

## **The Hubs of Transformation Dictated by the Innovation Wave: Boston as a Case Study. Exploring How Design is Emerging as an Essential Feature in the Process of Laboratorisation of Cities**

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**Abstract :** Cities have become the nodes of global networks, standing at the intersection points of the flows of capital, goods, workers, businesses and travellers, making them the spots where innovation, progress and economic development occur. The primary challenge for them is to create the most fertile ecosystems for triggering innovation activities. Design emerges as an essential feature in this process of laboratorisation of cities. This paper aims at exploring the spatial hubs of transformation within the knowledge economy, providing an overview of the current models of innovation spaces, before focusing on the innovation district of one of the cities that are riding the innovation wave, namely, Boston, USA. Useful lessons will be drawn from the case study of the innovation district in Boston, allowing to define precious tools for policymakers, in the form of a range of factors that define the broad strategy able to implement the model successfully. A mixed methodology is implemented, including information from observations, exploratory interviews to key stakeholders and on-desk data.

**Keywords :** Innovation District, innovation ecosystem, economic development, urban regeneration

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