



BETTER CITIES FILM FESTIVAL | BETTERCITIESFILMFESTIVAL.COM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 9/15/23

**BETTER CITIES FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES WORLDWIDE  
PREMIERE OF FILM *ARBITRARY LINES* FEATURING AUTHOR M.  
NOLAN GRAY**

**Detroit will host worldwide premiere of *Arbitrary Lines*  
a film exploring “how zoning broke the American city and how to fix it.”**

*Detroit, MI* — September 15, 2023 — Better Cities Film Festival and Nodehaus announce the global premiere of *Arbitrary Lines: The Free Spirit of Caroline* at the Better Cities Film Festival on Sunday, Oct. 8 at 5:30 - 6:30 PM at the Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

*Arbitrary Lines* is a captivating documentary that paints a vivid portrait of Caroline, a small town nestled in the rural landscapes of Upstate New York. The film presents an intriguing narrative about the tension between traditional zoning laws and the town's unique, free-spirited ethos. Viewers are challenged to consider the impact of zoning laws on the fabric of small-town life and to rethink the arbitrary lines that define our built environments.

The vision of film director and executive producer, Trần Hoàng Calvin “was to build an engaging narrative that transcends geographical boundaries to showcase how seemingly mundane zoning debates are actually universal struggles over self-determination and community identity,”

M. Nolan Gray, zoning and land-use expert, author of the popular book published by Island Press entitled “[Arbitrary Lines: How Zoning Broke The American City And How To Fix It.](#)” and research director for [California YIMBY](#), is the film’s host. “This film is more than a documentary.” says Gray, “It's an opportunity to start a conversation about how we, Americans, approach the future. Do we continue the legacy of segregation and stagnation that zoning mandates, or do we rediscover how to plan and build a more affordable, prosperous, equitable, and sustainable American cities and towns.”

For Calvin, *Better Cities Film Festival* is the ideal venue for their film’s global premiere. “Detroit is an inspiring city for reinforcing and showcasing films that fit the festival’s mission of making cities better, which is the same driving spirit of our film,” said Calvin.

The festival’s daytime programming of events, talks, workshops, and tours provides opportunities for leaders and organizations to meet and network with other affinity groups and leaders, and to convene meetings and conversations during the festival. Gray is the research director of California YIMBY. (The organization’s name is an acronym for “Yes in My Back Yard,” which advocates for housing, affordability, and inclusive communities.) While attending the film festival, Gray will convene YIMBY groups from across Michigan to meet in Detroit on Sunday, Oct. 8th for networking, planning, and attending the film festival. Details on this meeting can be found on the festival’s schedule online. Sunday’s activities will culminate in CA YIMBY presenting the final screening and panel discussion of the festival. *Rock this House*, which focuses on housing issues, will screen on Sunday, October 8, 7:30 - 9:00 PM at the Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Tickets for other Better Cities Film Festival screenings are available at <https://filmfreeway.com/bettercitiesfilmfestival/tickets>.

The full schedule for Better Cities Film Festival, including daytime programming, is available at: <https://www.bettercitiesfilmfestival.com/2023>.

Festival passes are available to purchase online in advance as single screening tickets or all-access passes. Tickets will also be available at the door.

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**Official 2023 Better Cities Film Festival Page:**

<https://www.bettercitiesfilmfestival.com/2023>

**About Better Cities Film Festival**

Better Cities Film Festival collects, curates and presents the best films from around the world on the theme of making cities and towns better places to work, live and play. It presents these films at its annual four-day flagship festival in Detroit, Michigan, and in “Best of Fest” screenings in towns across America.

More info at: [www.bettercitiesfilmfestival.com](http://www.bettercitiesfilmfestival.com).

**About First+Main Films**

First+Main Films is a creative studio that works nationwide, specializing in storytelling for cities, towns, and neighborhoods through films that foster civic pride, build community and spark imagination. First+Main Films owns and operates Better Cities Film Festival to help advance the cause of placemaking and civic storytelling.

More info at: <http://www.firstmainfilms.com>.

**About Nodehaus**

Nodehaus is a digital media agency built by and for Gen Z. A full-service strategic and creative agency with industry-leading expertise, Nodehaus helps brands and organizations find an authentic voice at the center of youth culture.

More info at <https://www.nodehaus.co>

**About CA YIMBY**

California YIMBY is at the forefront of major legislative victories that help end the housing shortage and make California a more equitable, affordable, and livable state.

More info at <https://cayimby.org>

**For more information, press only:**

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