

Greg Lindsay

Urbanist, Futurist, and Expert on the Post-Pandemic Future of Cities, Work, Travel, Mobility, and more

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Topics

- Artificial Intelligence
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About Greg Lindsay

Greg Lindsay is a journalist, urbanist, futurist, and speaker. He is the senior fellow for applied research and foresight at [NewCities](#) and director of strategy at its mobility offshoot [CoMotion](#). He is also a non-resident senior fellow of the Atlantic Council's [Scowcroft Strategy Initiative](#) and a senior fellow of MIT's [Future Urban Collectives Lab](#).

He's been cited as an expert on the future of cities, technology, and mobility by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, *USA Today*, CNN, NPR, and the BBC. He's a partner at [FutureMap](#), a geo-strategic advisory firm based in Singapore, and has advised Intel, Samsung, Starbucks, IKEA, Audi, Chrysler, Hyundai, Tishman Speyer, British Land, André Balazs Properties, Aldar, Emaar, and Expo 2020, among many other organizations. He was the inaugural urbanist-in-residence at [URBAN-X](#) – BMW MINI's urban tech accelerator.

Greg speaks frequently about globalization, innovation, and urbanization, most recently at Sandia National Laboratories, 10 Downing Street, the OECD, Harvard Business School, the MIT Media Lab, Deloitte, and McKinsey. His work with Studio Gang Architects on [the future of suburbia](#) was displayed at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 2012. His work has also been displayed at the 15th, 16th, and 17th Venice Architecture Biennales, the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, and Habitat III. He sits on the board of [CREtech Climate](#), and was guest curator of the 2018 and 2019 editions of [reSITE](#).

His writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *Harvard Business Review*, *The Financial Times*, *McKinsey Quarterly*, *Inc.*, *The Atlantic*, *Quartz*, *The New Republic*, *Politico*, The Economist Group, The World Economic Forum, *The Nikkei Asian Review*, *European Management Journal*, *World Policy Journal*, *Next City*, *Time*, *Wired*, *New York*, *Slate*, *Marie Claire Italia*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, and *Departures*. He was previously a contributing writer for *Fortune* and *Fast Company*, and an editor-at-large for *Advertising Age*. He is co-author of the 2011 critically acclaimed international bestseller [Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next](#).

Greg is a two-time *Jeopardy!* champion (and the only human [to go undefeated](#) against IBM's Watson). He lives in Montréal with his wife [Sophie Donelson](#) and their two children.

Select Keynotes

- **The Big Rethink: Cities After COVID-19**

Cities are done. The office is dead. Delivery is the future. At least two of these are wrong – but why? COVID-19 will eventually be tamed by vaccines, but work-from-anywhere is here to stay. That doesn't mean the end of the office, but whole new ways of working closer to home – with more fluid organizations to match. And that, in turn, means rethinking who and what cities are for – forget downtowns vs. suburbs and imagine a life more local, with everything you need at home or only a few minutes' walk, cycle, or drive away. Behind the scenes, technology is turning restaurants and retail inside-out through deliveries, "dark stores" and automation – threatening main streets, mom-and-pops, and real estate as we know it. Drawing on his research and foresight work for NewCities, the Atlantic Council, MIT's Future Urban Collectives Lab, and months of post-pandemic research, Greg Lindsay explodes the myths around COVID-19 and explains why the future isn't as socially-distanced as you might think.

- **Autonomous Everything: AI, the Future, and What We Can Do About It**

The robots are coming – not to steal your job, but to invent entirely new ones. Advances in machine learning, artificial intelligence, and automation all point toward an autonomous world – one in which perception, prediction, and action are embedded in machines. Autonomy will

not only transform how we work, but also we how move, think, discover, decide, and deceive. What we consume — as well as how we produce, transport, and market it — may take strange new turns as robots increasingly predict, suggest and prepare to help us eat do it. In this wide-ranging and eye-opening talk on the promise and perils of AI, author and futurist Greg Lindsay explores how autonomy is already upending society — and how we can use it to build a better world.

- **Where the Robot Meets the Road**

A decade ago, self-driving cars were science fiction leftover from *The Jetsons*. Today, Google and Tesla are leading a breakneck autonomous arms race, as the global auto industry races to build electric AVs at a cost of hundreds of billions of dollars. But a self-driving SUV may prove to be the horseless carriage of autonomy — rapidly eclipsed by new species of self-driving scooters, deliverybots, and buildings with a mind of their own. How are these technologies already transforming the way we see, understand, and get around cities? How have they helped China, Japan, and Korea mitigate the worst effects of the coronavirus lockdown? What effects will they have on where we live, work and play, and what are the opportunities and threats for automakers, technology firms, public transit, employers, and developers? Drawing upon his work with BMW, Intel, MIT, the Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Aspen Institute, and NewCities, Greg Lindsay offers a tour of future urban mobility and how they promise to transform our cities in the coming decades.

- **The Future of the Future**

The future isn't what it used to be. As the pace of social, technological, and environmental change accelerates, organizations are struggling just to make sense of the present, let alone spot threats and opportunities looming just over the horizon. The ability to anticipate, understand, plan for, and innovate around uncertainty has become a critical skill for designers, innovators, and strategists everywhere. As the computing pioneer Alan Kay once said, "the best way to predict the future is to invent it." Futurist, author and NewCities director of applied research Greg Lindsay will teach a crash course in exactly that. The practice of creating futures, or "foresight," offers a toolkit and framework for detecting signals of change, organizing insights, synthesizing possible futures, identifying potential barriers and opportunities, and designing innovative products, services or ideas that satisfy emerging needs. In addition to lecturing on possible futures, Greg is available to lead participants through a fun, fast-paced workshop in which they create futures of their own.

- **Engineering Serendipity**

How do we bring the right people and the right ideas to the right place at the right time to create something new, when we don't know who or where or when that is, let alone what we're looking for? This is the paradox of innovation — new ideas don't follow org charts or schedule themselves for meetings. Greg Lindsay describes how organizations like Google, the U.S. Military Academy, United Health Group, and the International Red Cross are "engineering serendipity." They're harnessing sensors, social networks, and new ways of working to break down the boundaries between new teams, discover new ideas, inspire collaboration and creativity, and to spur employee engagement, learning, and innovation. How, where, and who we work with will never be the same.

Select Book Titles

- **2011:** *Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next*

Select Articles

- [The Dark Side of 15-Minute Grocery Delivery](#)

Mini-warehouses dubbed "dark stores" are quietly taking over urban retail space. Left unregulated, the insatiable demand for faster delivery will only hasten the erosion of community life.

- [Why the Great Lakes need to be the center of our climate strategy](#)

If you're looking for a strategy to get the most value from climate investments, the answer is simple: Cities like Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo will still be livable as the climate changes, and have the space to absorb climate migrants.

- [How to design a smart city that's built on empowerment—not corporate surveillance](#)

There's a way to incorporate tech into a city that creates more equity and connection, not just opportunities to monetize data.

- [Hacking the City \(The New Republic\)](#)

In Newcastle, Australia, Marcus Westbury has grappled with the questions that have consumed struggling cities for decades: How do you turn a place around without money or resources, and by empowering residents rather than displacing them? *Renew's* success has made Westbury a minor celebrity on these issues at home. In August, he published a book, *Creating Cities*, recounting the lessons from...

- [Workspaces That Move People \(Harvard Business Review\)](#)

Few companies measure whether the design of their workspaces helps or hurts performance, but they should. The authors have collected data that capture individuals' interactions, communications, and location information. They've learned that face-to-face interactions are by far the most important activity in an office; creating chance encounters between knowledge workers, both inside...

- [Engineering Serendipity \(Aspen Ideas/Time\)](#)

I'd like to tell the story of a paradox: How do we bring the right people to the right place at the right time to discover something new, when we don't know who or where or when that is, let alone what it is we're looking for? This is the paradox of innovation: If so many discoveries – from penicillin to plastics – are the product of serendipity,...

Select Testimonials

When we feature Greg Lindsay in our programming, we rest easy knowing that the sophistication and intellect he brings to each program will be hugely beneficial to our audiences. Greg's confidence and flexibility make him a joy to work with in the lead-up to even the most complicated events, and on-site, his expertise makes him the ideal contributor to a variety of exchanges. Comfortable in leading, solo, or supporting roles, Greg is a go-to big ideas person, gifted with the relatability and humility that make him a fantastic collaborator across a range of topics and settings.

– *Aspen Ideas Festival*

Greg's presentation to an executive audience provoked new thought about the context and patterns of urban life in the 20th and 21st century. His presentation style was energetic, engaging, and humorous. His vivid journalistic style brought potentially dry academic topics and disparate ideas to life and created new relevance for our team.

– *Chrysler*

Greg Lindsay recently spoke to the Southern CA group of CORENET, an industry organization for Corporate Real Estate Executives and Economic Developers. As an attendee and coordinator for this event I can attest to the success. Broken into two speaking events, morning in LA and afternoon in Orange County, Greg kept both audiences intently listening to informative information about globalization: where we are, and where we are headed. The information he provides is made up of factual history about how we got to where we are, and what the future may hold as it relates to cities, airports, mass transit and connectivity. The description of the places he enlightens the audience about, mesmerized both groups for an hour without so much as a murmur. His delivery and energy are contagious and he is superb in transforming the audience across the globe and back to the local view, beautifully. He is a pleasure to partner with, a joy to listen too, and has a way of making everyone in the room walk away feeling a lot smarter and informed about "THE BIG PICTURE!"

– *CORENET*

"Greg is a very energetic speaker who had an immense wealth of knowledge that was apparent to the entire audience. One hour gave us only a glimpse into the fascinating ideas and research that Greg presented."

– *Cornerstone Real Estate Advisors*

This past spring, I invited Greg Lindsay to speak at a pair of Intel Labs "futurecasting" events, one devoted to the future of Big Data, and the other to the future of the workplace. In both cases, he was a smooth, polished, and beguiling speaker, alternately informing, challenging and making his audiences laugh. His prescriptions of a near-future in which your office is the city, your smartphone plays matchmaker, and your best coworker actually works for someone else were fascinating - and immensely valuable to the world's largest semiconductor manufacturer, which must constantly imagine what the world will look like a decade out. I would not only recommend him as a speaker, but I also look forward to working with him again to chart this future.

– *Intel*

Greg kicked off our inaugural Purpose City event with a sweeping and inspiring talk connecting cities, stars, and serendipity. His ability to tell stories and connect the dots across multiple disciplines was exactly what we need to prime the mental pumps of our attendees, as they spent the rest of the event debating his ideas and what a "purpose city" should be. He's an energetic, funny, and engaging speaker.

– *NBBJ*