



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLAN

URBAN SOLUTIONS

*Creating Strong, Just
and Resilient Communities*



**INTRODUCING URBAN SOLUTIONS:
NRDC'S COMMITMENT TO CREATE
STRONG, JUST AND RESILIENT
COMMUNITIES**



America is often judged by the greatness of its cities. Today, more than 80 percent of Americans live in cities and nearby suburbs, a number that is growing rapidly as more people seek out the opportunities of urban life. The sheer volume of this growth combined with ongoing economic stresses and rising carbon emissions means that we must develop new ways of building communities that help everyone thrive while reversing climate change.

FACT: Cities are major contributors to our nation's carbon emissions. In the U.S. over 60% of carbon emissions come from the buildings in which we live and work and the transportation systems that get us where we want to go. In order to safeguard our communities and meet our climate-change commitments, cities will need to evolve more quickly than ever to avoid irreparable harm.

FACT: Cities and surrounding suburbs are also highly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change, especially for low-income and other disadvantaged residents. In just the last three years, extreme weather events have caused over \$188 billion in damages to homes and businesses in American metropolitan areas, as well as taken over 1,000 lives. Scientists say that we're in for more such storms as the planet warms.

FACT: Cities are home to the highest rates of income inequality in the country, dragging down our shared economic strength and getting in the way of market-based solutions to climate change. According to the Urban Institute, over 25 percent of the nation's population live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty, and they have limited access to adequate transportation options and healthy food choices, often coupled with higher exposure to extreme weather events and environmental hazards. Without change, children growing up in these neighborhoods will have shorter life expectancy than their parents. We won't win on climate if our people aren't safe and our local economies aren't strong.

FACT: We have the building blocks for effective change. Regions that organize growth and reinvestment along high quality transit are on track to reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050, while growing jobs and economic opportunity. Cities that work with building owners to monitor energy use are seeing at least 10 percent savings with almost no new investment. And neighborhoods that have safe walkable streets, options for getting around town, strong schools, and access to healthy foods not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 30 percent, but according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, also help residents lead healthier lives. It's time to use these building blocks effectively and strategically to create places where people can thrive.

Over more than four decades, NRDC has built the skills and relationships necessary to address the twin challenges of climate change and inequality side by side. We are the only environmental organization that provides the bridge between community-level solutions and full-scale implementation, ensuring that what's pioneering today becomes business-as-usual tomorrow. Our collaborative, inclusive, on-the-ground approach empowers people in communities, helping them launch climate solutions and ensuring they are leaders in the political, economic and societal fight to address climate change.

BY FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN URBAN AREAS, NRDC CAN TACKLE THE INTERCONNECTED AND UNIVERSAL CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITY VITALITY SIDE BY SIDE—AND HELP ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF OURSELVES AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

WHAT WE STAND FOR: ACCELERATING CHANGE FOR THE BENEFIT OF EVERYONE

Climate change and inequality are the two most urgent challenges of our time. Urban Solutions is designed to address both challenges simultaneously by piloting new strategies for the ways we build our cities and by scaling up best practices so that the pace of change is dramatically accelerated.

We recognize that advocacy alone won't be enough to make urban communities part of the climate and economic solution. Mayors, community leaders, investors, and activists need practical and effective solutions for these critical challenges at multiple scales: neighborhood, city, regional, and national. Legal advocacy has also historically been a part of our strategy.

We go where the action is. As gridlock on Capitol Hill worsens, cities have quit waiting for federal funds that may never arrive and instead are creatively aligning public and private resources to create affordable and high-quality communities for their residents and businesses. They recognize their economic survival hinges largely on making cities sustainable and by ensuring people from all walks of life are able to prosper. Our team seeks out willing partners and aims to support their success through lasting relationships, including local, state and national actors.

We use data and tools to focus attention on key problems and unlock new markets. As a national organization with a deep commitment to the transparent use of information, we will invest in tools that help people and communities make smart decisions about leveraging limited resources and turning around key challenges.

To accelerate the pace of change, we have organized our efforts in new, collaborative ways. We are taking on partners, scaling up in order to rapidly deploy best practices, and going "all in" where we see potential for transformative change. By working with stakeholders—neighborhood leaders, elected officials, business owners, advocacy organizations, think tanks and universities—we aim to connect like-minded actors and grow a community for change.

Within the next five years we want to find, fund, and implement strategies that address inequality and, at the same time, reverse the devastating effects of climate change on people and our natural resources.

URBAN SOLUTIONS MAKES CITIES A PART OF THE ANSWER TO CLIMATE CHANGE, WHILE LOWERING ENERGY BILLS, REDUCING FLOODING, IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHIER FOOD AND MAKING IT CHEAPER AND EASIER FOR EVERYONE TO GET AROUND.

URBAN SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

VISION: Urban Solutions allows people to live in strong, just and resilient communities that create solutions to climate change.

GOAL: By 2020, at least 25 urban areas will have deployed integrated, equitable and replicable climate response strategies as a result of Urban Solutions' tools, technical expertise and on-site capacity, ultimately reaching a tipping point for market-wide adoption of these strategies.

THEORY OF CHANGE:

By building local capacity, scaling up best practices, aligning policies and funding with community visions, and unlocking markets we will create an undeniable groundswell of support for strong, just and resilient communities. By making these local voices heard, we will secure game-changing policy and investment reforms that allow strong, just and resilient communities to become business-as-usual.

MODEL: Provide partners in communities with the tools, expertise and capacity to find, fund and implement proven, replicable and locally appropriate strategies. Leverage our networks and stature to attract attention to urban solutions that deliver answers to climate change and inequality.



WHY NOW?

Important factors suggest that the time is right to help cities adopt forward-leaning strategies to reduce carbon emissions, make their communities safe, and grow opportunities to ensure everyone benefits:

Better communities can build better lives.

Communities in which it is possible to live without owning a car are more affordable, healthier, and produce a smaller carbon footprint. According to a recent Harvard University study, these communities also offer greater upward social mobility than those where owning a car is the cost of entry into the job market. This is particularly important at a time when most Americans are seeing the cost of living rise more rapidly than their wages.

People want more options. The market is showing a remarkable change in where people want to live. A 2013 national poll by the National Association of Realtors (NAR) found that most Americans would prefer a home on a small lot if it gave them the option of an easy walk to schools, stores, and restaurants, and a shorter commute to work.

Local leaders get it. There is clear evidence of a growing wave of local commitment to sustainability. More than 1,000 mayors have signed climate pacts, the number of sustainability directors in U.S. cities is at 120 and growing, and new multistate compacts are emerging to tackle adaptation to climate change. Cities are partnering with private entrepreneurs to provide mobility options (like bike-sharing and car-sharing) and create vibrant public spaces and parks. The demand for local solutions has never been stronger.

Cities are laboratories for new approaches: Budgetary constraints at all levels of government have created an environment in which the only way to address our challenges is through collaboration across sectors—public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit. Today, every public dollar needs to deliver multiple benefits. Leveraging investments to simultaneously achieve economic, environmental, and equity outcomes is becoming the gold standard for city leaders. Many communities have begun to experiment with public-private partnerships, and NRDC will work to expand them to include nonprofit partners as well.

We have powerful data, tools and techniques that

work. Systems and technologies for sustainable water, energy, mobility, food production, and resource management are being deployed more efficiently, and models for funding and financing have also advanced. Open data sources combined with new technologies are making information more accessible than ever. Innovative use of data is simplifying the challenge of measuring and tracking performance. For some issues, we've moved beyond pilots, and it's now a matter of disseminating those best practices.

The sharing economy is here. Forbes estimates the innovative use of Internet apps to share everything from houses to cars to clothes is already a \$3.5 billion market growing at 25 percent per year. This trend has far-reaching implications for cities, where much of the shared economy and the companies it has spawned are located. The sharing economy not only saves people money and generates personal income, but it is also far less resource-intensive than traditional economies. While consumers are tapping into this opportunity, the public sector is still evaluating how to adapt the sharing economy to improve government services, achieve cost savings, and support more inclusive community engagement.

In a time of seismic threats to the economic and environmental landscape, these trends have created a remarkable alignment of vision and priorities among political, community, and business stakeholders, spurring the development of best practices for building sustainable, just, and resilient cities. Together these factors have created an unprecedented opportunity that demands a unified, "all in" response. Urban Solutions is designed to answer this call and bring innovation to scale.



CENTER FOR MARKET INNOVATION

Urban Solution's Center for Market Innovation is a powerful team of financial and business experts working to transform the way investment decisions are made. CMI delivers strategies to increase value while decreasing cost and volatility using cutting edge analytical tools that help business leaders achieve results. One of the team's groundbreaking projects shows how public-private partnerships can accelerate the deployment of natural green infrastructure in Philadelphia.

WHAT'S IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS?

Now that climate change, unchecked sprawl, poor health, and growing inequality are recognized problems, our challenge is to help communities adopt proven strategies and demonstrate to the market that these projects constitute the most efficient and least-risky approach to building communities. But the barriers are significant:

There are many plans but not enough action. A growing number of communities have adopted plans to become sustainable and resilient. But only a few have taken comprehensive steps to align their codes, standards, funding programs, and policies to implement those plans. Without making these changes, they are unlikely to attract the private funds necessary to make these plans a reality.

The capacity to implement is lacking. Though local leaders have made innumerable commitments to reduce environmental impacts, address climate change, and build resilient communities, their capacity to move from vision to execution is uneven. Public agencies often lack the development and financial expertise to understand how plans translate into viable projects, and financial players may lack the skills or financial incentives to tailor their investments to local conditions. Community-based groups may have less capacity to engage and minimal leverage. For this market to work, all of these stakeholders must have greater capacity to act.

Public agency budgets are being cut to the bone. Many cities are stretched to provide basic services, diminishing their ability to advance policy and investment reforms without assistance. Elected leaders need creative least-cost solutions and partners to drive policy and political change in a variety of arenas, including transportation, water, energy infrastructure, and neighborhood investment. And they need talented staff that brings technical expertise and political savvy to modernize codes, remove policy barriers and create incentives for the private sector to act.

It is not always clear who will benefit. We learned during the last U.S. economic downturn that markets alone don't deliver solutions that benefit all people. Gentrification and displacement are a real and growing worry, as well-located neighborhoods seek new transportation and development investments. Few communities commit to providing the data that would help consumers and investors understand who would benefit from proposed policy and infrastructure investments.



No one size fits all. The vast majority of public policies and funding programs at all levels (federal, state, regional, and local) enable sprawl, put people at risk from major weather events, and exacerbate income inequality. There is no single policy or program that will make cities more sustainable, inclusive, and healthy. And there is no single approach to delivering technical assistance. Success requires sustained partnerships, new tools, and sophisticated advocacy tailored to local needs and capacity, but coordinated across communities to ensure that best practices are being brought to scale.

The market isn't working, yet. Despite significant public demand, cities suffer from the absence of a functioning marketplace for investments in green infrastructure, energy retrofits, mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods, and place-making projects. There is a mismatch between the desire of city and neighborhood leaders to tailor interventions to local conditions and the need for markets to aggregate investments in large pools and deliver returns in a short time. Governance structures reinforce these challenges, with many public agencies lacking the authority, fiscal capacity, or accountability to test new financial models without a capable intermediary to work with private capital to set the table for sustainable investments.

BRINGING DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER TO SHAPE THEIR COMMUNITIES CREATES NEW LEADERS IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL FIGHT TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE, WHILE ENSURING A MORE JUST AND RESILIENT SOCIETY.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE: BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY AND UNLOCKING MARKETS

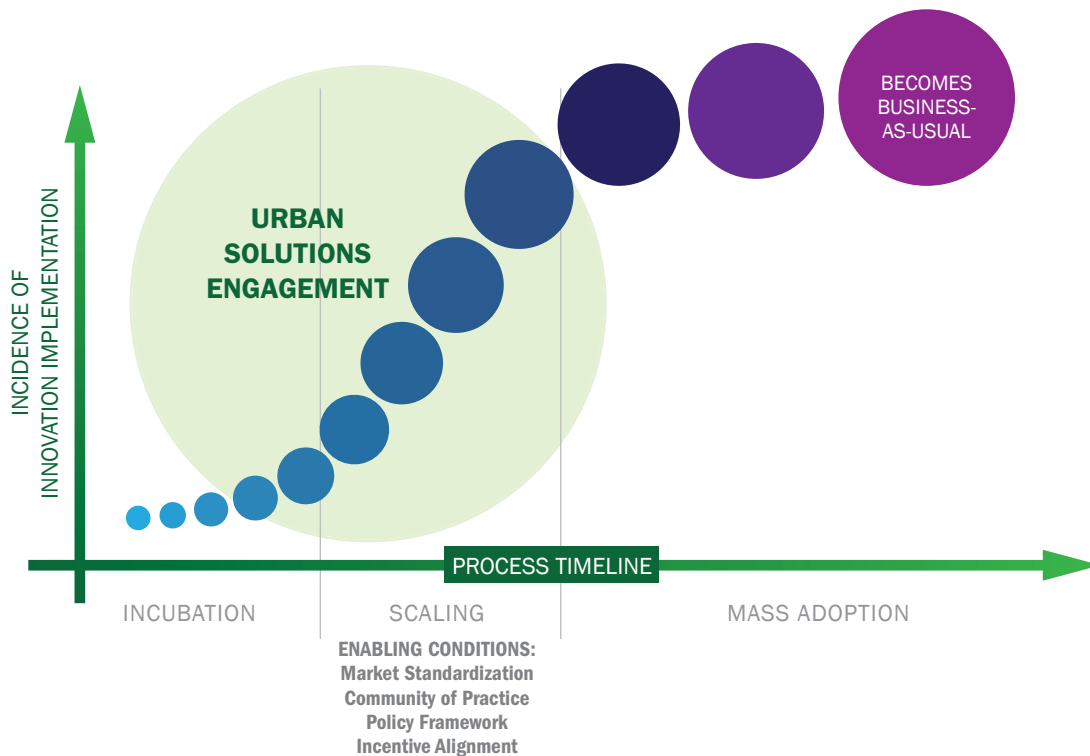
Every community has its own culture, character, and context. But if we are going to take advantage of the window of opportunity to respond to the inevitable impact of climate change, the threats of extreme weather events, and the need for social mobility, we need to significantly accelerate the pace of change. Fortunately, decades of practice give us a large tool kit to drive down carbon emissions from the built environment and help make the basics of life more affordable. This experience also gives us the acumen to tailor general instruments to local conditions and build the capacity of leaders to maintain momentum on their own.

Since Mayors are in a unique position to galvanize popular support to tackle tough problems, we will work with them to adopt aggressive, but realistic climate goals as well as implement policies and programs that stimulate strong local economies, encourage sustainable development, and ensure equal access to opportunity. Our toolkit will grow over time as we align policies and funding with growing markets for clean energy, livable communities and smart infrastructure.

To show that transformative change is possible in many types of communities, we will go “All In” in multiple regions simultaneously, deploying the full power of NRDC and our partners. We will organize ourselves into interdisciplinary

teams to deliver on-the-ground success and partner with a community of advocates and practitioners able to maintain momentum once NRDC is no longer involved. Where our expertise alone won’t be sufficient, we will partner with organizations that have complementary expertise. We see the act of friendly competition among communities sparking innovation and creative problem-solving that can spread from one community to another as short-term “wins” are realized.

Where models for change are not yet perfected, we will work with partners to test new ideas, measure their impact and refine our approach until they can be deployed at scale.



We aim to make it easy for implementers to do what they do best—deploy capital and build—by working with the public sector to remove policy barriers and align funding streams to encourage private investments in energy efficiency, clean energy generation, green and inclusive community development, smart infrastructure, regional and local mobility options and patterns of development that drive down carbon emissions. To encourage private capital to be invested in these solutions, we will document the pipeline of investable projects in our All-In Regions in terms that make sense to large investors and support innovative ways that allow community members to invest in their future, such as crowdsourcing, mini-muni bonds and other tools.

Though local action is the most practical path at this time, there are a select number of “game-changing” activities that could accelerate reform. These include federal administrative actions and state-level policy reforms, as well as public opinion campaigns and large market interventions that bring new capital to triple-bottom-line investments. We will continually keep our eyes and ears out for these opportunities to catalyze transformational change.

Our goals are ambitious, and our strategy reflects that ambition. NRDC and its partners intend to demonstrate that communities wishing to become more sustainable, inclusive, and healthy can indeed make those goals reality.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

By 2020 our work with local and national partners will result in 25 cities using Urban Solutions’ toolkits to improve the basics of life. This means:

- **Lowering the cost of living** by addressing housing, transportation and energy costs together;
- **Promoting job generation** through green infrastructure and neighborhood reinvestment;
- **Reducing emergency room visits** by eliminating mold in affordable housing and cleaning our air;
- **Protecting communities from flooding** through better stormwater management;
- **Improving personal health** by creating walkable communities and enhancing access to healthy food; and
- **Creating local investment opportunities** that support communities and build wealth.



OUR APPROACH

NRDC is the only environmental organization that provides the bridge between community-level solutions and full-scale implementation, ensuring that what's pioneering today becomes business-as-usual tomorrow.

With decades of experience working from the upper reaches of government downward and from the community level upward, we have built the skills and relationships necessary to accelerate change in policy, practice, and attitudes. Working across our deep and extensive network, we spur results by rapidly building a marketplace of new ideas, removing barriers to access for the underserved, and advancing policies and programs that will protect the environment and improve people's lives. While many of our peers work pilot-by-pilot or city-by-city from a single angle, we keep our eye on the bigger system, focusing on integrated solutions that can address complex and far-reaching challenges like climate change and access to opportunity simultaneously.

Our approach extends to everyone who shares a common vision, from governors and mayors to business leaders and community groups. Our staff works with local decisionmakers to identify, fund, and implement solutions that are tailored to the unique needs of their communities. We coordinate citywide and regional initiatives with our partners to bring the solutions we have identified to scale. We work with city councils, state legislatures, and the federal government to enact policies and ensure that they are adopted nationally. And we align investment with innovation, marshaling the resources needed to build communities that allow everyone to thrive.

WHAT WE DO

We partner: We look for opportunities where we can add value, building on our core strengths and expertise, and partner with others that have complementary skills to get the job done.

We build capacity: We work with city and suburban partners to forge strong local coalitions that are sustainably funded and can drive change into the future.

We demonstrate value: We show policymakers, market actors and citizens that using sustainable, inclusive, and healthy principles to improve the quality of life in communities saves money, generates jobs, improves health, and makes significant contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

We accelerate deployment: Within the next five years, we will help at least 25 communities adopt programs and execute projects with the aim of creating an undeniable groundswell of popular and market support for sustainable, inclusive and healthy community initiatives.

We unlock the market: We support public sector efforts to focus resources more strategically and we help to guide philanthropic/private sector investments in projects that deliver a wide array of environmental and community benefits.

We measure impact: We will measure and track our success in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, creating jobs, lessening harmful health effects, and saving money for consumers, local governments and businesses.

WORKING AT A LARGE AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE SCALE TO REACH A TRANSFORMATIONAL “TIPPING POINT” IS SOMETHING FEW ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS CAN TACKLE. WE WILL REMOVE BARRIERS TO GETTING THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED, AND SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.



EACH URBAN SOLUTIONS PROJECT:

- Identifies key barriers to overcome
- Focuses on the solutions to those barriers with the biggest climate and equity impacts
- Packages solutions and materials, so they are easy to adopt and tailor to local conditions
- Identifies willing local partners and places with opportunities for significant impact
- Builds a central “hub” team to provide strategic and back-office functions and pays for on-site capacity in local government or in local advocacy organizations
- Curates a peer-learning network and community of practice
- Funds strategic local partners to engage stakeholders and build support for change
- Measures the impacts and adjusts as needed to meet target outcomes
- Promotes and builds on successes through a variety of communications and educational venues

HOW WE WORK

NRDC joins with strategic partners to fill expertise and resource gaps with replicable solutions that can be adapted to a community's needs, assets, and vision. NRDC has a wealth of internal knowledge from which it will draw, including focused technical experts to provide locally based organizations and civic leaders with the information and ability to create a plan for change that is right for their community. Engaging and empowering multiple voices within the community, particularly the underserved, is necessary to find locally appropriate solutions and build the buy-in to make lasting local change.

Urban Solutions' core model is to provide local partners with a "toolkit" of vetted policy options and supporting materials, a structured learning network and temporary on-site staff. The use of strategically selected policies that are backed by experience and data ensures significant outcomes, eases implementation, and increases the likelihood of replication beyond the initial cities; a structure to learn from experts and peers promotes smarter and faster adoption; and dedicated staff member(s) to design and implement the initiative ensures there are adequate resources, accountability and clear communication.

The model delivers proven and replicable solutions that are appropriate at various scales and allow for learning across places and over time. The innovations used by Urban Solutions should have a proven track record of results that can be modified and applied in multiple locations. This staging ensures solid building blocks toward reaching the tipping point for mass adoption.

The selection process for places and partners is based on their interest, the significance of impact, likelihood of success and national or regional importance. For example, the City Energy Project cities were evaluated on potential greenhouse gas emissions reductions and energy savings, along with factors such as mayors' statements, policies and remaining time in office; local political conditions; geographic distribution and city size.

What will change as a result? By 2020, at least 25 urban areas will have deployed integrated, equitable and replicable climate response strategies as a result of Urban Solutions' tools, technical expertise and on-site capacity, ultimately reaching a tipping point for wide-spread adoption.

WHERE WE WORK

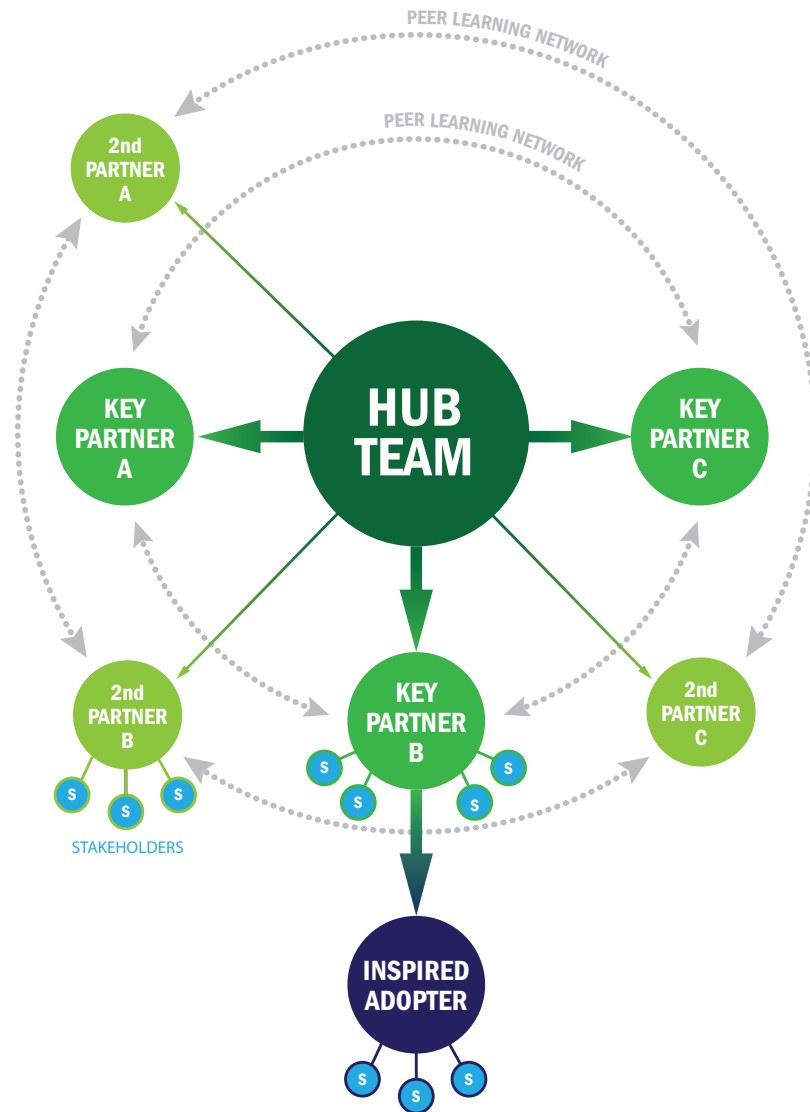
We will seek to align as many of our activities as possible in a specific set of cities, regions, and states because we understand the value of leveraging relationships and growing the array of local successes. Still, we recognize the need to be flexible and will seek out the places that will make the largest impact and provide models that are transferable to many other similar communities. See page 14 for our current work.



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OUR MODEL

A typical Urban Solutions project uses a central “hub” team (created by NRDC and national partners) to deploy a toolkit of policies and campaign messages. The hub also provides back-office functions to support our partners in communities, such as a Mayor’s office or local organizations. These Key and Secondary Partners learn from each other using a peer network that NRDC curates, building a community of practice that attracts other communities and spreads impact.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR ALL

Energy Efficiency For All is a national effort to bring the benefits of energy efficiency to millions of poor Americans by linking the energy and multifamily housing sectors. We work with a range of partners to reach 5 million homes in 12 states—California, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Virginia—to promote effective utility energy efficiency programs for all affordable-building owners and ensure healthy and inexpensive housing for residents. The potential annual savings from more efficient multifamily buildings are \$3 billion.



OUR CURRENT WORK

The Urban Solutions model is applicable across various issue areas, with a current focus on the following:

All-In Initiatives

Transformative change won't happen without integrated solutions. The All-In Initiatives draws on staff from across NRDC to build local capacity at all scales (region, city, neighborhood and building) by identifying strategies and activities to reduce climate pollution and increase opportunities for all. Local capacity is also increased with a staff person (full-time on-site) to coordinate work and communications, and financial support and technical resources for local partners. The work in these regions is designed to create communities of practice and open investable markets by working with key national partners, including Enterprise Community Partners (ECP), the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) and Harvard University's Hauser Institute for Responsible Investing (IRI).

Energy Efficiency

Existing buildings typically contribute more than half of the carbon pollution generated in cities. Urban Solutions is investing over \$20 million over three years through three major projects aimed at scaling market and policy approaches to increase existing buildings' efficiency. The City Energy Project (CEP) is a national initiative to cut energy waste in large buildings by partnering with the Mayors of 10 cities and supporting their efforts to adopt proven policies and programs. Energy Efficiency for All (EEFA) targets the affordable multifamily housing sector by staging a 12-state campaign to secure at least \$80 million in additional utility investments, empowering state and national networks of advocates, and engaging building owners in the fight for an equitable share of funding resources. The High Performance Tenant Demonstration Project focuses on helping commercial and multi-family housing tenants see the financial benefit of managing their energy use.

Land Use and Transportation

Urban form and the transportation systems that support mobility are equally important sectors to drive down climate pollution, as well as create strong, just and resilient communities. The California Climate Initiative takes a holistic approach to implementing the State's ambitious GHG reduction targets by working with state, regional and local agencies to scale investments that lower vehicle miles traveled by building connected communities and increasing low carbon mobility options to meet residents' needs. The national policy team engages in the fight for policy reforms at the federal level that supports climate-friendly inclusive communities by working with key national partners.



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Neighborhood Revitalization

Using LEED-ND, a rating system that NRDC helped create, we work with community leaders and public officials to develop innovative and actionable strategies that revitalize distressed neighborhoods and lead to city-wide policy reform. The Green Neighborhoods team works directly with local leaders in distressed neighborhoods to design and implement the next generation of green, inclusive and thriving communities.

Stormwater and Urban Resilience

One of the most pressing challenges cities face is dealing with urban flooding and polluted run-off. Urban Solutions is partnering with the Water program to help increase the use of private-sector financing in green stormwater infrastructure, and to work with cities and regional agencies to develop comprehensive strategies to reduce the impact of flooding from extreme storms in urban neighborhoods.

Food and Food Waste (in development)

Access to healthy food options is a critical component to creating thriving communities. This initiative aims to build on pilots from New York City to scale people's access to healthy and fresh food, particularly for underserved populations by building purchasing pathways for schools and other anchor institutions. Municipal composting and other organic waste management strategies may also be included in this work.

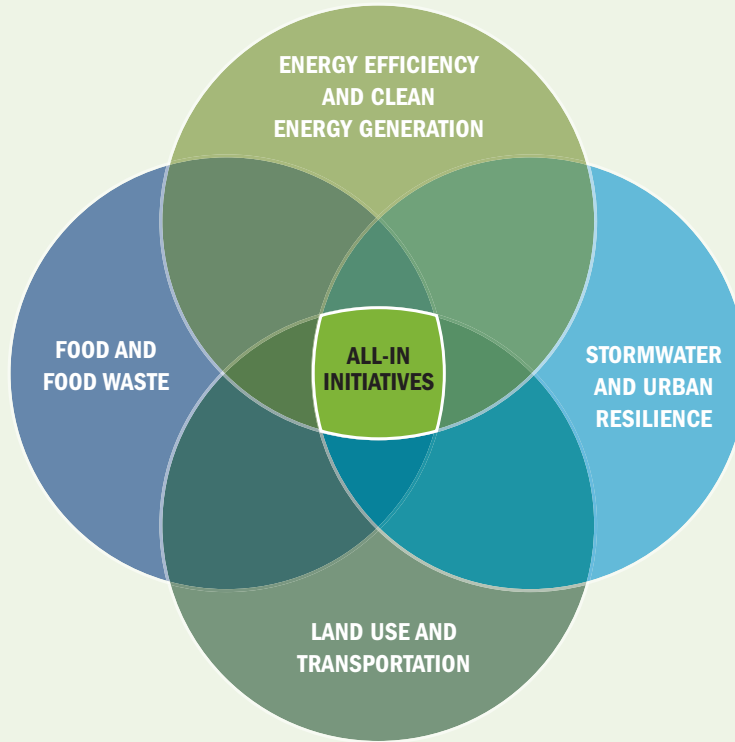
International Cities (in development)

Starting in 2015, Urban Solutions will explore the most effective way to engage with cities across the globe as they adopt sustainability strategies.



ALL-IN INITIATIVES

Urban Solutions' All-In Initiatives bring all our expertise together to grow local capacity and build the next generation of climate friendly and inclusive communities. This is the most interdisciplinary effort within Urban Solutions, involving staff from across NRDC, as well as key national partners.



THEMES FOR THE FIRST SET OF ALL-IN INITIATIVES

Los Angeles:

Implementing California's aggressive climate laws with innovative and inclusive investments in community development, transportation and water infrastructure.



Denver:

Bridging the gap between vision and implementation along the region's transit system and showing that new development can be both inclusive and green.



Chicago:

Modeling an integrative approach to climate resilience planning where neighborhoods lead the charge for change.



New York:

Supporting Mayor de Blasio's commitment to drive down carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050, while ensuring that the region's neighborhoods are safe, affordable and prosperous.



OUR EXPERTISE

There are very few organizations with NRDC's national and international reach and capacity. The Urban Solutions team will work across NRDC program areas and with both national and local partners to accelerate market transformation and build the capacity of communities to address the cross-disciplinary challenges that strong, just, and resilient communities require.

Our key capacities include:

Policy Reform at all Scales

Scenario Planning and Data-Driven Policy-Making

Codes, Standards and Tools to Define New Markets

Innovative Funding and Financing Strategies

Public Engagement

Local, State and National Advocacy

Legal Remedies

Communications and Campaigns

Synthesizing Best Practices and Curating Learning Networks

NRDC IS THE ONLY ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES THE BRIDGE BETWEEN COMMUNITY-LEVEL SOLUTIONS AND FULL-SCALE IMPLEMENTATION, ENSURING THAT WHAT'S PIONEERING TODAY BECOMES BUSINESS-AS-USUAL TOMORROW.

Our key technical expertise includes:

Energy Efficiency: Benchmarking energy use, policy reform, data and finance tools, building owner programs, and advocacy campaigns to reduce wasted energy in existing buildings.

Land Use and Transportation: Removing barriers and creating the policies, tools and public-private partnerships that deliver the urban form and transportation systems that increase mobility options, drive down climate pollution and create vibrant communities.

Stormwater and Urban Resilience: Public policies and private sector financing of green infrastructure to reduce flooding from extreme storms, improve water quality, and create public greenspaces in urban areas.

Food and Food Waste: Purchasing pathways for cities, schools and anchor institutions to increase people's access to healthy and fresh food, and municipal organic waste management strategies.

Neighborhood Revitalization: Using LEED-ND, a rating system NRDC helped create, we work with community leaders and public officials to develop innovative and actionable strategies that revitalize distressed neighborhoods and lead to city-wide policy reform.

Integrated Solutions: Our All-In Initiatives work to deploy and integrate multiple solutions at all scales— buildings, neighborhoods, cities and regions—to reduce climate pollution and increase access to resources for everyone.

OUR PARTNERSHIP PLEDGE

Along with our own expertise, external collaborations and partnerships are central to the Urban Solutions approach, whether we are working with other national groups that bring deep understanding on specific issues or local partners who offer critical networking connections and access to local stakeholders or political leaders.

We know from our long history with state and federal campaigns that successful policy change requires a diverse set of allies and partners. In some instances, NRDC will need to be a visible and strong leader; at other times we may be needed as a strategic collaborator.

A critical piece of our strategy includes designating an average of 25 percent of our funds when we work in communities as “pass through” grants to our local partners. See page 14 for our current work.

**25% OF OUR PROJECT BUDGETS
GO TO LOCAL PARTNERS**

CITY ENERGY PROJECT

The City Energy Project (CEP) is a national initiative to cut energy waste in large buildings by partnering with Mayors and supporting their efforts to adopt proven policies and programs. The pioneering actions of the 10 leading cities involved in the City Energy Project—Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Kansas City Mo., Los Angeles, Orlando, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City—will help shape and define next-generation energy efficiency efforts in communities nationwide, lower energy bills by nearly \$1 billion annually and cut emissions equal to taking more than a million cars off the road.

OUR PARTNERS

NRDC is partnering with these national and local groups on one or more Urban Solutions project.

ACTION-Housing	Climate Bonds Initiative	Move LA
Aeon	ClimatePlan	National Consumer Law
American Farmland Trust	Clinton Global Initiative	National Housing Law Project
American Lung Association of California	Coalition for Green Capital	National Housing Trust
Association for Energy Affordability	Council of Infill Builders	New Ecology
Benningfield Group	Delaware Valley Green Buildings Council	New York Green Bank
Blue Hills Community Services Corporation	Earthjustice	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
Brookings	Ecology Center	Office of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti
Build It Green	EcoWorks	Pace Energy and Climate Center
California Clean Energy Fund	EKO Asset Management	Pennsylvania Utility Law Project
California Housing Partnership Corporation	Elevate Energy	PolicyLink
California League of Conservation Voters	Empire State Realty	Preservation Compact
Capital for Healthy Families & Communities	Energy Foundation	Public Advocates
Center for Community Progress	Enterprise Community Partners	Rainforest Alliance
Center for Working Families	Evans Multifamily Services	Renew Missouri
Center National Association of State Energy Offices	Food Alliance	Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy	Fresh Energy	Salt Lake City Corporation
ChangeLab Solutions	Global Green	Social Policy Research Associates
Circulate San Diego	Goldman Sachs	Southface
Citizens Utility Board	Great Communities Collaborative	Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership
City and County of Denver, Department of Environmental Health	Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce	SPUR
City of Atlanta, Mayor's Office of Sustainability	Green and Healthy Homes Initiative	Strategic Economics
City of Boston, Office of Environment and Energy	Greenbelt Alliance	Sustainable Agriculture Network
City of Chicago, Chief Sustainability Officer	Housing California	The Community Economic Development Association of Michigan
City of Houston, Office of Sustainability	Houston Advanced Research Center	The George Wiley Center
City of Kansas City, Missouri, Office of Environmental Quality	Institute for Market Transformation	The Nature Conservancy
City of Orlando	Institute for Sustainable Communities	TransForm
City of Philadelphia, Mayor's Office of Sustainability	Keystone Energy Efficiency Association	Transportation For America
	Local Initiatives Support Corp.	Urban Institute
	Little Tokyo Service Center	Urban Land Institute
	Living Cities	Urban School Food Alliance
	Local Government Commission	Urban Sustainability Directors Network
	Low Income Investment Fund	Utah Clean Energy
	Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition	WeAct (West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.)
	Michigan Environmental Council	
	Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance	
	Mile High Connect	

LITTLE TOKYO: HARNESSING THE POWER OF NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS



“We’re willing to embrace change and the influx of new people [that will come to our neighborhood once the transit system is expanded], but we want to look for ways to preserve our history and culture and continue to have opportunities for the people who are already here.”

- Thomas Yee, Director of Planning, Little Tokyo Service Center, Los Angeles

Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo is just one example of NRDC’s Green Neighborhoods initiative, which works directly with the leaders of disinvested neighborhoods by bringing the networks and capacity of a major national organization to serve their needs.

Little Tokyo is a neighborhood that has experienced trauma. Once the largest Japanese-American neighborhood in California, World War II Internment wiped out what had been a thriving and robust community. The few families who returned and resettled in this centrally located urban district just three blocks south of the Los Angeles City Hall, fought hard to rebuild their lives and their businesses. With almost no government support, they bought back and reopened lost shops, built new affordable housing for seniors and families, and created new institutions that celebrate Japanese-American culture.

Expanded transit service will soon make the Little Tokyo station the busiest stop in LA’s system. While this expanded access will bring new customers to Little

Tokyo businesses and create new opportunities for neighborhood residents to access jobs, there is also the threat rents will rise, pricing out the area’s mostly low-income residents and wiping out what is left of this region’s Japanese-American culture.

In July 2013, NRDC’s Green Neighborhoods team worked with community leaders, youth, business owners, elders, architects and municipal officials to stage a Green Neighborhoods Charrette. The effort sought to promote neighborhood investment that fit with the community’s vision for the future. Little Tokyo would become a “Cultural Eco-District”—a neighborhood that is able to absorb new development, help local businesses thrive, embrace affordable housing, build more walkable streets and incorporate green infrastructure for energy and water management, all while protecting and enhancing its cultural identity. Now that the community has come forward with a shared vision, Mayor Garcetti has pledged both resources and collaboration to help Little Tokyo become a model for other disadvantaged communities.

A high-speed train is shown in motion, blurred background of modern skyscrapers. The train is moving from left to right, and the buildings are also blurred, suggesting a fast-paced urban environment. The overall color palette is dominated by blues and greens, with a bright yellow light source on the right side.

**OUR GOALS ARE
AMBITIOUS, AND
OUR STRATEGY
NEEDS TO
REFLECT THAT
AMBITION.**

**NRDC and its partners
intend to demonstrate that
communities wishing to
become strong, just and
resilient can indeed make
those goals reality.**

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