

# *No Small Plans* Discussion Questions

## CHAPTER 1

### **Universal questions:**

Who is the city for? Who does the city belong to?

What is public space in a city?

Who decides what makes up public space and who is welcome?

What does civic engagement look like?

### **Other questions to consider:**

- Reggie, Elisa and Bernard see different things as they travel downtown.  
Based on what they see during their trips, who do you think the city is for?
- Do you agree with how Elisa, Bernard and Reggie each responded to the bullies on the beach?  
What would you have done if you had been there?
- How do Elisa and Reggie participate in their communities? How do you participate in your community?
- Do you think the three characters will meet up again?

## CHAPTER 2

### **Universal questions:**

What is the relationship between development and displacement?

What does community involvement look like?

How do neighborhoods change over time?

### **Other questions to consider:**

- Why do you think it took Natalie so long to share her news with her friends?  
How do you think you would have responded to this kind of news from your friend?
- What does the photo album at Cristina's house depict? What lessons do Cristina's parents share with the group?  
How does Natalie respond to the information?
- What does Jesse take photos of at the beginning of the chapter? What about at the end of the chapter?  
What do you think the photos say about how Jesse is changing?
- What kinds of things does David observe as he walks through his neighborhood? What does he imagine?  
Have you ever imagined how your neighborhood could be different? What would you change or add?  
Who would those changes affect?
- Do you agree with the elderly woman gardening who says, "gotta participate"?  
Can you think of ways your neighborhood has changed? Who was affected by the changes?
- What do you think happened when David went into the alderman's office at the end of the chapter?

## CHAPTER 3

### Universal questions:

Who decides?

How are decisions made in my city?

What's my role and my responsibility?

### Other questions to consider:

- What surprises you about 2211? Are there any aspects of the future that seem familiar?
- How does each character make a decision about which proposal to accept?  
What personal experiences influence their decisions?
- Why do Tsang and Codex decide to go to Uptown? Why motivates Octavius?  
Does the experience in Uptown change their perspectives at all?  
Do you think it was a good idea to go to Uptown? Why or why not?
- What does Octavius mean when he says "I was wrong to think I could make a decision from my apartment?"  
Do you agree with him?
- What are Rafael and Gabriela trying to get Tsang to do? Why?  
What advice would you give Tsang? If you were in Tsang's position, what would you do?
- Who has power in the group? How do they use their power?

## BURNHAM INTERLUDES

### Questions to consider:

- What does Daniel Burnham mean in Interlude Three when he says,  
"The decisions were not mine alone?"
- In the last frame on the last page, Daniel Burnham challenges readers to "Have at it." What does he mean?  
What kinds of things would you need to consider if you were going to design a city for "everyone?"
- Do you think the city planners did a good job where you live? What did they do well?  
What would you add or change to make where you live more "livable for everyone?"