

## Cities Striving for Carbon Neutrality

**When 17 of the leading cities pursuing carbon neutrality converged in Copenhagen in June 2014, they found they had some lessons learned about how to advance carbon neutrality and a lot of common concerns.**

USDN members participating were: *Boulder, Boston, Minneapolis, New York City, Portland OR, San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver,* and *Washington DC*. As a result of the meeting, USDN developed a large-scale initiative called the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance, in collaboration with C40 and Innovation Network for Communities, to build on the discovered alignment among cities and to collaborate on high-priority projects.

The Alliance's overriding goal is to help cities accelerate their development and implementation of deep de-carbonization strategies, and garner support among key stakeholders critical to their success. Their experiences can, in turn, inspire and inform other cities to take similar action. Specific goals were developed with input from the Copenhagen meeting participants and other cities:

Goal	Description
<i>Create a Shared Vision of Carbon Neutral Cities</i>	Create a shared vision and narrative for carbon neutral cities of the future, and how pursuit of this goal can also advance quality of life, equity, and socio-economic success.
<i>Make Carbon Neutral Planning Easier and Smarter</i>	Help cities engage more efficiently and effectively in deep carbon reduction planning and implementation by developing a streamlined planning framework, helping cities tackle key strategic challenges, and facilitating peer exchange and dissemination of lessons to wider audiences.
<i>Develop Transformational Leadership Skills and Strategies</i>	Advance the transformational leadership capacity of sustainability directors and others to help their cities enact transformational change of key urban systems to radically reduce carbon emissions while increasing equity and economic opportunity.
<i>Build Collective Strength</i>	Create opportunities for cities to join together in ways that strengthen their ability to enact and leverage transformative change. Help these cities to communicate with a common voice on visions of the future, supportive policy frameworks, and opportunities to engage with external stakeholders who are critical to cities' success.

Other cities that participated in the Copenhagen meeting are *Berlin, Copenhagen, London, Melbourne, Oslo, Stockholm, Sydney,* and *Yokohama*.

Next steps for early 2015 include:

- Establishing the City Steering Committee that will govern the Alliance.
- Creating a \$500,000 "Carbon Neutral Cities Innovation Fund" (modeled on the USDN Innovation Fund) that invests in high-potential, city-led projects that develop, test, implement, and amplify deep de-carbonization strategies and practices.
- Facilitating city-to-city best practice sharing on achieving transformational systemic change across different sectors and city agencies.
- Developing a deep carbon reduction planning framework to help cities take a more comprehensive and consistent approach to developing their deep carbon reduction strategies.
- Planning for an in-person meeting in mid-2015.

Stay tuned to the monthly USDN Sustainability Innovation Report for more details in the coming months.