

**Abby Bohannan**  
**2018 Building Healthy Places Forum Reflection Essay**

I feel so fortunate to be a part of the 2018 ULI/Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program. As a dual masters student pursuing my degree in Public Health and Urban and Regional Planning, I initially applied to this mentorship program to meet like-minded individuals who were doing compelling things at the intersection of public health and the built environment. Having the opportunity to travel to Boston for the Fall Meeting and connect with a mentor has provided me with insight and opportunities I wouldn't have been able to experience without the generous support of Randall Lewis and the Urban Land Institute.

Looking back, the ULI Fall Meeting feels like a bit of a whirlwind. There were so many interesting workshops available, and the only downside is that I didn't have the opportunity to catch them all! However, I was able to explore various topics surrounding diversity and inclusion, land use, and the transformation that Boston has experienced over the past several decades. I also really enjoyed the presentation by the keynote speaker, Theaster Gates, which left me feeling invigorated and inspired about community engagement and creative urban renewal. Throughout the week, I had the opportunity to network with a variety of professionals; this exposure helped me improve my professional networking skills and my ability to think outside of the box in terms of what is possible. I felt that the Fall Meeting, overall, was an excellent opportunity to swap ideas and interests with people who are truly passionate about their work.

The Building Healthy Places Initiative and the Product Council meetings left me with a different perspective about the work that I aim to do throughout my career. I especially enjoyed learning about healthy building design and the work that is being done in the Boston area to promote healthy growth in a way that advances the community's vision. Participating in the Responsible Property Investment Council Day gave me the opportunity to learn about gentrification, responsible property investment, and to meet incredible people from all over the country who are working on addressing some of the same complex issues that I am passionate about. I am especially thankful for my mentor, Maryanne Speroni, who introduced me to the council members and shared her expertise with me throughout the meeting.

After the Fall Meeting, I participated in several ULI events in my home state of Colorado. Being a ULI member has been especially beneficial for me as I finish up my Masters program and look towards my future career. I am looking forward to attending the Spring Meeting, and grateful for the opportunity to participate in the 2018 Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program, through the Urban Land Institute!