

GREATER PHILADELPHIA

# FUTURES GROUP

DIALOGUE. COLLABORATION. KNOWLEDGE-SHARING.



## Complex Systems

**September 4, 2020, 10:00am – 12:00pm**

Virtual Meeting

Please Register for the Zoom Webinar [HERE](#)  
Please take the pre-event Survey [HERE](#)

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## AGENDA

### Welcome and Introductions

### Complex Systems

Simon A. Levin, Princeton University, will discuss the concept of Complex Systems as it relates to cities and regions, and will use principles of ecology and evolutionary biology to share strategies that enable regions to deal with extreme events, such as weather events and pandemics.

### Facilitated Exercise

Marisa Denker and Kiersten Mailler, Connect the Dots (CtD), will facilitate a workshop that builds upon Dr. Levin's discussion of complex systems, and asks participants to imagine and discuss the intersectionality of multiple factors in the region. CtD specializes in creative workshops that tackle challenges and collective decision-making, and gives participants the tools to co-design their project. With consideration of the pre-event survey that you were asked to participate in, CtD designed a workshop to the needs and thoughts of this group.

### Member Updates

If time allows, Futures Group participants will be invited to share updates and announcements from their organizations.

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Connecting People, Places & Prosperity in Greater Philadelphia

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related nondiscrimination statutes in all activities. For more information, visit [www.dvrpc.org/GetInvolved/TitleVI](http://www.dvrpc.org/GetInvolved/TitleVI).

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# SPEAKER BIOS

## SIMON A. LEVIN

James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology  
Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Princeton University



Simon A. Levin received his B.A. from Johns Hopkins University and his Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Maryland. At Cornell University 1965-1992, he was Chair of the Section of Ecology and Systematics, and then Director of the Ecosystems Research Center, the Center for Environmental Research and the Program on Theoretical and Computational Biology, as well as Charles A. Alexander Professor of Biological Sciences (1985-1992).

Since 1992, he has been at Princeton University where he is currently James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Director of the Center for BioComplexity. He retains an Adjunct Professorship at Cornell, where he still has many valued colleagues, was a Distinguished Visiting Professor at UC Irvine from 2007-2016, and recently became a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Arizona State University. His research interests are in understanding how macroscopic patterns and processes are maintained at the level of ecosystems and the biosphere, in terms of ecological and evolutionary mechanisms that operate primarily at the level of organisms; in infectious diseases; and in the interface between basic and applied ecology.

Levin is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a Member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Philosophical Society, and a Foreign Member of the Istituto Veneto and the Istituto Lombardo. He is a University Fellow of Resources for the Future, a Fellow of the Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics, a Fellow of the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, and a Fellow for the Society for Mathematical Biology. He also has received honorary doctorates from Eastern Michigan University, Whittier College, Michigan State University, McMaster University, and the University of Victoria. He chaired the Governing Council for IIASA for more than five years and was Vice-Chair from 2009-2012. He serves on the Science Board of the Santa Fe Institute, which he co-chaired from 2007-2010. He is also ViceChair for Mathematics of the Committee of Concerned Scientists.

Levin is a former President of the Ecological Society of America and the Society for Mathematical Biology, and a past Chair of the Board of the Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics. He won the MacArthur Award (1988), Distinguished Service Citation (1998) and the Eminent Ecologist Award (2010) of the Ecological Society of America, the Okubo Award of the Society for Mathematical Biology and the Japanese Society for Theoretical Biology, and the Distinguished Scientist Award of the American Institute for Biological Sciences. He was honored with the Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for Environmental Sciences by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (2004), the Kyoto Prize in Basic Sciences (2005) by the Inamori Foundation, and the Margalef Prize (2010) of the Government of Catalonia, the Luca Pacioli Prize from Ca'Foscari University of Venice, Italy, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement (2014), and most recently, the National Medal of Science (2014, announced 2015, awarded 2016).

Levin has mentored more than 100 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, and has published widely. He is the editor of the influential Princeton Guide to Ecology and the landmark Encyclopedia of Biodiversity.

## MARISA DENKER

Co-Director and Co-Founder, Connect the Dots



Marisa is based in Philadelphia and is Director and Co-Founder of Connect the Dots. Marisa is a Fulbright scholar, with a MA Design Practice from Dublin University and a BA in Urban Studies and English from the University of Pennsylvania. Marisa has deep expertise in consultation design, engaging event design, strategic communications, stakeholder management and project management.

Connect the Dots designs equitable stakeholder engagement & public involvement processes. The firm develops tailored strategies and expert insights to help build cities, regions, and entities focused on sustainability and equity for people and planet. The work is based on the knowledge that the careful engagement of all voices, in a collaborative and thoughtful way, is critical when engaging with challenges we are facing and to moving forward with confidence and trust.

Connect the Dots is a women-led (WBE/DBE) firm with separate branches in both Dublin, Ireland and Philadelphia, USA. Clients/partners include public and private sector entities from Center City District to Knight Foundation to University of Pennsylvania - working to co-design with their stakeholders and enable inclusive, insight-driven decisions that drive equitable and robust solutions.

## KIERSTEN MAILLER

Manager of Strategic Planning & Design at Connect the Dots



Kiersten is a planner and engagement specialist. She has a background in architecture, sustainability, landscape design, real estate, and human-scale planning.

Her specialties include: project management, creative engagement, intersectional planning, negotiation, and placemaking. Her graduate school focus was in gentrification mitigation, and the cross-section of planning, economics, and social justice. She worked as a County Planner before joining Connect the Dots as manager of strategic planning and design.