

The Ion and Ion District Join The Global Network of Innovation Districts

Innovation epicenter accepted into GIID's Global Network as one of a select number of districts in the U.S. and the only district from Texas

April 26, 2022 – In a move that further solidifies its position as the home of innovation, [The Ion](#), the epicenter for Houston's innovation ecosystem, and the forthcoming [Ion District](#), an accessible, walkable, and integrated urban community in Houston's Midtown have joined a pioneering worldwide collaboration: the Global Network of Innovation Districts. The Ion District is the first innovation district from the state of Texas accepted as a member of the Global Network, which has been developed by The Global Institute on Innovation Districts' (GIID).

The Global Network is a major initiative created to provide governments and investors with new insights and resources on how to support innovation districts as they re-energize cities. Positioned to become engines of economic development, innovation districts have the unique potential to spur productive, inclusive, and sustainable environments.

GIID, led by [Julie Wagner](#) and affiliated with the world-renowned Brookings Institute, is the preeminent global organization of thought leaders and developers of institutionally-led innovation districts. Along with 21 other members in the Global Network, including the [Pittsburgh Innovation District](#) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, [Cortex Innovation Community](#) in St. Louis, Missouri, [Tech Central](#) in Sydney, Australia, and [Knowledge District Zuidas](#) in Amsterdam, Netherlands, The Ion and Ion District will engage, collaborate, and contribute mindshare with innovation districts from across the globe. Additionally, by utilizing the organization's research to build comprehensive expansion strategies, The Ion and Ion District will have an opportunity to validate its unique value proposition on a global stage.

"GIID's Global Network is utilizing best practices of world-renowned innovation districts to accelerate regional economies. Their focus on placemaking, startup services, and community engagement are some of the critical components that lead to successful districts," said Bryson Grover, Investment Manager of Real Estate Development, Rice Management Company, the developer of The Ion and Ion District. "We are the only venture in Texas accepted into the Global Network to date, which is a testament to our progress and vision. With GIID, we will continue to think creatively about how the built environment and specialized programming can inform future development and allow equitable access to an ever-changing workforce."

"We're thrilled for The Ion and Ion District to join our network, especially as it commences its next steps on development later this year," said Julia Wagner, President of GIID. "Our team has extensive experience working with unique real estate ventures that aim to transform how communities learn, work, and live. We look forward to playing a part in Houston's transformation, and as we have documented in innovation districts around the world, having a leader like Rice drive the creation of the district is a key ingredient of its continued and growing success."

Recently completed, The Ion, a 266,000 square-foot innovation hub, is an integral part of the forthcoming Ion District, which also includes Greentown Labs, the largest climatetech startup incubator in North America. The build-out of the Ion District encompasses more than three million square feet of development, which will occur over the next decade. The next building is already under construction, and RMC intends for three more to commence in the next year. In addition to office and research, and development space, the district will include multi-family apartments, retail space, [entertainment venues](#),

and several acres of highly programmed, fully-public outdoor space. Together, The Ion and Ion District create the foundational ingredients that entice talent to co-locate and innovate.

The Global Network's goal for its members, like the Ion District anchored by The Ion, is to accelerate the growth of innovation districts—individually and collectively—through empirical analysis, peer learning, and technical support for implementing new strategies and initiatives in districts and their communities. Through structured engagement led by GIID, The Ion and Ion District will leverage insights and best practices on challenges and solutions that other districts have faced in the past or are currently facing.

“The Ion and the Ion District represent a major commitment and investment in the success of Houston as a center of innovation and a foundation of Houston's economic future. From the very beginning of our planning, we visited innovation hubs and districts around the country and around the world to make sure that we drew on their experiences and best practices,” said Rice President David Leebron. “And by participating in the Global Network now, the Ion District will contribute to and benefit from a global exchange of knowledge among the very best innovation districts, which complements Rice's broader international engagements and strategies.”

Rice University Provost Reginald DesRoches added, “Acceptance into the GIID pairs Rice and The Ion District with an unparalleled set of peers around the globe that have created transformative environments to collaborate and innovate. Through the GIID, Rice and the Ion District can lend its capacity to advance translational research to catalyze innovation and embrace global best practices.”

“As we create quality collaborations between entrepreneurs, corporations, academics, and the community, we are thrilled to be a part of the network and look forward to exchanging ideas with other members and their constituents,” added Jan E. Odegard, Executive Director, The Ion. “The valuable interactions the network provides will help our team build The Ion and Ion District into a globally-minded innovation hub and further cement Houston's technology ecosystem.”

About The Ion: The Ion anchors a 16-acre innovation district, the epicenter for Houston's innovation ecosystem, as an inclusive, dynamic, vibrant, and dense hub focusing on quality collaborations between entrepreneurs, incubators, accelerators, corporations, academics, and the Houston community. The 266,000-square-foot building accommodates multiple uses, including class-A office space, shared workspace, prototyping and maker resources, event space, classrooms, food and beverage offerings, as well as indoor/outdoor communal areas with shared amenities. For more information, please visit <https://ionhouston.com>.

About the Ion District: The Ion District is an intentionally accessible, walkable and integrated urban community. It spans 12 city blocks (16 acres) in Houston's Midtown, where people, ideas, and businesses thrive. Initiated by Rice University, the Ion District energizes a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future. At actively programmed events and spontaneous everyday moments, the Ion District invites residents, startups, corporate, academic, and civic leaders to unite, explore, and create opportunity together. For more information, visit <https://iondistrict.com>.

About The Global Institute on Innovation Districts: The Global Institute on Innovation Districts (GIID) is a global-reaching not for profit organization dedicated to conducting independent and practice-oriented research on innovation districts—new geographies of innovation emerging primarily in cities and urbanizing areas. Drawing on deep analytics and proven impact, GIID seeks to identify how districts transform into new engines of city and regional economic growth. During a time of uneven growth, our



research and work with a global network of districts aims to identify new systems for advancing inclusive innovation. For more on (GIID), visit <https://www.giid.org>.