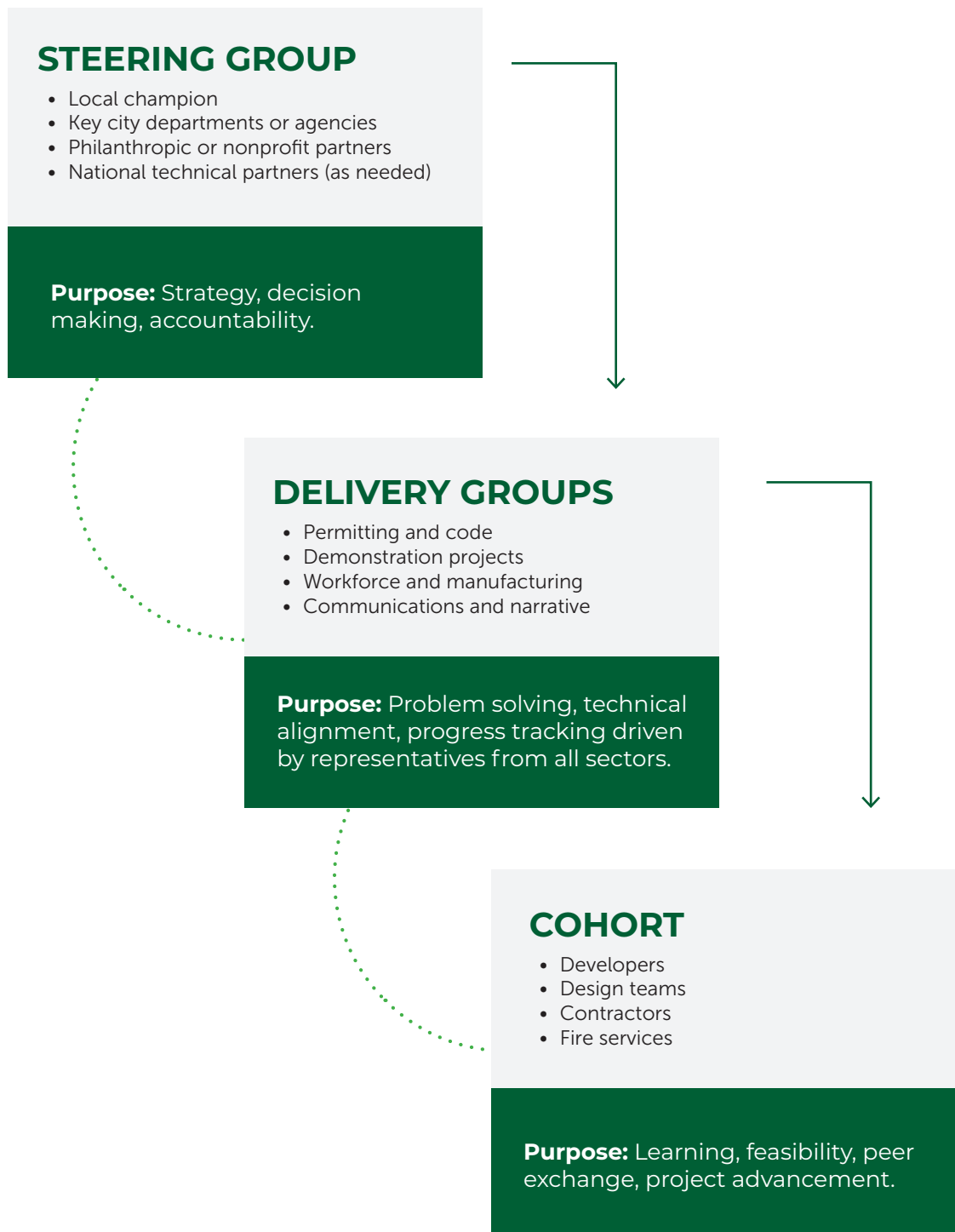
STAKEHOLDER NETWORK STRUCTURE

Activations

Accelerators succeed when they activate partners in a deliberate sequence that builds trust and momentum. Each city will have a unique matrix of stakeholders. This sequencing ensures that early work is focused, manageable, and aligned—and that later engagement builds on real progress.

Establish the Cross Sector Coordination Model

Once the stakeholders are committed, the Accelerator needs a predictable rhythm to keep partners aligned and engaged. Cities typically use a three-tiered coordination model:



Build the Stakeholder Engagement Cadence

A predictable cadence builds trust and reduces friction. Accelerators that succeed use a simple, repeatable rhythm to ensure partners stay informed, aligned, and accountable.

Create Stakeholder Communication Pathways

Clear communication prevents confusion and accelerates progress. To reduce friction and move quickly, your Accelerator should establish:

- A single point of contact for developers
- A permitting liaison for renewable construction
- A fire services liaison
- A communications lead
- A shared project tracker
- A shared resource library

Document the Network Structure

Your last step is to document your stakeholder network, so it becomes a repeatable asset. This document should include:

- A full stakeholder map
- Role definitions
- Activation sequence
- Coordination model
- Meeting cadence
- Communication pathways
- Contact directory

This becomes the operating manual for your Accelerator's cross sector ecosystem.

The effectiveness of an Accelerator depends on the strength of its committed team members and their relationships. When public agencies, developers, design teams, manufacturers, workforce partners, and civic organizations operate as a coordinated network, cities can move faster, reduce friction, and convert more projects with confidence. This structure ensures this network is intentional, aligned, and built for momentum—creating the collaborative foundation every Accelerator needs to advance renewable and biobased construction at scale.



Credit: Kevin Belanger

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATING MODEL

Accelerators do not need a complex governance system—Accelerators need a small group of committed people, clear roles, and a predictable rhythm. This simplified model focuses on what matters: alignment, decisions, and forward motion.

	Includes	Responsibilities	Decides	Meets
Steering Group: A small group that sets direction and clears obstacles.	Includes local champion and 3–5 key city leaders (planning, permitting, fire, housing/economic development)	- Set priorities - Holds agreement and distributes funding - Approve the cohort - Resolve issues - Keep the Accelerator City Program visible and supported	- Priorities - Cohort selection - Policy direction - Major escalations	Monthly / Quarterly
Delivery Group: The people who keep the work moving day-to-day.	Includes 3–5 staff from permitting, planning, fire, sustainability, workforce, and communications	- Coordinate across departments - Support demonstration projects - Align permitting and technical guidance - Track progress and risks	- Technical guidance - Workflow improvements - What needs to escalate	Bi-weekly / Monthly Inform regularly
Cohort: The professionals who perform or impact the actual building*.	Includes developers, architects, engineers, contractors, and national experts	- Advance their projects - Share lessons - Surface issues early - Participate in feasibility and reviews	Project level design and feasibility choices	Bi-weekly / As needed Inform regularly

* From an operational perspective, a cohort size between 5–8 provides a manageable yet diverse set of projects and supports effective peer to peer outcomes—all while remaining agile.



A streamlined governance model works because it is lean and clear, so **every partner understands their role**, and practical, making it easy for cities with limited resources and multiple priorities to adopt and operate. **It is also repeatable, providing a structure that works in any market.** This approach gives cities the discipline and coordination they need to run a high performing Accelerator without overwhelming them or creating new bureaucracy.

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

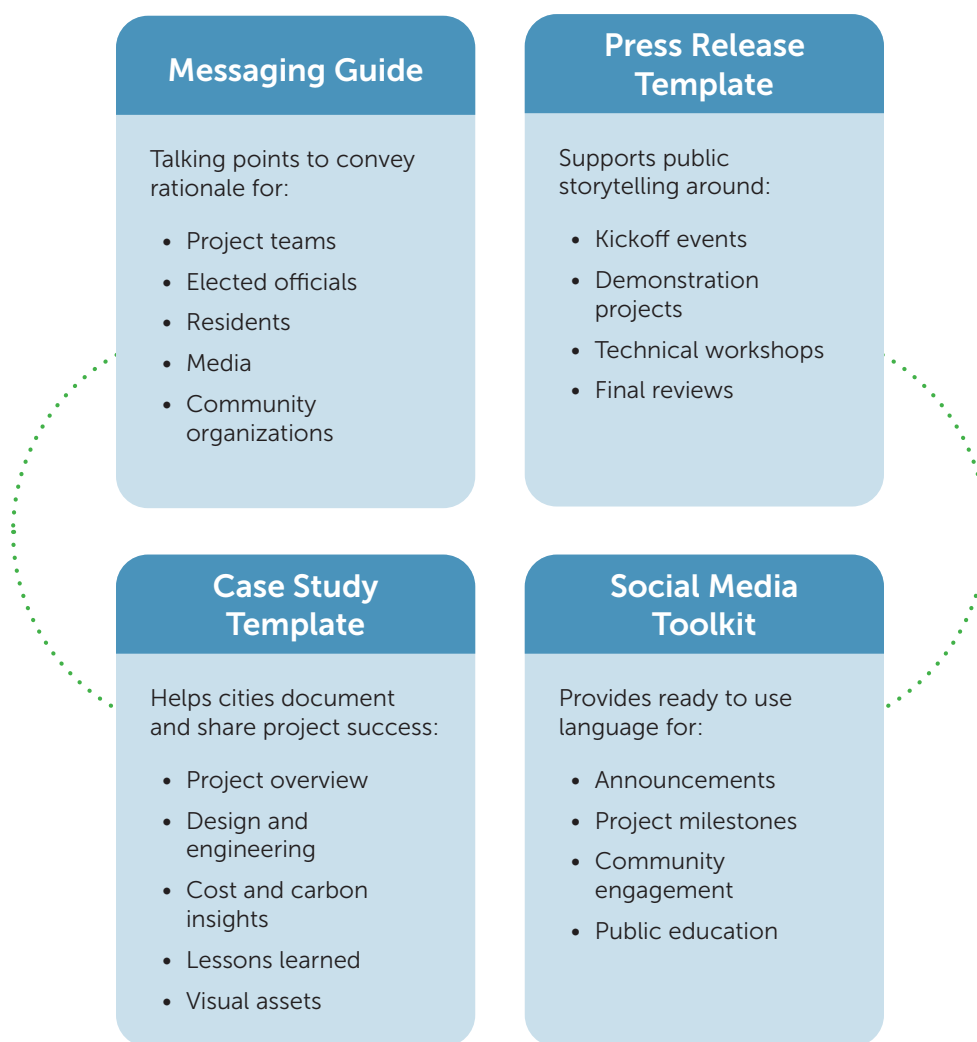
Cities accelerate renewable and biobased construction not just because they have the right strategy, but because they have the right tools. This section provides sample templates, checklists, workflows, and communication assets that help your city operate the Accelerator with discipline and repeatability. These tools reduce friction, increase predictability, and ensure that every partner—from project teams to permitting teams to fire services—has what they need to move quickly and confidently.

This toolkit is modular. Cities can adopt it as is, adapt it to local needs, or integrate it into existing systems. Access to these tools will be facilitated as part of the next phase of support.

Communications and Narrative Tools

Effective communication begins with a clear understanding of what matters most to your city. Renewable and biobased construction is a tool to advance the priorities your community cares about most, whether that's housing affordability, economic development, climate commitments, forest health, workforce training, code adoption, permitting modernization, or neighborhood wellbeing.

Cities that succeed make this connection explicit. They frame renewable construction as a solution to their housing challenge, a strategy to strengthen their workforce and local economy, or a pathway to meet climate goals. When sustainable building is positioned to advance your city's agenda, partners align more quickly, code and policy support strengthens, and momentum builds. The communications tools in this section help you articulate that connection with clarity, consistency, and confidence.



These tools help cities make their progress visible and compelling.

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Meeting and Coordination Tools

Predictable coordination keeps partners aligned and accountable. These tools support the operating cadence established in the previous section.

Steering Group Agenda Template

Ensures strategic alignment:

- Progress and meeting updates
- Decision items
- Risks and blockers
- Policy and permitting updates
- Communications and narrative

Delivery Group Agenda Template

Supports technical problem solving:

- Issue review
- Technical alignment
- Resource needs
- Escalation items

Cohort Convening Agenda Template

Guides bi-weekly cohort meetings:

- Project updates
- Technical workshops
- Peer learning
- Manufacturer engagement

**These tools help cities maintain
discipline and momentum.**

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Demonstration Project Tools

Demonstration projects are the engine of your Accelerator. These demonstration project tools help cities intake, evaluate, support, and track projects from early feasibility through final review.

Master Project Tracker

A shared dashboard that tracks:

- Project stage
- Milestones
- Risks and blockers
- Permitting status
- Technical support needs
- Storytelling opportunities

Project Intake Form

Captures essential information for evaluating project fit:

- Applicant contact
- Project name and location
- Project planning and permitting status
- Team description (Developer, architect, engineer, code, sustainability, cost estimating, construction)
- Team experience
- Project description (typology, use, square footage, height, site plans, building plans, elevations, sustainability goals)
- Economic impact estimates
- Wood sourcing, forest health or rural economies benefits

Feasibility Study Template

Guides teams through early exploration of renewable and biobased systems:

- Structural options
- Cost proforma and schedule implications
- Carbon analysis (LCA)
- Fire and life-safety considerations
- Moisture, acoustics, and constructability
- Supply chain alignment

Mid-Review and Final Review Templates

Provide structure for cohort presentations and storytelling:

- Design evolution
- Technical findings
- Cost and carbon insights
- Cross disciplinary collaboration
- Lessons learned
- Next steps

These tools provide an outline to help cities manage projects with clarity and consistency.

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Permitting and Code Tools

Permitting clarity is one of the most powerful accelerators of market adoption. These tools help cities create predictable pathways for developers and design teams.

Pre-Application Meeting Template

Ensures early alignment between developers, permitting staff, and fire services:

- Project overview
- Structural system options
- Fire and life-safety considerations
- Code interpretation questions
- Required documentation
- Next steps and timelines

Permitting Guidance Document

Provides developers with a clear understanding of:

- What is allowed under current code
- How renewable systems are reviewed
- Required submittals
- Review timelines
- Points of contact

Code Interpretation Checklist

Helps permitting teams review renewable construction consistently:

- Fire resistance
- Height and area
- Egress
- Structural performance
- Moisture and acoustics
- Special inspections

Fire Services Engagement Template

Supports early and ongoing collaboration:

- Key questions for fire services
- Documentation requirements
- Site visit opportunities
- Peer city examples

These tools reduce uncertainty and help project teams move quickly.

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Workforce and Manufacturing Tools

Cities can use these tools to align training programs, support local manufacturers, and strengthen rural urban economic ties.

Workforce Alignment Matrix

Maps training programs to industry needs:

- Architecture and engineering
- Construction management
- Skilled trades
- Digital fabrication
- Manufacturing and logistics

Curriculum Integration Guide

Helps universities and trade schools incorporate renewable construction into coursework:

- Learning objectives
- Technical modules
- Hands on activities
- Guest lectures and site visits

Manufacturer Engagement Template

Supports early coordination with suppliers:

- Capacity and lead times
- Material specifications
- Logistics and delivery
- Opportunities for local investment

These tools help cities build a strong talent pipeline and supply chain ecosystem.

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Digital Design and Feasibility Tools

Modern digital platforms help project teams evaluate renewable construction quickly and accurately. Cities can encourage their use through:

Early Stage Optioneering Tools

Support rapid exploration of:

- Structural systems and design options
- Cost and carbon implications

Modern Modeling Tools

Help teams:

- Generate high fidelity BIM models
- Coordinate with manufacturers
- Reduce design rework

Visualization and Engagement Tools

Support:

- Community engagement
- Developer presentations
- Public storytelling

These tools help teams move from concept to feasibility with speed and clarity.

Resource Library and Shared Infrastructure

Cities that succeed create a shared resource library for partners, and eventually others, which include:

- All templates and tools
- Technical guidance
- Case studies
- Project trackers
- Meeting summaries
- Training materials
- Communications assets

This library becomes the central hub for your Accelerator—a sole source of truth that keeps partners aligned and informed.

APPENDIX

WHAT LEADING CITIES HAVE ACHIEVED



Hidden Creek Community Center, Credit: Mike Brewington

New York City Case Study:

ACCELERATOR
CITIES IN ACTION



A CITY SEEKING NEW SOLUTIONS

Cities today face mounting pressure to deliver more housing, strengthen local economies, and reduce the environmental impact of construction. In New York City, meeting these goals requires new approaches—not only in building materials, but also in how cities collaborate with industry, regulators, and development teams.

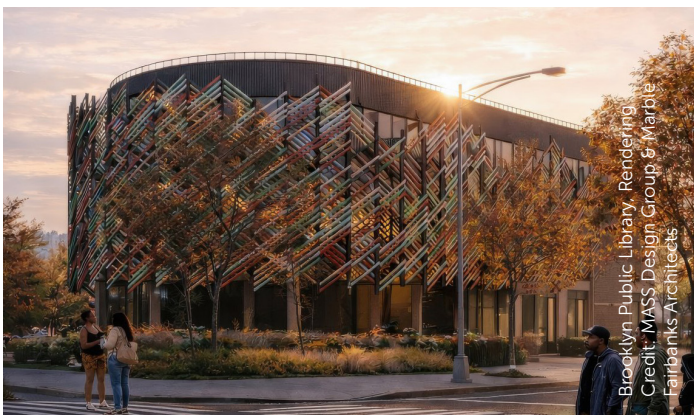
Through the **Accelerator Cities Program**, the **Softwood Lumber Board (SLB)** and the **U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service)** partnered with New York City to help explore innovative construction solutions aligned with the city's climate and economic development priorities.

Working with the **New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)** and the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, the partners launched the **NYC Mass Timber Studio**—a program designed to turn emerging building technologies into real development projects while building industry knowledge and regulatory experience along the way.

The Brooklyn Public Library New Lots Branch in East New York is one of the projects explored through the NYC Mass Timber Studio.



Brooklyn Public Library, Rendering Credit: MASS Design Group & Marble Fairbanks Architects



Brooklyn Public Library, Rendering Credit: MASS Design Group & Marble Fairbanks Architects



Brooklyn Public Library, Rendering Credit: MASS Design Group & Marble Fairbanks Architects

TURNING INNOVATION INTO REAL PROJECTS

The NYC Mass Timber Studio was designed to move beyond research and into real-world application. The most recent cohort of the program, completed in 2025, operated with a **\$150,000 total budget**, including **\$50,000 from the SLB, \$50,000 from the Forest Service, and a \$50,000 match from NYCEDC**—demonstrating a true public–private partnership to accelerate innovative construction projects in the city. A 2026 program is anticipated and will continue to provide technical support, funding, and collaborative problem-solving to development teams exploring innovative construction approaches during the critical early stages of project planning and design.

What Is Mass Timber?

Mass timber refers to a category of **engineered wood building systems**—such as cross-laminated timber (CLT) and glulam—that make it possible to use wood safely and efficiently in mid- and high-rise buildings.

For cities, the interest in mass timber goes beyond the material itself. When used in appropriate projects, these building systems can:

- **Lower the carbon footprint** of construction by using renewable, bio-based materials.
- **Accelerate project delivery** through prefabrication and efficient installation.
- **Create high-quality civic and residential spaces** with warm, natural materials.
- **Support economic development** by strengthening supply chains tied to sustainable forestry.

For these reasons, many cities are exploring how mass timber and other innovative building systems can help advance their climate, housing, and economic development goals.



» **The Studio brings together city agencies, architects, engineers, developers, and industry experts** to evaluate how new building systems can work within New York City's complex regulatory and construction environment. «

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT: NYC MASS TIMBER STUDIO



**14 PROJECTS
SELECTED**

across two cohorts



**500,000+
SQ FT**

of development
assessed



**5 BOROUGH
REPRESENTED**

across New York City



**\$150,000 PROGRAM
INVESTMENT**

(\$50K SLB • \$50K Forest Service
• \$50K NYCEDC match)

Projects include **housing, civic facilities, recreation centers, and mixed-use and industrial buildings**, demonstrating the versatility of mass timber in dense urban environments.

From concept to civic investment: the program is helping turn innovative building ideas into **real projects** serving New York communities.

PROJECT CASE STUDY:

Brooklyn Public Library — New Lots Branch

One of the most visible projects supported through the NYC Mass Timber Studio is the **Brooklyn Public Library's New Lots Branch in East New York**. The new approximately **25,000-square-foot library** will replace an aging neighborhood facility with a modern civic building designed to serve as a hub for learning, gathering, and community programming.

Designed by **MASS Design Group and Marble Fairbanks Architects**, the project also acknowledges the site's history as a historic African Burial Ground and incorporates spaces for reflection, dialogue, and community gathering. The design explores the use of **mass timber structural systems** to create a warm, welcoming interior environment while reducing the carbon footprint of construction.

Through participation in the Studio, the project team received technical guidance on structural design, fire safety considerations, and code pathways specific to New York City. The project illustrates how the Accelerator Cities model can support **real civic infrastructure projects** while helping city agencies and development teams build expertise with innovative building systems.



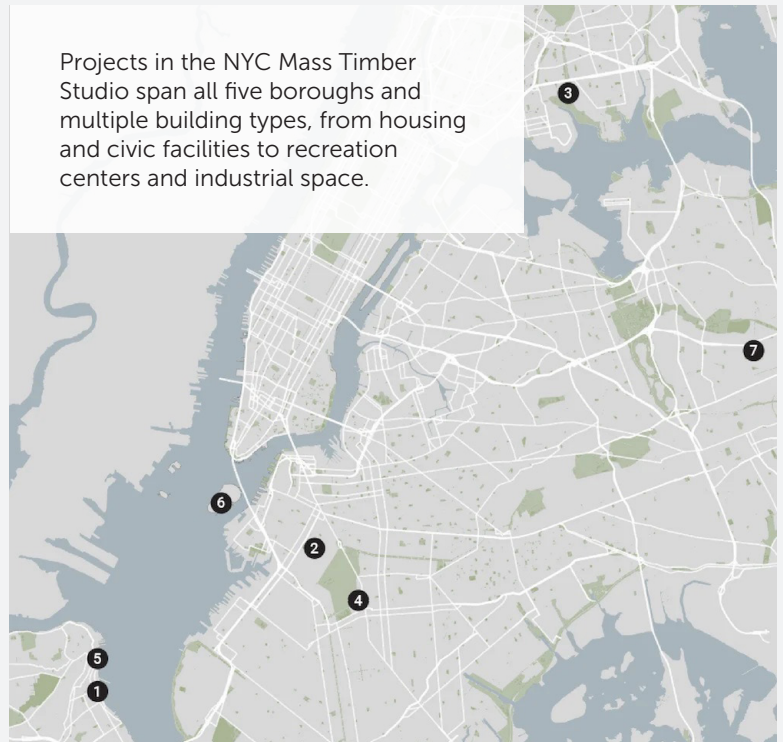
The new 25,000-square-foot Brooklyn Public Library New Lots Branch employs mass timber to create a welcoming civic space while advancing New York City's clean construction goals.

Brooklyn Public Library Rendering Credit: MASS Design Group & Marble Fairbanks Architects

By supporting **active development projects** rather than theoretical studies, the program demonstrates how cities can test **new construction approaches** while advancing real community investments.



Projects in the NYC Mass Timber Studio span all five boroughs and multiple building types, from housing and civic facilities to recreation centers and industrial space.



ADVANCING REGULATORY COLLABORATION

A critical barrier to adopting new construction systems in large cities is regulatory uncertainty. New York City addressed this challenge by integrating regulators directly into the program.

Through the Studio, project teams engage with experts from the **NYC Department of Buildings and the Fire Department of New York** to explore building code pathways, fire safety considerations, and structural design requirements early in the development process.

This collaborative approach helps clarify permitting requirements, lets city leaders identify potential regulatory modernization, and builds confidence among both developers and city officials. By addressing these issues early, the program reduces uncertainty and accelerates the path from concept to construction.



Technical workshops and advisory sessions bring together developers, designers, and city regulators to address building code and safety considerations.

“As we embark on a journey toward a more sustainable future for our city, the advancement of **the NYC Mass Timber Studio marks a significant milestone in our commitment to sustainable construction practices.** NYCEDC is not only helping reduce our carbon footprint but also paving the way for a more resilient and vibrant built environment.”

— JIMMY ODDO, COMMISSIONER, NYC DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS



New Stapleton Waterfront Rendering Credit: GF55 Architects

Mass timber buildings can support vibrant community spaces while reducing the carbon footprint of new construction.

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY

Beyond supporting individual projects, the Studio contributes to the city's broader strategy to grow a clean construction and sustainable economy sector.

Programs that encourage lower-carbon construction practices can expand opportunities for architects, engineers, contractors, and manufacturers while creating new jobs and strengthening regional supply chains. New York City's economic action plan projects significant advancement of the workforce in the coming decades, and innovative building programs like the Studio help lay the groundwork for that expansion.

By fostering collaboration between city leadership, industry experts, and project teams, the program is helping position New York City as a leader in the next generation of sustainable urban development.

“If we want to decarbonize our built environment and lower our carbon emissions, **it is critical we prioritize the scaling of the clean construction industry.**”

— ANDREW KIMBALL, PRESIDENT & CEO, NYCEDC



Walter Gladwin Recreation Center
Rendering Credit: MARVEL

The city's first example of CLT use for a community space, the Walter Gladwin Recreation Center will provide inclusive, universally accessible fitness amenities and programs for all ages.

A MODEL FOR FUTURE ACCELERATOR CITIES

New York City demonstrates how the Accelerator Cities model can help municipalities move from policy ambition to project delivery. Through collaboration between the **SLB, the Forest Service, city leadership, and industry partners**, the program integrates technical expertise, regulatory engagement, and real development projects.

For cities seeking to accelerate innovation in housing, economic development, and sustainable construction, **the New York City experience provides a compelling blueprint for action.**

BECOME AN ACCELERATOR CITY

Cities interested in exploring how the Accelerator Cities model could support their own housing, climate, and economic development goals are encouraged to connect with the program partners.

To learn more about the Accelerator Cities initiative or discuss how your city could participate, contact the Softwood Lumber Board at:

acceleratorcities@softwoodlumberboard.org

We welcome conversations with city leaders, economic development organizations, permitting agencies, and industry partners interested in advancing innovative construction and sustainable urban development.



WHAT LEADING CITIES HAVE ACHIEVED

Across leading Accelerator Cities, a consistent pattern emerges: **they set a clear priority, empower a strong local champion, and bring public, private, and civic partners together around a shared agenda.** They launch early demonstration projects, engage fire services and code officials from the start, and draw on national technical expertise to build confidence. Most importantly, they connect renewable and biobased construction to their city's broader goals—housing, jobs, climate, and community wellbeing. These ingredients create the conditions for momentum, and any city can build them.



Boston: From Pilot to Pipeline

[Boston's Mass Timber Accelerator](#) began with a simple goal: help development teams explore renewable and biobased construction through early stage feasibility funding. What followed was a citywide shift. Boston has:

- Built a multi-million square foot pipeline of sustainable projects
- Launched multiple cohorts of development teams
- Integrated renewable construction into economic development and climate strategies
- Given fire services, code officials, and developers hands on experience that reduced uncertainty
- Created repeat activity beyond the original funding window

Boston shows what happens when a city aligns its priorities with sustainable building systems—momentum becomes self sustaining.

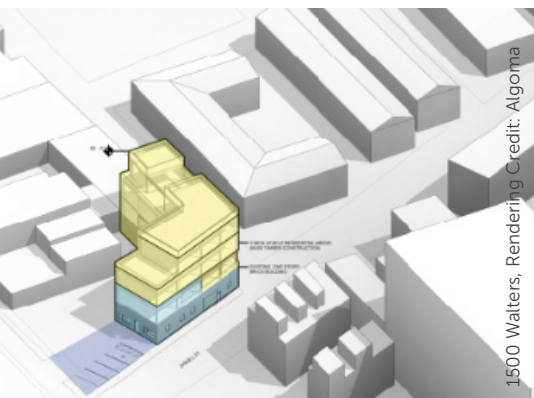


New York City: Embedding Sustainable Construction in Economic Development

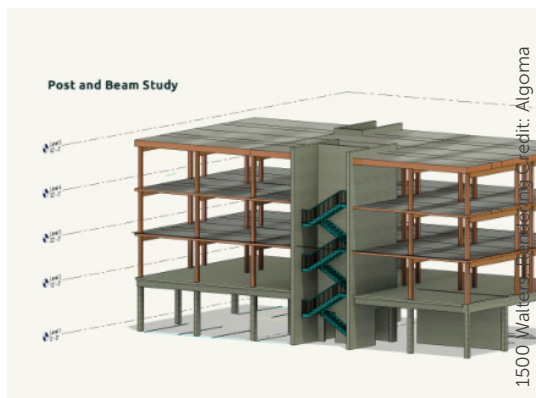
New York City's [Mass Timber Studio](#), led by NYCEDC, has become a national model for integrating renewable construction into broader economic development strategies. NYC has:

- Supported multiple cohorts of development teams
- Advanced projects across affordable housing, commercial, and institutional sectors
- Built strong partnerships with fire services, DOB, and design teams
- Used the Accelerator to support innovation districts and workforce pipelines
- Demonstrated that renewable construction can scale in dense, complex urban environments

New York City has demonstrated how the model can help municipalities move from policy ambitions to project delivery.



1500 Walters, Rendering Credit: Algoma



1500 Walters, Rendering Credit: Algoma



1500 Walters, Rendering Credit: Algoma

Georgia: Scaling Across Multiple Metros

The [Georgia Mass Timber Accelerator](#) began in Atlanta and then expanded statewide. Georgia's model emphasizes:

- Workforce development
- Manufacturing and supply chain alignment
- Rural-urban economic development
- Multi-city collaboration
- Statewide policy modernization

Georgia demonstrates how accelerators can scale beyond a single city and become a regional strategy.



Hidden Creek Community Center, Photo Credit: Mike Brewington



Frame 122, Photo Credit: Christopher Stumpp



Community MusicWorks Center, Photo Credit: Warren Jagger Photography

Emerging State Level Models

Programs like Washington's MASSTAC, Oregon's Mass Timber Coalition, Michigan's DNR led initiative, and Massachusetts' statewide efforts are expanding the Accelerator Model across regions. These programs focus on:

- Forest to cities economic development
- Rural-urban value chains
- Workforce and training pipelines
- Statewide policy modernization

They show that **best practices can be adapted** to state agencies, regional coalitions, and multi-city partnerships.

NATIONAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

Cities participating in this work have access to a coordinated set of national partners who bring technical expertise, research capacity, funding pathways, workforce support, and communications tools. While each organization plays a distinct role, **together they form a comprehensive resource ecosystem that helps cities advance renewable and biobased construction with confidence.** The program lead will guide each city to the right partners and tools as part of onboarding and early activation.



Softwood Lumber Board

The [Softwood Lumber Board](#) is an industry-funded initiative established to promote the benefits and uses of softwood lumber products in outdoor, residential, and non-residential construction. Programs and initiatives supported by the SLB focus on increasing the demand for appearance and softwood lumber products in the United States. Through the Accelerator Cities Program, and in coordination with key partners, the SLB is helping cities connect local priorities with national expertise, resources, and implementation support.



U.S. Forest Service

The [U.S. Forest Service](#) provides funding, technical support, and market development resources that help cities reduce risk and accelerate early projects. The Wood Innovations Grant program is a key pathway for feasibility studies, demonstration projects, and innovation pilots, and additional Forest Service programs strengthen rural urban economic connections and support community focused development.



U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities

The [U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities](#) supports cities by connecting them to research, market insights, and cross sector partnerships that strengthen forest based economic development. Their work bridges rural supply chains and urban development needs, helping cities build long-term capacity for renewable construction.



American Wood Council (AWC)

The [American Wood Council](#) offers authoritative guidance on codes, standards, and fire design. The AWC supports building officials, fire services, and permitting teams with training, technical resources, and code interpretation assistance—ensuring safe, predictable, and compliant pathways for project approval.



WoodWorks

[WoodWorks](#) provides hands on technical assistance to cities, developers, and design teams. Their support includes feasibility studies, early design guidance, cost and performance analysis, and project specific engineering assistance. WoodWorks helps cities advance demonstration projects and build local capacity.



Think Wood

[Think Wood](#) equips cities with communications tools, case studies, imagery, and messaging support that help tell the story of renewable and biobased construction. Their resources strengthen public engagement, build understanding, and elevate local projects within a broader national narrative.



SLB Education Program

The [SLB Education](#) program expands the talent pipeline by supporting curriculum development, faculty training, and student engagement across universities, community colleges, and technical programs. It helps cities grow a skilled workforce and connect residents to high quality career pathways in modern building systems.



Credit: Marcus Kauffman

