

An aerial photograph of a park, likely Central Park in New York City, showing a large circular plaza with a fountain on the left and a large tree on the right. A large, semi-transparent orange circle is centered over the plaza, containing the text "STRATEGIC PLAN".

STRATEGIC PLAN

NATURAL
RESOURCES
DEFENSE
COUNCIL



URBAN
SOLUTIONS



WHO WE ARE

- 01. INTRODUCING URBAN SOLUTIONS P04**
- 02. WHAT WE STAND FOR P08**

THE OPPORTUNITY

- 03. CHALLENGES P10**
- 04. WHY NOW P14**
- 05. NRDC P18**

THE SOLUTIONS

- 06. OUR THEORY OF CHANGE P24**
- 07. OUR APPROACH P28**
- 08. OUR PARTNERSHIP PLEDGE P34**
- 09. OUR CURRENT WORK P36**

▶ 01. INTRODUCING
URBAN SOLUTIONS

**URBAN SOLUTIONS
ADVANCES STRATEGIES THAT
CREATE STRONG, JUST AND
RESILIENT COMMUNITIES.**

MISSION Urban Solutions advances strategies that create the strong, just and resilient communities that provide 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 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.



BY FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN URBAN AREAS, WE CAN TACKLE THE INTERCONNECTED AND UNIVERSAL CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITY VITALITY SIDE BY SIDE.

▶ 02. WHAT WE STAND FOR

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 can be dramatically accelerated.

URBAN SOLUTIONS MAKES CITIES A PART OF THE ANSWER TO CLIMATE CHANGE...

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.

...WHILE LOWERING ENERGY BILLS, REDUCING FLOODING, IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHIER FOOD AND MAKING IT CHEAPER AND EASIER FOR EVERYONE TO GET AROUND.

▶ 03. CHALLENGES

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.

**70% OF ALL GLOBAL WARMING
POLLUTION IS GENERATED
IN URBAN AREAS.**

Now that climate change, unchecked sprawl, related health issues, 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 investments in 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 who bring 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 everyone. Gentrification and displacement are a real and growing concern, 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 income neighborhoods, and place-making projects. There's 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.

▶ 04. WHY NOW

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.

▶ **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. 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.

URBAN RISKS

+60%

of carbon emissions in the U.S. come from buildings and transportation.

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.

\$188B

in damages were caused by extreme weather events in metropolitan areas.*

Cities and surrounding suburbs are highly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change, especially for low-income and other disadvantaged residents.

OVER 25%

of the nation's population lives in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty and poor environmental conditions.

Without change, children growing up in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty and limited access to adequate transportation options and healthy food choices will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. These same neighborhoods often have higher exposure to extreme weather events and environmental hazards.

URBAN RESULTS

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.

Neighborhoods with walkable streets, options for getting around, strong schools, and access to healthy food not only **reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 30 percent**, but also help residents lead healthier lives.

▶ 05. NRDC

NRDC 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've 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 address the bigger system, focusing on integrated solutions that can address complex and far-reaching challenges like climate change and access to opportunity simultaneously.

Our expertise and broad reach enable us to get things done quickly and effectively. NRDC provides significant national and international capacity. The Urban Solutions team works 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.

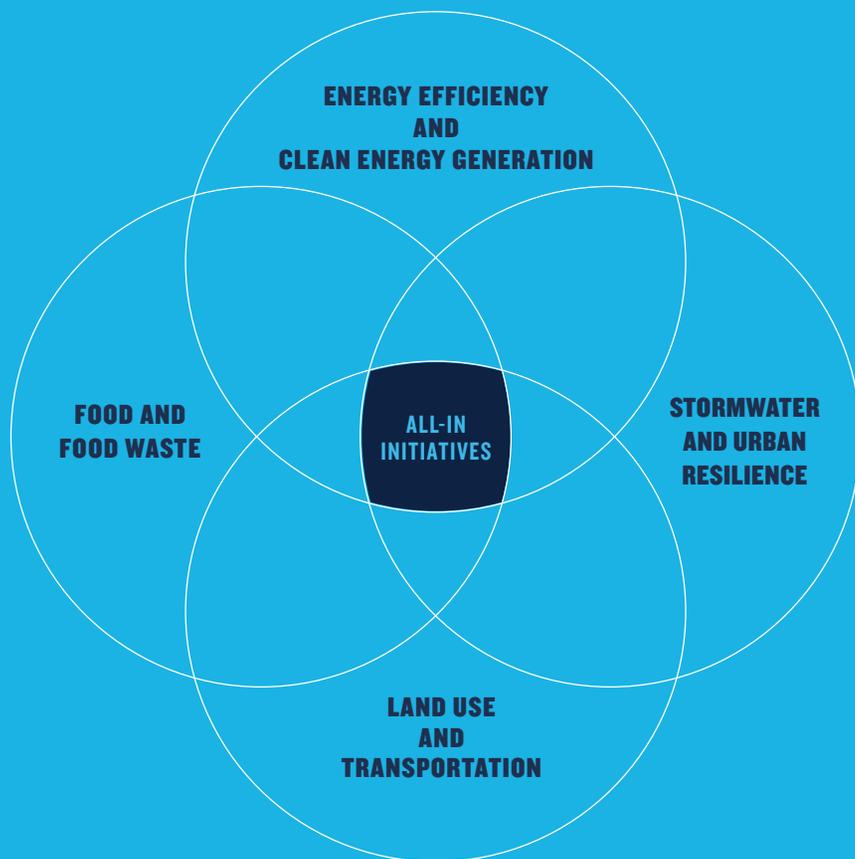
CORE CAPABILITIES

- ▶ **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**

**BRINGING DIVERSE
STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER TO
SHAPE THEIR COMMUNITIES
CREATES NEW LEADERS TO
ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE
AND INEQUALITY.**



NRDC'S URBAN SOLUTIONS REMOVES BARRIERS TO GET THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED TODAY, AND WORKS ON A LARGE ENOUGH SCALE TO REACH A TRANSFORMATIONAL "TIPPING POINT."



OUR PILLARS OF WORK

▶ **Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy Generation**

Benchmarking energy use, policy reform, data and finance tools, building owner programs, and advocacy campaigns to reduce wasted energy in existing buildings. Advancing programs to increase access for low-income residents to install renewable energy such as solar.

▶ **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**

Building better purchasing pathways for schools to offer healthier food and improving food systems to ensure more healthy food goes to low-income families.

▶ **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 and revitalize distressed neighborhoods leading to city-wide policy reform.

▶ 06. OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

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 climate change, the threats of extreme weather events, and the need for social mobility, we need to significantly accelerate the pace of change.

A hand is shown pointing to a map or technical drawing. The map features various letters (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z) and symbols (circles, squares, lines) arranged in a grid-like pattern. The background is a teal color with a faint, larger-scale version of the same map pattern.

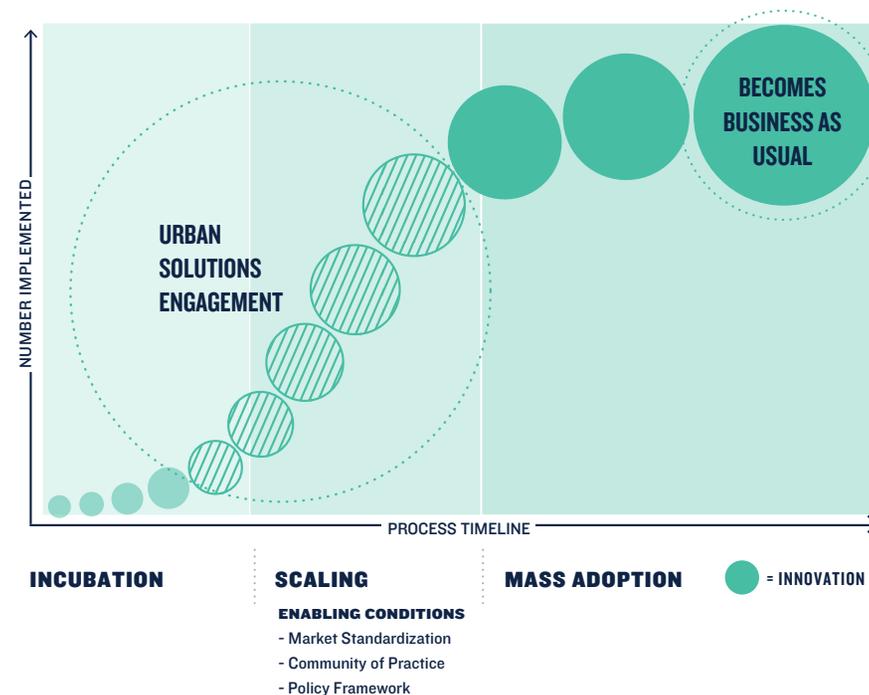
BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY AND UNLOCKING MARKETS

Decades of practice give us a large tool kit to drive down carbon emissions for the built environment and help to 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.

- ▶ **Partner with mayors.** 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.
- ▶ **Full deployment.** 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.
- ▶ **Test new ideas.** 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.
- ▶ **Remove barriers and facilitate funding.** 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.

- ▶ **Accelerate reforms.** 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.
- ▶ **Attainable goals.** NRDC and its partners intend to demonstrate that communities wishing to become more sustainable, inclusive, and healthy can indeed make those goals reality.



▶ 07. OUR APPROACH

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 decision makers 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're 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.

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 to 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 from which 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.

WHERE WE WORK

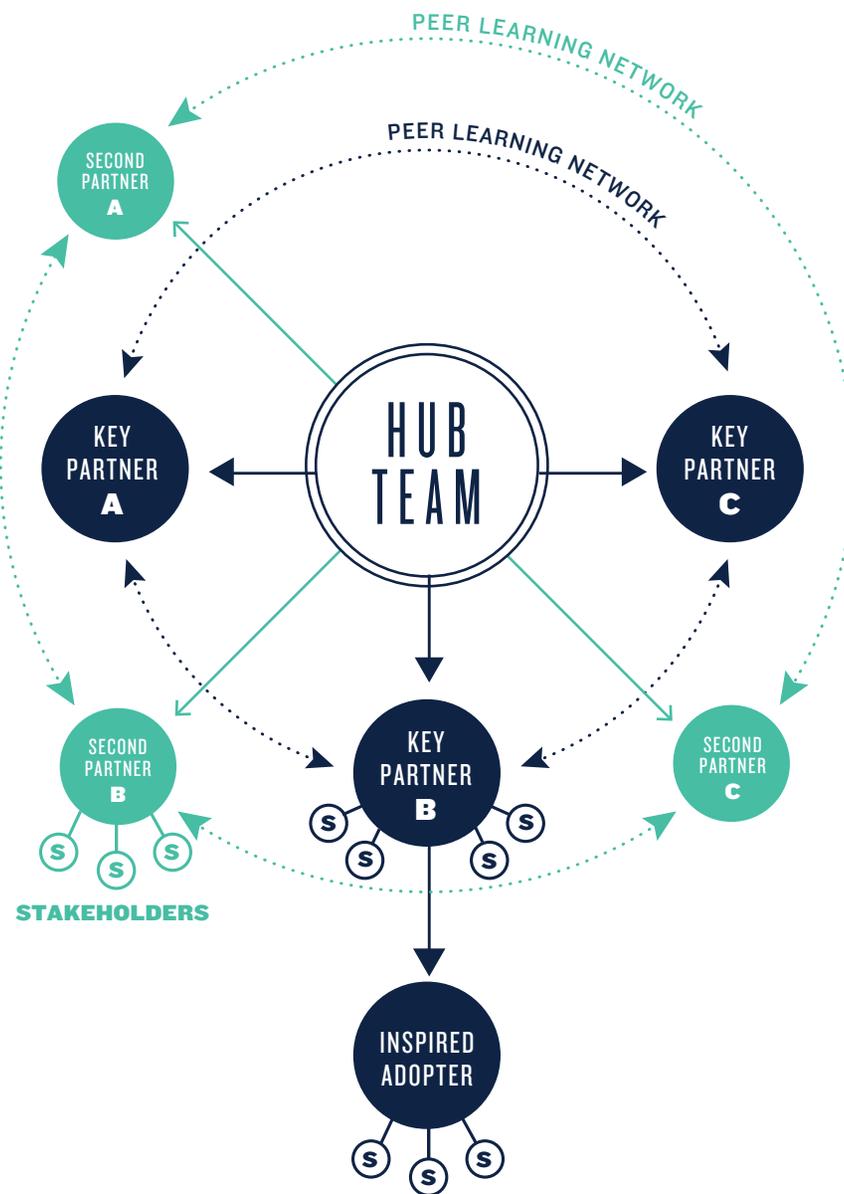
We will seek to align as many of our activities as possible in a specific set of cities, regions, and states because we understand the value of leveraging relationships and growing the array of local successes. Still, we recognize the need to be flexible and will seek out the places that will make the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

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 matches them with opportunities
- ▶ **Builds** a central “hub” team to provide strategic and back-office functions; 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** success and adjusts strategy as needed to meet target outcomes
- ▶ **Promotes** and builds on successes through a variety of communications and educational venues

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, 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.



▶ 08. OUR PARTNERSHIP PLEDGE

Along with our own expertise, external collaborations and partnerships are central to the Urban Solutions approach. National groups that bring deep understanding on specific issues and local partners who offer critical networking connections are essential to our success.

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.

25% OF OUR PROJECT FUNDS GO TO LOCAL PARTNERS

NRDC is working together with these national and local groups on one or more Urban Solutions projects.

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

▶ 09. 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 draw 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 through financial support, technical resources and a staff person (full-time, on-site) to coordinate work and communications. 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). NRDC also works with community leaders and public officials to develop innovative and actionable strategies that revitalize distressed neighborhoods and lead to city-wide policy reform.

▶ **Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy Generation.** 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 and 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.

▶ **Stormwater and Urban Resilience.** Ensuring clean and reliable water, and preventing urban flooding and polluted run-off are serious and pressing challenges for cities. Floods caused by storms cost billions every year and cause upheaval in areas where people live, work and recreate. In addition, the reliability of a growing number of cities' existing water supplies are at risk and this will likely get worse as rising temperatures make urban landscapes thirstier. Urban Solutions is partnering with the Water program to help increase the management of water supply and treatment as coordinated decisions, which account for the multiple benefits of green infrastructure and water use efficiency to manage storm water and potable water to improve water quality and quantity, manage stormwater and enhance community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

▶ **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 waste-to-energy strategies may also be included in this work.

▶ **Innovative Finance.** Urban Solutions' 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.

OUR GOALS ARE AMBITIOUS. OUR STRATEGY REFLECTS THAT AMBITION.

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 and thrive.



TO LEARN MORE

Contact Shelley Poticha
Director, Urban Solutions
Natural Resources Defense Council
spoticha@nrdc.org





**URBAN
SOLUTIONS**

JOIN US

NRDC.ORG/URBANSOLUTIONS