

Overview

October 13 and 14 | Mechanics Hall, Worcester, Massachusetts | and Livestream

The first ever Historic New England Summit is New England's largest conference about our collective roles in creating livable and resilient communities.

Two days of exciting conversations will explore how twenty-first-century challenges and opportunities are transforming the fields of historic preservation, architecture, urban planning, conservation, arts and culture, museum studies, collections management, public history, and education. This highly interactive program will include keynote presentations by regional and national leaders, panel discussions, provocations, networking opportunities, awards, and more.

Topics include:

- Culture as catalyst
- Agricultural preservation
- Teaching authentic history
- Preservation and affordable housing
- Repurposing industrial spaces
- Trades education
- Climate change and impact
- Planning for resiliency
- Heritage in the digital age
- Inclusive museum collecting
- Activating landscapes
- The power of the arts

The Historic New England Summit will:

- Be inclusive, encouraging participation from a broad and diverse audience, both in person and virtually
- Bring together preservationists, conservationists, educators, civic and municipal leaders, urban planners, arts and culture organizations, community advocates, engaged citizens, and students in open dialogue
- Encourage debate on timely issues and topics that are relevant to building resilient and livable urban, suburban, and rural communities across New England
- Focus on New England while addressing topics that resonate nationally and globally
- Help transform preservation into an accessible and essential ethic in community sustainability, livability, and resilience
- Inspire public-private and transdisciplinary partnerships

The Summit will engage:

- An interdisciplinary, in-person audience of more than 400 people in plenary session format, with all attendees gathered together to build community and maximize networking opportunities
- A global audience through livestream participation who care deeply about creating livable and resilient communities
- Students in diverse areas of study who are the emerging professionals that will make a difference

The dynamic, fast-paced Summit program will feature:

- Regionally and nationally recognized leaders whose work is on the leading edge of preservation, education, urban planning, land conservation and agriculture, humanities, arts and culture, philanthropy, advocacy, social justice, and related disciplines
- Powerful keynote speakers, panel discussions, conversations, and lightning talks
- Networking opportunities and platforms for individuals and organizations from across the region to share ideas, challenges, and success stories
- The presentation of concepts for transforming a factory building into a vibrant cultural center and partner in urban revitalization
- Targeted opportunities for student participation and engagement
- Award presentations recognizing exceptional work across the region, including
 - » The Historic New England Book Prize
 - » The Historic New England Prize for Collecting Works on Paper
 - » The Herbert and Louise Whitney Fund Community Preservation Grants
 - » The Edward F. Gerber Urban Preservation Fund Award
 - » The inaugural Historic New England Preservation Leadership Award

Program sessions will cover:

- Obliterating the old lens on social history
- Globalizing cultural heritage
- Anchoring community through culture
- Climate change impacts to New England
- Growing community through agricultural preservation
- Resiliency and the traditional trades
- Efficiency goals and old buildings
- How past planning efforts impact future resiliency
- Refunctioning post-industrial New England
- Creating living archives and inclusive collections

About Historic New England

Historic New England is the largest and most comprehensive independent preservation organization in the United States, and welcomes the public to thirty-eight exceptional museums and landscapes, including several coastal farms. The organization operates a major collections and archives center in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and has the world's largest collection of New England artifacts, comprising more than 123,000 decorative arts and objects, and 1.5 million archival documents including photographs, architectural drawings, manuscripts, and ephemera. Engaging education programs for youth, adults, and preservation professionals, and award-winning exhibitions and publications are offered in person and virtually. The Historic New England Preservation Easement program is a national leader and protects 118 privately owned historic properties throughout the region.



About Mechanics Hall

Historic Mechanics Hall is ideally located in the heart of New England in downtown Worcester, 40 minutes from Boston and Providence, an hour from Hartford, and three hours from New York City. It is easily accessible by several major highways from all directions, and via the MBTA commuter rail. The hall was opened in 1857 by the Worcester County Mechanics Association, a nonprofit educational and philanthropic organization. Mechanics Hall is considered by architectural historians to be one of the nation's finest pre-Civil War concert halls. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For more than 160 years, Mechanics Hall has been the cultural cornerstone of central Massachusetts, and is regarded as one of the world's great concert halls for its superb acoustics and beauty.