

# American Cities Climate Challenge: Making climate action real



# The Climate Challenge is a two and a half year accelerator program to help 25 US cities advance their climate goals



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## Emissions

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Together **BUILDINGS** and **TRANSPORTATION** emissions typically account for more than **80% OF A CITY'S EMISSIONS.**

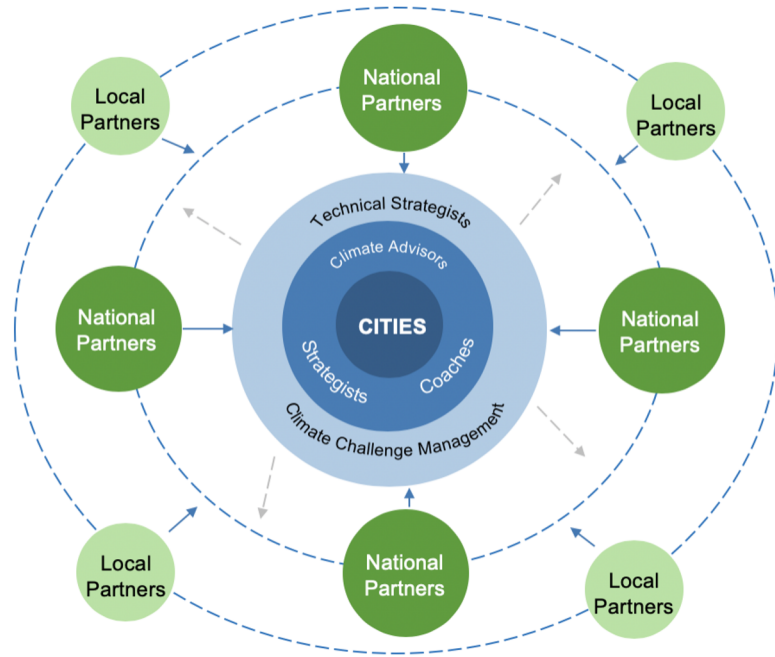
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## High Impact

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We are working with each winning mayor to pass and implement **HIGH-IMPACT, PROVEN ACTIONS.** In total, we are pursuing more than **190 ACTIONS.**

# Our program ecosystem is managed by two coordinating partners, Delivery Associates and NRDC...



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## We have a network of over 250 individuals in the Climate Challenge

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- Climate Challenge Cities (25 cities)
- DA and NRDC Hub Staff (~25)
- Climate Advisors (30 staff)
- National Partners (>25 organizations)
- Local Partners (>65 organizations)

# Data and tools help target key populations, prioritize actions and track progress

## Understand where we're going and its impact

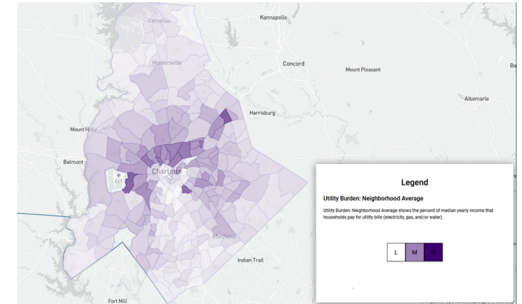
- **Climate Challenge Dashboard** is used to evaluate progress and the respective strategies to reach targets (all cities) every quarter

## Illuminate inequalities with disaggregated data

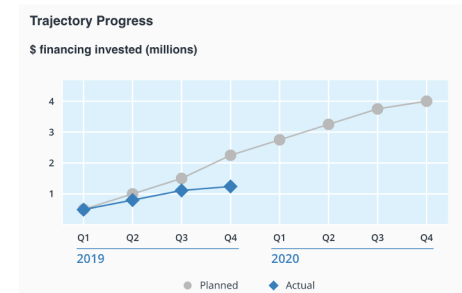
**Energy Burden Mapping** has identified where residents pay disproportionately high energy costs and has helped prioritize future programs more equitably (e.g. solar co-ops in Orlando) and engage with utility regulators (e.g. Charlotte engaging with the Public Utility Commission)

## Test new data systems/products

- **Telematics Assessments** have been used in several cities (Albuquerque, Charlotte, Orlando, and St. Louis) to determine procurement/replacement in fleet electrification strategies



Energy Burden Mapping, Charlotte, Jan 2021



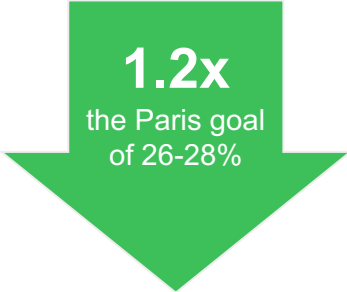
SELF \$ invested trajectory, St. Petersburg, Jan 2020

**The Climate Challenge has empowered mayors to  
“beat the odds” and deliver on ambitious goals**

# This acceleration will enable our cities to exceed Paris targets while delivering valuable co-benefits for residents

**33%**

**EXPECTED EMISSIONS  
REDUCTION IN OUR 25  
CITIES BY 2025**



**~50**

**MAJOR POLICIES  
PASSED SINCE 2018**  
while only 1 of 26  
comparable non-Climate  
Challenge cities passed a  
major policy as of Aug 2020



**MAYORS DELIVERED IN 2019 AND 2020**  
changing markets, reducing emissions, and improving  
quality of life in their communities



**500  
MW**

new solar and  
wind under  
contract



**10,000  
INCREASE**

in installed  
electric vehicle  
chargers



**1,000  
WORKERS**

trained for  
new Green  
economy jobs

# ...building the climate movement by making it real to people



Mayor Lyda Krewson  
@LydaKrewson

This week, I signed legislation sponsored by @HeatherNSTL making @STLCityGov the first Midwestern city to require that buildings meet energy efficiency standards.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot proposes tripling ride-share on solo rides in or out of downtown Chicago

## Planned solar project will power 54% of the city's needs

BY JESSICA DYER / JOURNAL STAFF WRITER  
Published: Thursday, May 30th, 2019 at 12:45pm  
Updated: Thursday, May 30th, 2019 at 9:16pm

GOVERNMENT & REGULATIONS  
Cincinnati plans to power city government with massive new solar array



LOG IN

CITY of CHARLOTTE  
CITY LAUNCHES RENEWABLE ENERGY AND EFFICIENCY WORKFORCE (RENEW) TRAINING PROGRAM

Energy tracking becomes mandatory for 700 buildings in St. Paul

Kirk Caldwell @MayorKirkHNL · Mar 3  
We're investing \$1.8 million for energy conservation improvements, as well as \$11.2 million for the electrification of our transportation infrastructure. @resilientOAHU



PNM breaks ground on new solar farm  
Jicarilla Apache Nation

Pilot Project Of Income-Tiered Electric Vehicle Car Sharing Program Will Be Launched In Boston

Bill 25 Aims To Help Hawaii Transition From Fossil Fuel

Tampa Bay Times  
St. Pete co-op has the potential to bring more solar to the city

Boston is one of the 25 winning cities in the Climate Challenge.

CPR News

How Denver Got Its Climate Sales Tax — And What Happens Next

By Sam Brasch | November 25, 2020

NEWS  
San Jose Approves 'Reach Codes' to Promote Green Development

By Grace Hase @grace\_hase / September 17, 2019

The Columbus Dispatch

Columbus voters approve green-energy aggregation plan

Transit Forward Philadelphia, a new advocacy coalition, is ready to hear your concerns

OUC and City of Orlando Launch First-of-Its-Kind Electrified Dealer Program

Oct 02, 2020

Live Updates  
D.C.'s first downtown bus lanes in decades debut Monday.

**Over the last 2 years, Climate Challenge cities have passed 48 unique Buildings & Energy and Transportation policies!**



# Challenge Cities passed 27 transportation policies and adopted 41 programs to advance low-carbon mobility



## 27 Transportation policies passed

### Examples of high impact wins

**LA, Denver, Atlanta, and San Diego greatly expanded their bike networks** (*0.51 million metric tons reduced by 2025*)

**Honolulu and San Diego passed policies to remove parking requirements** (*0.45 million metric tons reduced by 2025*)

**Portland, D.C., Minneapolis, and Honolulu installed bus-only lanes to speed transit service** (*0.25 million metric tons reduced by 2025*)

**Climate Challenge advocacy resulted in \$39 billion in emergency relief transit funding through stimulus packages.**

350



Miles of bike lanes and sidewalks added or improved

24



Miles of bus/transit lines improved

10,000



EV chargers installed

1,025



New EVs in city fleet

Note: Numbers have been rounded off to the nearest significant number

# Examples of wins across the Transportation Sector



**Transit Funding in Cincinnati** Voters passed major funding ballot initiative for transit and infrastructure.



**Improved bus service in Los Angeles** Metro's board unanimously approved the NextGen Bus Plan to create dedicated bus lanes and increased frequency and service reliability



**Electrification and mobility in San Jose** City Council adopted their Electric Mobility Roadmap to guide their efforts to electrify private vehicles, micromobility, shared mobility, and other vehicles.



**Bus lanes in Portland** City Council unanimously adopted the 'Rose Lane Project' to create a network of red bus lanes, new bus priority projects, accelerate transit service, and increase transit ridership.



**Improved bus service in Los Angeles** Metro's board unanimously approved the NextGen Bus Plan to create dedicated bus lanes and increased frequency and service reliability



**Electrification and mobility in San Jose** City Council adopted their Electric Mobility Roadmap to guide their efforts to electrify private vehicles, micromobility, shared mobility, and other vehicles.

# In parallel, actions have resulted in building stock across sectors that consume less, and cleaner, energy



**21** Buildings & Energy policies passed

## Examples of high impact wins

### Columbus Community Choice Aggregation

*(1.7 million metric tons reduced by 2025)*

### Columbus Energy Benchmarking Policy

*(1.3 million metric tons reduced by 2025)*

### Philadelphia Commercial Tune-Up Policy

*(1.3 million metric tons reduced by 2025)*

### St. Louis Building Performance Standard

*(0.64 million metric tons reduced by 2025)*

**289 MW**



Municipal RE procured or installed

**591M**



Sq. ft covered by benchmarking policies

**36,000**



Energy audits conducted

**382**



Energy efficiency retrofits or tune-ups conducted

**821**



Residents trained in green jobs programs

# Examples of wins across the Building and Energy Sector



**Building Energy Performance Standard in St. Louis** City Council adopted first ambitious standard of this kind in the Midwest and 4th in the nation.



**Benchmarking in Columbus** City Council unanimously voted to adopt the policy in virtual meeting.



**New Construction Standards in Honolulu** City Council passed bill to require new buildings to be more energy efficient-cutting energy bills in half - and solar and EV ready.



**Denver passed a ballot initiative** to raise the local sales and use tax by 0.25% to create the Climate Protection Fund (CPF) estimated \$40M per year with half of funds focused on most impacted communities



**Benchmarking in Saint Paul** City Council adopted an official benchmarking ordinance.



**Energy Efficiency financing in San Antonio** City Council voted to establish Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing



**Building Retrofits in Cincinnati** launched the 65-family Year 1 cohort of “Warm Up Cincy,” a five-year program to provide low-income families in rental housing with retrofits.



**Solar power in St. Petersburg** launched its first solar co-op with SUN Florida



**Municipal retrofits in Albuquerque** that will cover 45 buildings or 2 million square feet.

# Takeaways

# Cities are ready to act for scale and impact: a community-driven, whole government approach works best

*Five important lessons learned from our work with cities to date*



## **CITIES ARE READY TO DO MORE**

Mayors and communities are compelled to address climate justice and are ready to step up with new ambitious goals and commitments



## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP IS KEY**

The strongest, most lasting change occurs when cities partner with communities to co-design policies that benefit all, and blend political buy-in with community support



## **WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT IS NECESSARY**

Climate challenges are cross-cutting; solutions must be implemented starting with mayors and across departments, and at state and federal levels



## **SCALE CAN MAXIMIZE IMPACT**

Our proven, cohort-support model could spark innovation across even greater geographies, especially with the power of a federal partnership



## **IMPACT TAKES TIME**

The infrastructure, capacity, and partnerships that create sustainable change require more than quick wins, taking years to move from policy making to implementation

# Cities are the “last mile” to achieve national climate and justice goals



**Cities bear the brunt of the four unprecedented, intersectional crises** - the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession, persistent racial injustices, and the threat of climate change disproportionately affect cities



**Cities are on the front-lines and the drivers of change** - most Americans live in cities, and mayors can move more nimbly than state/federal government as the “last mile” of delivery, inspiring stronger local action and building an equitable climate movement



**Cities are innovators and leaders of a broader equitable climate agenda** - piloting projects, innovating cross-sectoral solutions, and developing new approaches to community partnerships is critical



The **Climate Challenge is a highly effective model with strong delivery infrastructure** - we have passed 50 ambitious policies and locked in ~30 MMT of GHG emissions reductions



**Cities can offer a whole-of-government approach but need support** - at every level, governments must prioritize an ambitious, green, equitable recovery

**Thank you!**

**Shelley Poticha  
Chief Climate Strategist  
NRDC**