

All-In Cities: Building an Equitable Economy from the Ground Up



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by Sarah Treuhaft

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Preface

The first quarter of the 21st century may well be remembered as the period in which U.S. cities regained their footing, showed their resilience, and became drivers of economic innovation. All-In Cities, a new initiative launched with this report, offers tools and strategies to accelerate this process and ensure city success is sustained by deliberately baking in pathways for all to contribute and prosper, a crucial ingredient for “comeback cities.”

All-In Cities marks a continued effort to shift the narrative on racial inequality in America. We believe that dismantling persistent racial barriers and investing in the people of color who are the emerging majority is both the right thing to do and critical to securing America’s economic future. Cities are ground zero for demonstrating this interconnectedness. Success in cities and the nation depends on the ability of people of color to be the leaders, innovators, workers, entrepreneurs, and creative problem solvers who can produce widespread prosperity for generations.

This report, along with the All-In Cities initiative, focuses on the particular role of cities in moving toward an all-in nation. Large and small, urban and suburban, cities are where most people of color live and where the next economy is taking shape. They are where movements countering inequality and police brutality are capturing the public’s imagination and propelling forward new policy solutions. And cities are where working-class communities of color are most able to be equal partners in creating innovative solutions.

All-In Cities challenges cities to step up and take on their toughest challenges. Through this initiative, PolicyLink will continue its attempt to change the dialogue about how and why equity matters to city and regional futures, while working hand-in-hand with city leaders who are ready to advance equitable growth strategies designed to achieve measurable progress on racial economic inclusion.

We are excited to seize this moment of urban revival to go “all-in” for cities.



Angela Glover Blackwell
President and CEO



Michael McAfee
Vice President for Programs

Introduction

America is having a city moment. After decades of losing residents, jobs, and investment to the suburbs, urban neighborhoods are coming back, captivating educated millennials and innovation-economy companies with their diversity and density.¹ Americans love an underdog story, and the resurgence of our cities is a tale full of hope and promise.

But that comeback story elides the critical question: *for whom are cities coming back?* Beneath the glory of rebound and buzz of startup hubs lies the harsh reality of rising inequality and persistent structural racism. For most low-income people of color—many who lived in cities through their long decline while being systematically shut out of the greatest wealth-building opportunities of the past century—the new urban economy is just as unkind as the old. They are still waiting for their recovery, struggling and striving to provide for their children on strapped budgets and flat paychecks in neighborhoods that conspire against their health, livelihoods, and—far too often—their very lives.

It doesn't need to be this way. There is an alternative to racial exclusion and unequal growth, and cities have a critical role to play. By becoming “all-in cities” that deeply embrace inclusion and thrive on the participation, creativity, and contributions of the very groups who've long been left behind, America's cities can help create a new economy that is equitable, sustainable, and prosperous.

Cities are the nation's engines of economic and policy innovation and where new, expanded forms of citizenship and democracy are born. As the command centers of the knowledge-driven economy, cities are where inclusion can be incorporated into the business models of the country's economic powerhouses. As the vanguards of the nation's emerging people-of-color majority, cities can tap the accumulated knowledge of institutions and leaders working in and for communities of color. And as the country's most trusted policy incubators, cities can establish the new rules of the game needed to build an equitable economy.

Inequitable growth is not only unjust—it is socially and economically unsustainable. Cities cannot afford to chase after mobile millennials and footloose companies while underinvesting in their own residents, entrepreneurs, and neighborhoods. Research proves that inequality and racial segregation hinders growth, prosperity, and economic mobility in regions while diversity and inclusion fuel innovation and business success.² As baby boomers retire and the pool of American workers grows more and more diverse, the costs of racial economic exclusion—and the value proposition of inclusion—will continue to rise.

There is no time to waste. During this moment of resurgence, cities must act to firmly connect their low-income people and communities of color to the new economy and its needs for fresh ideas, ingenuity, and skilled workers—and ensure they have the opportunity to stay in their neighborhoods and cities as they improve.

Thankfully, the “inclusion revolution” has already begun.³ From Seattle to Dubuque to Ferguson to New York, equity champions are implementing policies and practices to build all-in cities, dismantling barriers and equipping their residents with the opportunities and resources they need to thrive. No city is there yet, but like the residents they serve, these local leaders are strivers and doers. They believe their cities can become geographies of inclusion, justice, and human flourishing—and are working to make that vision the reality.

The All-In Cities initiative at PolicyLink aims to deepen, amplify, and multiply these efforts to build equitable, thriving cities. In the pages that follow, we present a set of cross-cutting practices for all-in cities and an eight-point policy framework that is the focal point of an ongoing campaign to create just cities and an equitable America. We hope you will join us.



What Is an All-In City?

Every journey needs a North Star, and the path to “all-in cities” is no exception. How then, do we define an all-in city?

It starts with equity, which we define as just and fair inclusion into a society in which all, including all racial and ethnic groups, can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity seeks to counteract the barriers and systemic exclusions (historic and current) that prevent people from realizing their potential. Attaining equity requires understanding those barriers and working to proactively ensure each individual’s circumstances—in their neighborhoods and streets, at school and work, in their local economy—provides them with the optimal opportunity to thrive.

All-in cities manifest equity within a specific city, nested within a specific regional economy. In an all-in city, your life chances and outcomes are not determined by your race, ethnicity, gender, nativity, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, zip code, or family income. Residents of all-in cities can access the resources and opportunities they need to fully participate in and contribute to the economic, political, and cultural life of the city. All-in cities foster inclusive growth: implementing win-win policies and strategies that grow good jobs and new businesses critical to a thriving economy while ensuring that workers and entrepreneurs play a role in generating that growth and share equitably in its benefits.

The all-in city is a work in progress. Cities are dynamic, complex, and constantly evolving and the work of building all-in cities requires a long-term commitment, intentionality, vigilance, and constant learning.

Cities become all-in as they make measurable progress on key indicators of racial inclusion and equitable growth. Each city needs to understand its unique conditions and assets, set ambitious goals to reverse the trendline on inequity, and select metrics that align with those goals. Here are a few examples of the types of indicators and metrics that might guide city governments and advocates as they seek to become equitable cities:

- The number and share of Black, Latino, Native American, Asian, and other workers of color who are jobless decreases and the city moves toward full employment—when everyone who wants a job has one—for all racial and gender groups.
- Entrepreneurs of color are able to grow their companies and create more accessible, living-wage jobs for low-income people of color.
- The number and share of youth who are disconnected from work or school decreases, with the steepest decreases among youth of color, including LGBTQ youth of color.
- The number of low-income tenants who are evicted or priced out of gentrifying neighborhoods decreases.
- Police fatalities decrease, and people of color are no longer disproportionately harmed by police violence.

Practices for Inclusive Cities

All-in cities are created through a set of equity-focused practices that cut across policy arenas.

Integrate a focus on people, place, and the economy

The builders of all-in cities understand that their cities—and the neighborhoods where low-income people of color live—are embedded in a broader metropolitan economy, and act to create more connections and linkages between their underserved residents and the regional and global economy. They recognize that place-based and people-oriented strategies, community organizing, policy changes, and new business and financing models are all valuable and necessary to create equitable cities. They are savvy about resources and innovate new ways of working with markets and investors to achieve solutions at scale.

Embrace equity as an economic imperative

Private sector businesses employ most city residents and are crucial partners for advancing equitable growth. All-in city leaders help business leaders see the long-term, bottom-line benefits of racial and economic equity and engage them in developing and implementing solutions.

Focus on the most vulnerable

By developing strategies and policies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, all-in cities create solutions that have cascading benefits. Take the case of school integration in Evanston, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. The Evanston school district is one of the most diverse in the country, but a few years ago, the district saw that students of color were underrepresented in advanced placement (AP) courses. It began trying new strategies, including placing all youth in freshman honors' classes. Three years later, significantly more Black and Latino students were taking and performing well on AP tests. And the changes are not only benefiting students of color: White students had improved on the same measures.⁴

Embed anti-racism throughout government

Racial inequities in cities are not inevitable: they are created and perpetuated by the actions, investments, policies, and decisions of society's most powerful institutions, including local governments. All-in cities transform themselves from

within, analyzing all of their decisions and practices with a racial equity lens (asking: Who benefits? Who pays? Who decides?), and using their power and influence to remove barriers and expand opportunities. In 2005, Seattle became the first city in the nation to launch a citywide initiative to eliminate racial inequities and structural racism. Now, more than a dozen local governments have launched similar initiatives and participate in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity national network.

Strengthen the public realm: public action, public space, and public institutions

All-in cities require active governments that find ways to invest in the public infrastructure and public space that are such critical resources for low-income communities of color who have little access to privately provided goods and services. Cities need strong public institutions—school districts, health departments, police departments—that effectively serve communities of color and help their cities succeed.

Ensure meaningful community participation, leadership, and ownership

Residents of disinvested neighborhoods possess valuable information, insight, and wisdom that city governments need to design and implement solutions that work. They are also uniquely positioned to carry out innovative and creative solutions to city challenges like repurposing vacant land and stewarding parks. And community ownership and control of land and assets is critical for equitable development without displacement as neighborhoods attract new investment.

Take on the challenge of achieving equity results at scale

All-in cities aim for structural changes, acknowledging and taking on their cities' toughest and most enduring challenges of racial inequity. They use the best information available—and the proliferation of better and more detailed data—to understand current conditions and inform and continuously hone strategies to set targets and achieve results for specific excluded populations while improving outcomes for entire populations.

The Policy Agenda for All-In Cities

Countering unequal growth and making real progress on racial and economic equity will require transforming the way that cities work. To become truly “all-in,” cities need to implement focused policy and systems changes to achieve measurable results. We offer the following eight policy goals as a framework:

- 1. Grow good, accessible jobs that provide pathways to the middle class.**
- 2. Increase the economic security and mobility of vulnerable families and workers.**
- 3. Cultivate homegrown talent through a strong cradle-to-career pipeline.**
- 4. Create healthy, opportunity-rich neighborhoods for all.**
- 5. Build resilient, connected infrastructure.**
- 6. Increase access to high-quality, affordable homes and prevent displacement.**
- 7. Expand democracy and the right to the city.**
- 8. Ensure just policing and court systems.**

Our aim is to provide inspiration and guidance to cities and advocates as they craft and implement tailored policy agendas to make inclusive growth their reality. We provide a policy menu rather than a prescription, highlighting key strategies that are within the control or authority of local city governments (at least of some of them). Local governments are diverse in their powers, resources, market contexts, and capacity. While these eight broad policy goals are relevant for all cities, local leaders will need to assess which of the solutions within those policy arenas are right for their city at this time.

Local governments can and must lead on equitable growth, but they cannot do it alone. Regions are the true economic units in the global economy, and coordination across the central cities, suburban cities, counties, and smaller cities within a region is critical. Supportive state and federal policy and investment is also essential. While some states have been supportive of this agenda, others have passed laws prohibiting their cities from enacting some of the policies in this agenda. Equity advocates must work to overturn these laws and be ready to stave off new ones.

Likewise, federal policy and practices must pave the way for—and not impede—local progress toward full inclusion. Our national urban policies need to support local equity innovations and provide the infrastructure and financing to take these solutions to scale. National policies on immigration, education, transportation, housing, economic development, and more, must set the stage for local inclusive growth strategies. Additionally, the federal government must ensure that federal resources go toward equitable practices and policies and that residents’ civil rights are protected.

The private sector also plays a unique and important role. The business case for racial economic inclusion is real, and companies need to invest in inclusive growth, incorporating it into their business models as well as partnering with local governments and community institutions to put these policy solutions in place.

Community-based institutions remain crucial on-the-ground partners in developing and carrying through all of these strategies—and must continue to lead, especially with neighborhood-level efforts.



A protester looks on at a rally for fair wages Wednesday, April 15, 2015, in Seattle. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson)

1.

Grow good, accessible jobs that provide pathways to the middle class

For Sammi Babakrkhil, a shuttle driver and valet attendant who immigrated to the United States from Afghanistan 11 years ago, it meant being able to quit his second full-time job, reducing his weekly hours from 80 to 40, having more time to spend with his wife and three girls, and starting to exercise.⁵ For Ashley Young, a 27-year-old cashier, it meant affording to play on a competitive softball league. Sammi and Ashley are among more than 1,600 workers whose jobs are better and lives are fuller because of the nation's first \$15 living-wage law, passed in 2013 by the small, majority people-of-color Seattle suburb of SeaTac.⁶ Fifteen dollars an hour is a policy innovation that was born in cities, first chanted in November 2012 by striking fast-food workers in New York City who were bold enough to demand more when the nation's highest minimum wage was \$10.24/hour, in high-cost San Francisco.⁷ It has been a game changer, with 10 other cities and counties enacting \$15/hour minimums, and about a dozen other cities raising their minimum wages. And the momentum around higher local minimum wages has spread beyond progressive strongholds like Seattle and Oakland, with recent wins in St. Louis, Kansas City, and Birmingham.

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With the \$15 I can survive but still live pay check to pay check. I used to work two full-time jobs. This year is the only time I can enjoy a little bit of my social life as well.

Sammi Babakrkhil, Masterpark valet, SeaTac

Good jobs that are accessible to workers of color and other marginalized workers who are likely to live in poor, isolated neighborhoods form the bedrock of all-in cities. A job that pays enough to support one's family and put some away for the future, provides health care and other benefits, and safe, dignified, family-friendly working conditions is a universal foundation for well-being and prosperity. But cities struggle to provide good jobs for all of their residents. While most cities are recovering from the Great Recession—92 percent said their economies did better this year than last in a recent National League of Cities survey—the recovery has been slow, incomplete, and the jobs that have come back are generally not good jobs. Many African American, Latino, Native American, Asian, and other workers of color are still jobless, and most of the jobs cities have regained are low-wage jobs that keep their workers on the bottom rungs of the economic ladder.⁸

All-in cities use all of the tools at their disposal—economic and small business development, procurement, contracting, and wage standards—to grow more good, accessible jobs and raise the floor on low-wage jobs to turn them into good, living-wage jobs.

Key Strategies:

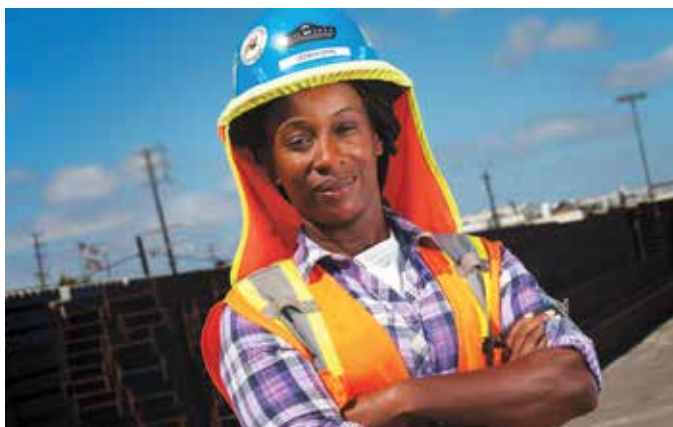
- Target economic development efforts to grow high-road, inclusive businesses within high-opportunity industries: ones that have potential for growth and create good, “middle-skills” jobs for people with less than a four-year degree.
- Leverage procurement and contracting to help entrepreneurs of color and triple-bottom-line businesses (social enterprises, cooperatives, B Corps, etc.)—both of which are more likely to hire workers of color—grow more good jobs.
- Transform low-wage jobs into good jobs by setting high community standards for wages and benefits (including paid sick leave), preventing wage theft, ensuring fair scheduling, and supporting worker organizing.

2.

Increase the economic security and mobility of vulnerable families and workers

“It’s renewed my life,” says LeDaya Epps of Los Angeles. “It has been a lifeline to a career I am proud of.” After struggling to make ends meet for her three children during a two-year bout of unemployment and before that, patching together a living doing home care work, LeDaya now has a new career in construction, a secure livelihood, and bright prospects. She is among the tens of thousands of Los Angeles workers who have accessed good jobs through the region’s efforts to connect residents with gainful employment building infrastructure, often with the assistance of community organizations like the Los Angeles Black Worker Center, which helped LeDaya break into the construction industry.⁹ LeDaya’s first project is the new 8.5-mile transit line connecting South Los Angeles and the historic African American Crenshaw neighborhood with the airport and the rest of the city. As a Black woman, she is also diversifying the region’s construction industry, where African Americans comprise just 3 percent of workers although they are 9 percent of the total population.¹⁰ Los Angeles has long been an innovator in ensuring development projects expand economic opportunity, and its leaders played a major role in convincing the federal transportation agency to allow cities to hire locally on federally funded transportation projects on a pilot basis.¹¹

Targeted hiring and pre-apprenticeship training can provide a pathway to economic security for workers like LeDaya Epps, pictured here. (*Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority*)



Economic security—having enough money to cover basic needs and enough savings to weather setbacks and invest for the future—is critical to the health and well-being of families, neighborhoods, and local economies. Neighborhoods and cities thrive when their residents have sufficient incomes to buy goods and services from local businesses, and invest in their homes and neighborhoods. But such security is increasingly elusive to low-income families of color who disproportionately live in or near poverty even when they are employed, face daunting levels of debt, and are squeezed by rising costs of living. Families of color are far more likely to lack enough savings to weather an economic setback like the loss of a job or a medical emergency. In Charlotte, for example, 51 percent of Black households and 56 percent of Latino households lack enough savings to subsist at the poverty level for three months, compared with 21 percent of White households.¹² Cities can reduce this insecurity and shore up their economies by connecting residents with jobs and opportunities to save and build assets, removing discriminatory barriers to employment, and protecting them from predatory financial sector practices.

All-in cities leverage their investments, development projects, hiring, and policy tools to put their vulnerable families and workers on a path to economic security.

Key Strategies:

- Implement targeted and local hiring and invest in pre-apprenticeship training on development and infrastructure projects.
- Ensure fair hiring, equal pay, and equitable promotion opportunities within the municipal workforce.
- Dismantle barriers to employment and services, such as credit checks and criminal history questions on applications for jobs and housing in both the private and public sector.
- Increase financial security and assets through children’s and matched savings accounts, benefits assistance, access to financial services, and opportunities for first-time homeownership such as shared equity programs.
- Limit or manage the proliferation of alternative, high-cost financial service providers through licensing and zoning powers.



A Pre-K 4 SA student at the South Education Center in San Antonio. (AP Photo/Eric Gay)

3.

Cultivate homegrown talent through a strong cradle-to-career pipeline

In the fall of 2013, 700 four-year-olds from predominantly low-income, Latino families in San Antonio were tested for kindergarten readiness in six areas: cognitive, literacy, mathematics, oral language, physical ability, and social-emotional behavior. As a group, they fell significantly below the national average in all areas. But when they were tested again the following spring, they scored above-average in three areas and had caught up to the average in the other three. These children were the inaugural class of Pre-K 4 SA, the City of San Antonio's full-day pre-kindergarten program, which is provided free of charge to eligible students. Universal preschool emerged as the top policy recommendation of an education task force convened in 2011 by then-mayor Julian Castro and chaired by the CEOs of two of San Antonio's largest companies. Supported by the business community as a smart investment in the city's workforce pipeline, voters approved a 1/8-cent sales tax to pay for an eight-year program that will soon reach about 3,700 children per year. Jesse Quesada's daughter, Gabriella, completed the program in 2014 and is now excelling in her first-grade class. He attributes her success to the quality of Pre-K 4 SA. "People say 'Oh, you can't tell if pre-K programs benefit the kids,'" says Jesse, "but you can tell. It makes a big difference."

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This is not only an educational issue, it's about the future workforce. The whole educational chain has to work...It lifts the entire city's educational profile up and attracts companies and individuals here.

Josue (Joe) Robles, Former CEO of USAA and Co-Chair of the San Antonio Brainpower Initiative Task Force

A skilled workforce is the key to city success in the global economy, but our nation's public school systems, especially those in urban centers, are not adequately equipping youth of color with the skills to excel in the 21st century workforce. By 2020, 43 percent of jobs will require at least an associate's degree but only a quarter of Black, Latino, and Native American workers are currently prepared for them.¹³ While many cities focus on attracting college graduates from other states to meet employer needs for skilled workers, those on the path to inclusive growth must cultivate their homegrown talent through a cradle-to-career approach that starts when children are born.¹⁴ That pipeline needs to include a workforce system that connects adult workers—including those facing barriers to employment—with careers. Although school districts play the primary role in delivering quality K-12 education to its least advantaged children, city governments can lead on education by aligning key partners around strategies and investments. Similarly, cities can be critical conveners on targeted workforce strategies, as New Orleans is doing to connect its jobless Black men with careers coming online at its major anchor institutions.¹⁵

All-in cities grow their own talent pool by using their bully pulpit, convening powers, and the policy tools available to them to create a robust cradle-to-career education and workforce pipeline that equips low-income children and workers with the skills they need to succeed.

Key Strategies:

- Expand access to high-quality preschool for working-class families.
- Ensure excellent public education for low-income students through strategies including comprehensive, place-based cradle-to-career initiatives, such as the federal Promise Neighborhoods program.
- Reform harsh, zero-tolerance school discipline policies to keep youth in school and on track to graduate.
- Implement sectoral workforce development and training programs and apprenticeships that connect un- and under-employed workers with good jobs.

4.

Create healthy, opportunity-rich neighborhoods for all

“I think it’s wonderful,” says Linda Jones. “I just leave out of my house and come to the center, then I get my groceries.”¹⁶ Like 150,000 other Baltimoreans—including 34 percent of the city’s Black residents, 15 percent of its Latino residents, and 8 percent of its White residents—Jones lives in a “food desert” where 30 percent of households lack access to a car and there is no grocery store within a quarter mile radius.^{17, 18} But Jones and her neighbors at Perkins Homes can now pick up fresh groceries right at their community center every Tuesday thanks to Baltimarket, an online grocery delivery service run by the city’s health department in partnership with a local grocery chain. One of the flagship efforts of the interagency Baltimore Food Policy Initiative formed in 2010 to address the city’s challenge of food access, Baltimarket offers free delivery to 300 residents living in Perkins Homes and four other community sites.¹⁹ Long pushed by residents and organizers to address the “grocery gap” in urban communities of color, cities are stepping up to bring in fresh food to underserved communities through innovative financing and non-traditional business models, incentives, zoning, transportation, and more.²⁰

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Our goal is to make this a program that you see not only across Baltimore but also across the United States.

Laura Flamm, Baltimore City Health Department

High-quality neighborhoods are fundamental building blocks for health and economic opportunity, and for residents born without wealth, they can make all the difference. Live in a neighborhood with good schools, safe streets, parks, transit, clean air and water, places to buy healthy food, and services, and your chances of living a long, healthy, secure life increase dramatically. Live in a neighborhood that provides few of these ingredients for success, and your chances are stymied. While cities are home to some of the most vibrant, diverse neighborhoods in the country, these neighborhoods are the exception rather than the rule: most low-income people of color, and particularly African Americans, live in disinvested, racially and economically segregated neighborhoods in central cities and inner-ring suburban cities—and often over multiple generations. One of the most telling statistics for the difference in neighborhood quality is the wide variation in life expectancy from one city neighborhood to the next. A child born in New Orleans’s Tremé neighborhood, for example, can expect to live to be 55 years old, while a child born in the Lakeshore neighborhood just a few miles away can expect to reach their 80th birthday.²¹

All-in cities work to improve services and quality of life in their poorest neighborhoods and by making strategic, coordinated, and catalytic investments that reconnect disinvested neighborhoods to their regional economies and spur equitable development that builds community wealth.

Key Strategies:

- Increase access to healthy food in underserved neighborhoods and build more equitable food systems—from cultivation through to disposal—regionally.
- Build and maintain high-quality parks, playgrounds, and green spaces in low-income neighborhoods.
- Conduct “health impact assessments” to analyze policy proposals for their impacts on health equity.
- Leverage key federal resources (like community development block grants) and neighborhood-focused programs (including Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods, Promise Zones, and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative) to create opportunity-rich neighborhoods.

5. Build resilient, connected infrastructure

Cleveland's Euclid Avenue was known as “millionaire's row” during the city's industrial heyday in the early 20th century, but the corridor steadily declined as the city's population dipped to less than 400,000 from over 900,000 in 1950.²² Today, a major infrastructure investment—the HealthLine bus rapid transit system (known as BRT)—is catalyzing reinvestment and economic activity along the historic corridor, delivering fast, first-class transportation service to all communities along the route and connecting the high-unemployment, predominantly African American city of East Cleveland to the region's two largest job centers in downtown Cleveland and University Circle. Since it began in 2008, the HealthLine has provided more than 29 million riders with high-frequency, 24-hour-a-day service—34 percent faster than the prior bus service—and has generated more than \$6.3 billion in economic activity along the corridor: a return on investment of \$114 for every dollar it cost to build.²³ Leadership, commitment, and support from city and state officials, major employers (including the Cleveland Clinic and Cleveland State University), and residents was essential to bringing the BRT from an idea to reality. Joe Calabrese, the CEO of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority says it “has sparked economic development that is propelling the city back into prosperity.”

Cleveland's HealthLine connects workers to a combined 140,000 jobs located in downtown Cleveland and University Circle, the region's two largest commercial districts.
(Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority)



Infrastructure—roads, transit, sidewalks, bridges, ports, high-speed internet, parks, schools, water lines, and more—is the skeletal support that allows cities to function and connects their residents to each other and to the regional and global economy. But much of the infrastructure in central cities and older suburban cities is crumbling or antiquated, unsuited to the demands of the knowledge-driven economy and incapable of halting the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change. Low-income communities of color face the worst infrastructure deficiencies and digital divides—stemming from years of discriminatory land use planning and inequitable investment—while being disproportionately burdened by polluting facilities. Far too frequently, new infrastructure investments skip over the very communities that are the least served, and community organizers and residents must fight for years to get a transit stop or a renovated school or park. Other times, infrastructure investments are planned without adequate attention to how they will impact existing, neighborhood-serving businesses and lower-income residents at risk of displacement from the revitalization spurred from such public investments.

All-in cities leverage their infrastructure investments—and find creative ways to finance new infrastructure—to improve livability, resilience, health, access, business development, and economic vitality for people living in underserved neighborhoods.

Key Strategies:

- Develop funding sources to expand, improve, and maintain high-quality transportation, water, parks, broadband, and other infrastructure in underserved neighborhoods.
- Ensure that federal, state, regional, and citywide infrastructure resources are targeted to high-need low-income communities of color and bring tangible benefits to their residents.
- Leverage infrastructure investments to bring jobs and contracting opportunities to underserved communities in both construction and operations (described in Policies 1 and 2).
- Increase access and affordability of public transit for youth and other transit-dependent populations.

6.

Increase access to high-quality, affordable homes and prevent displacement

Norma and Luis Santiago and their three teenage children live in a three-bedroom townhome in North Philadelphia built by the Women's Community Revitalization Program (WCRP), a community organizing, housing development, and advocacy organization that has been serving the multi-ethnic Latino (mainly Puerto Rican and Dominican) and African American neighborhood for nearly three decades. Norma found WCRP in 1997, when they were living in a cramped apartment with Luis's sister's family and scraping by on his income. Within two months, the Santiagos were living in their own apartment. "Moving into our own home allowed us to raise our family how we wanted to raise them," said Norma. "We were able to stand on our own two feet." In 2012, WCRP used funds from the city's Housing Trust Fund—which they and other community organizations helped establish in 2005—to rehabilitate and preserve the 72-unit development where the Santiagos live. The Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund generates \$11 million per year to meet the city's housing needs and has helped 14,000 low- and moderate-income residents. Norma is now on the board of WCRP and has advised them on other advocacy campaigns including establishing a new citywide land bank that will recycle vacant land to meet community goals including building 2,000 affordable homes. As Norma puts it, "We help each other."

In 90 of the 100 largest American cities, the majority of renter households of color are rent burdened (spending more than 30 percent of their incomes on rent).

National Equity Atlas

Housing is the lynchpin for opportunity: the location and quality of the home you can afford not only affects your living space and household budget—it determines the quality of your schools, the safety of your streets, the length of your commute, your exposure to toxics, and more. But cities everywhere struggle to ensure their working-class families of color can live in healthy homes that connect them to opportunity amid rising housing costs and stagnant wages. Those coping with population decline face the challenge of vacant properties and a lack of reinvestment. Cities with hot housing markets risk losing their diversity and culture as their low-wealth communities of color are displaced to the outer fringes where they are stranded from jobs, transportation, and services. And in the context of today's uneven development patterns, gentrification and displacement is a neighborhood-by-neighborhood phenomenon: even cities without large-scale housing affordability challenges can be experiencing displacement in their up-and-coming neighborhoods. All cities need to be tracking the market and acting early to build in long-term affordability and community control to promote development without displacement.

All-in cities take action on multiple levels—financing, zoning, development, preservation, code enforcement, tenant protections and services, and more—to expand housing opportunity and prevent displacement of low-income communities of color.

Key Strategies:

- Create dedicated sources of funding to continually meet affordable housing needs.
- Leverage market-rate development to support long-term affordable housing through inclusionary zoning and other tools.
- Prevent displacement and secure vulnerable renters and homeowners in gentrifying neighborhoods through services, legal protections, and rent stabilization policies.
- Expand and preserve affordability in high-opportunity neighborhoods through zoning, incentives, and development.
- Leverage the new federal Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule to foster racially and economically integrated neighborhoods.



Elizabeth Moran and her granddaughter in their rehabbed, more energy-efficient apartment, along with WCRP case manager Haydee Amill and Paup Aylesworth. (Ashley Hahn)

7. Expand democracy and the right to the city

In 2007, New Haven, Connecticut, launched the Elm City Resident Card, a municipal ID program designed to protect and address the needs of the city's estimated 10,000 to 15,000 undocumented residents. Support for the program grew after the robbery and murder of Manuel Santiago, who, like many other immigrants, was unable to open a bank account without a government-issued ID. Because they were forced to carry large amounts of cash, workers like Santiago became known as “walking ATMs.”²⁴ By September 2014, the city had issued cards to more than 10,000 residents. “It’s a good ID because it validates you, anywhere you go, from stores, to parks, hospitals,” says resident Alberto Salgado, “More than anything, it’s to identify who you are, so they’d know that you’re a good ‘citizen,’ a quiet person, that supports and participates.” In conjunction with other policies designed to foster trusting relationships between the city’s immigrants and its police and city services, the ID program has helped foster a sense of belonging for immigrant communities and facilitated their integration into public life in New Haven, where they have revitalized disinvested neighborhoods by creating small businesses and rented or purchased homes.²⁵ The program was the nation’s first, and has become a model for similar programs in other cities including New York City and Newark.

Alberto Salgado displays his Elm City resident ID card in the supermarket where he works. (NextCity/Sarah Kramer)



In addition to being spaces of economic activity and the development of human capital, cities are key sites where marginalized residents—low-income people of color, undocumented immigrants, religious minorities, the homeless, people with disabilities, street vendors and other informal economy workers, LGBTQ people, the formerly incarcerated—make new claims on political rights and expand the boundaries of democracy and citizenship. A concept from French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, the “right to the city” refers to the rights of everyday residents who lack money and power to participate in the production of urban space: to shape, define, and create their neighborhoods and the city. Arts and culture of diverse communities are essential to all-in cities, serving as potent vehicles for advancing equity through city planning, community engagement, economic development, and jobs. To strengthen democracy, cities must eliminate discrimination at all levels and ensure residents can access government and participate in the decisions that affect their neighborhoods, services, livelihoods, safety, and well-being. They must also open up new avenues for engagement and leadership, enabling residents to be the agents and owners of development and change in traditional and non-traditional ways.

All-in cities expand democracy by protecting civil and human rights, extending the franchise, holding fair municipal elections, and implementing mechanisms to ensure marginalized populations have a voice in city decisions and the ability to create city space.

Key Strategies:

- Ensure all residents have a voice in city affairs by making it easy for low-income people to register and cast their vote, and extending voting rights to youth, documented immigrants, and people with felonies on their records.
- Effectively engage diverse communities in planning and participatory budgeting processes, and integrate their arts and culture throughout government activities.
- Include immigrants in civic life by providing language access, services, support for citizenship, and municipal ID cards.
- Guarantee that LGBTQ residents have access to services and are protected from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

8. Ensure just policing and court systems

Carlo Hinds is among more than 2,500 young people who have passed through the courtroom of Buffalo City Court Judge James McLeod as part of its Crossroads community-based justice program since 2009. Judge McLeod and his partners at the HEART (Helping Empower at-Risk Teens) Foundation designed Crossroads to empower 16- to 24-year-olds with the tools to create positive change in their lives and avoid getting trapped in the criminal justice system. Crossroads offers community-based supervision, counseling, drug treatment, job training, and academic support (including New York's only GED program housed in a city court building). Crossroads' goal is to resolve these young people's cases non-judicially—thus avoiding the criminal record that becomes a major barrier to opportunity for youth. The program seems to be working: only 13 percent of Crossroads participants have returned to court on new criminal charges, compared to an average recidivism rate of about 60 percent in New York State. For young people like Carlo, who was referred to the program after being found carrying a small amount of illicit drugs, the program helped him stay on track to complete his education. He participated in financial literacy classes and a job-training program offered by the program, and is now enrolled in community college and working part-time.²⁶

Police chief Chris Magnus of Richmond, California, stands with residents in peaceful protest. (Flickr/Daud)



The police killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012 followed by Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and many others revealed the depths to which policing practices in cities large and small act as structural barriers to racial inclusion, catalyzing the Black Lives Matter social movement and a long-awaited national dialogue about criminalization, mass incarceration, and police violence in communities of color. Activists have put forth a positive vision, with a policy platform that states: "We can live in a world where the police don't kill people by limiting police interventions, improving community interactions, and ensuring accountability," including a comprehensive policy agenda.²⁷ Cities are responsible for public safety and policing needs to ensure streets and parks are safe and residents are protected and respected. By holding police accountable to the communities they serve and investing in diversion and restorative justice programs that focus on preventing crime and recidivism, cities can move away from traditional punitive measures that reinforce social structures of inequity—making their communities safer and their economies stronger in the process.

All-in cities implement the policy recommendations of community activists and policy organizations to ensure just policing and court systems, end the criminalization of communities of color, and prioritize community safety, prevention, and alternatives to detention.

Key Strategies:

- End overpolicing and racial profiling that disproportionately burdens communities of color, limit police use of force, and train police to de-escalate situations, eliminate racial bias, and interact respectfully with communities.
- Implement diversion and restorative justice programs for minor offenders and invest in youth violence prevention and mental health services.
- Increase accountability through community representation and oversight, and by requiring the use of body cameras.
- Eliminate overuse of fines and fees: end police department quotas and limit fees and fines for the indigent.
- Limit participation of local law enforcement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.



Become an All-In City

PolicyLink is working with local and national partners to develop, advance, and disseminate the next generation of equitable growth policies and practices. Through the All-In Cities initiative, we provide capacity-building and implementation support, data and policy tools, and strategic research to city governments and community organizations as they develop and implement tailored policy solutions to increase racial economic inclusion and foster equitable growth.

Policy Research and Communications

Recognizing that local leaders need specific policies and examples of strategies that can work in their particular economic and political context, in 2016 we will launch an All-In Cities policy toolkit that provides detailed policy information and examples of equitable growth strategies in cities. We will also be producing a series of policy briefs that focus on specific equitable city policy ideas and policy issues facing cities. Our semi-monthly *America's Tomorrow* newsletter will continue to feature win-win local strategies for equity and the economy.

Data Infrastructure

PolicyLink and the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) maintain the National Equity Atlas, a first-of-its-kind policy and data tool to build an equitable economy. To support the All-In Cities initiative, we recently expanded the Atlas to include data for the 100 largest cities, and will continue to enhance this resource and work with cities to help them use the data for change.

Place-Based Engagements and Field Building

Through place-based engagements, we work hand in hand with city leaders inside and outside of government as they craft tailored policy agendas and launch targeted efforts to make measurable progress toward results that close racial gaps and strengthen local economies. We start with cities where they are and help them build strategies to achieve equity results at scale. We support individual cities and cohorts of cities that are seeking to advance particular pieces of this policy platform. And we are offering a cadre of supports including technical assistance and training to help cities get on the path to becoming all-in cities.

Join us. Become an all-in city. Sign up at www.allincities.org.

Appendix:

Expanded Policy Menu

Below is a more comprehensive list of the policies and strategies needed to create all-in cities. This list will grow in response to policy and practice innovations emerging in cities. We invite you to suggest additional policy solutions at www.allincities.org.

Cross-cutting policies and practices:

- Target investments and services to the most vulnerable people and places
- Conduct equity analyses (including racial equity) of all activities and decisions
- Assess equity conditions and monitor progress using disaggregated data
- Engage diverse residents in decision making
- Integrate a focus on people, place, and the economy
- Engage the private sector and leverage market forces in developing and implementing solutions
- Invest in public infrastructure, public space, and strong public-serving institutions

1. Grow good, accessible jobs that provide pathways to the middle class

- Implement equitable, accountable economic development to grow high-road, inclusive businesses and middle-skills jobs
 - Targeted subsidies and subsidy accountability (e.g., clawbacks)
 - Focused municipal procurement and contracting
 - Coordinated regional equitable economic growth strategy
 - Industrial land preservation to retain good manufacturing jobs
- Support entrepreneurs of color, immigrants, and triple-bottom-line businesses (e.g., cooperatives, social enterprises) to launch and grow
 - Targeted small business assistance
 - Focused municipal procurement and contracting
 - Access to affordable capital
- Raise the floor on low-wage work
 - Minimum and living wage
 - Paid sick days
 - Wage theft prevention and enforcement
 - Fair scheduling
 - Support for worker organizing

2. Increase the economic security and mobility of vulnerable families and workers

- Increase access to construction careers and public sector jobs
 - Targeted and local hiring
 - Pre-apprenticeship and construction careers programs
 - Community workforce agreements and project labor agreements
 - Fair hiring, pay, and promotions in the municipal workforce
- Remove barriers to employment and services
 - Removal of criminal conviction questions from job applications
 - Elimination of criminal conviction questions from applications for housing and other services
 - Ban on employer credit checks
- Increase financial security and assets
 - Matched savings accounts (children's savings accounts and individual development accounts)
 - Benefits assistance and awareness campaigns (EITC, tax preparation, etc.)
 - Access to low-cost financial services (e.g., Bank On)
 - Foreclosure prevention
 - First-time homeownership assistance (including shared equity homeownership)
 - Protection from predatory, high-cost financial service providers (via licensing and zoning)

3. Cultivate homegrown talent through a strong cradle-to-career pipeline

- Provide high-quality preschool for low-income children
- Create excellent public schools
 - Community-based cradle-to-career wraparound supports
 - High-quality facilities, teachers, and curricula in high-poverty schools
- Keep youth in school and on-track to graduate
 - School discipline policy reform
 - Anti-bullying policies
- Prepare youth for the workforce
 - Career technical education and “linked learning”
 - Youth summer job programs
- Ensure college access and success
 - College scholarship programs
 - Academic support programs
- Implement coordinated workforce development targeted to workers facing barriers to employment
 - Sectoral workforce training
 - Apprenticeship programs

4. Create healthy, opportunity-rich neighborhoods

- Ensure access to healthy food and build equitable food systems through fresh food financing initiatives, zoning and land use policies, and school district procurement
- Build and maintain high-quality parks, playgrounds, and green spaces in low-income neighborhoods
- Conduct “health impact assessments” to analyze policy proposals for their impacts on health equity and environmental justice, and mitigate negative impacts
- Ensure new development delivers jobs, services, infrastructure, and affordable housing to residents and entrepreneurs of color through community benefits policies and agreements and commercial stabilization strategies

5. Build resilient, connected infrastructure

- Develop funding sources to expand, improve, and maintain high-quality infrastructure in low-wealth communities of color
- Target infrastructure resources to expand opportunity in high-need, low-income communities
 - “Fix it first”—repair existing facilities before adding new ones
 - Transit that connects to job centers
 - Upgraded water and sewer systems
- Maximize the job and economic benefits of infrastructure investments (see numbers 1 and 2)
- Increase access and affordability of sustainable infrastructure for vulnerable populations
 - Reduced cost or free transit passes
 - Home energy efficiency retrofits

6. Increase access to high-quality, affordable homes and prevent displacement

- Expand affordable housing resources
 - Housing trust funds with permanent revenue sources
 - Local and regional bonds to finance housing development and preservation
- Preserve affordability
 - Retention of subsidized affordable units facing expiring use
 - Rent stabilization/control and removal of vacancy decontrol
 - One-for-one replacement requirement for subsidized units during redevelopment
 - Financing program and/or tenant right of first refusal policy to help tenants or community organizations purchase properties when landlords sell
- Create new affordable housing
 - Inclusionary zoning and impact fees to increase affordable development alongside market-rate development
 - Land acquisition (including of foreclosed properties) for long-term affordable housing development and other community uses
 - Prioritization of public land for affordable housing development
- Prevent displacement
 - Tenant rental assistance and legal services
 - Tenant protections (e.g., just cause eviction)
 - Limitations on condominium conversions
- Healthy housing
 - Code enforcement, rental inspection, and rental registries to discourage speculators and absentee landlords
 - Implementation of the federal Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule to place affordable housing in communities of opportunity

7. Expand democracy and the right to the city

- Secure and extend the franchise
 - Facilitation of voter registration and voting (e.g., same-day registration, vote by mail)
 - Extension of voting rights to youth (ages 16-17) and documented immigrants
 - Restoration of voting rights to people with criminal records
- Ensure fair, competitive elections
 - Local campaign finance reform
- Effectively engage residents in decision making
 - Effective community outreach and engagement in governance and planning
 - Participatory budgeting
- Include immigrants
 - Culturally and linguistically appropriate services
 - Citizenship support
 - Municipal ID cards
 - Integrate the arts and culture of diverse communities throughout city planning, development, and investment activities
- LGBTQ inclusion
 - LGBTQ non-discrimination laws and fair hiring and benefits for LGBTQ municipal employees

8. Ensure just policing and court systems

- End racialized overpolicing and criminalization
 - Racial profiling ban
 - Decriminalization of harmless offenses (e.g., spitting)
 - Restrictions on police use of force
 - Prohibition of purchase or use of military weaponry
 - Police training on de-escalation, recognizing and eliminating racial bias, and respectful community interaction
 - Limited participation of local law enforcement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- Prevent violence and recidivism
 - Diversion and restorative justice programs for minor offenders, and reforms to minimize jail time
 - Youth violence prevention and provision of mental health services
- Increase accountability
 - Representation of diverse communities of color on police force
 - Community oversight bodies with power to investigate police misconduct, subpoena, and discipline police officers
 - Independent investigations of police killings or injuries
 - Body cameras requirement
- Eliminate overuse of fines and fees
 - Bans on police department quotas for tickets and arrests and failure-to-appear fines or warrants, and allow judges to waive fees for the indigent

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