

# The Civics of Federal Climate Policy

**Designing and Investing**

**for**

**Community Empowerment and  
Public Participation**

*by*

Carmen Sirianni

August 2020

This paper is a revised version of “The Civics of a Green New Deal,” May 2020, which in turn expanded an argument first made in the *Public Administration Review*, Blog Symposium: The Green New Deal: Pathways to a Low Carbon Economy, July 2019, edited by Nives Dolsak and Aseem Prakash. Comments welcome: [Carmen.Sirianni@tufts.edu](mailto:Carmen.Sirianni@tufts.edu)

## *Note on the Author*

*Carmen Sirianni* is the Morris Hillquit Professor in Labor and Social Thought, and Professor of Sociology and Public Policy at Brandeis University. He is also Faculty Affiliate at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Carmen served as research director of Reinventing Citizenship with the Domestic Policy Council under President Clinton, in partnership with the Ford Foundation Governance program. He also served as the academic advisor to EPA's Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program during the Bush and Obama administrations, and was chair of the collaborative governance work group in the urban policy committee of the Obama '08 campaign. He coordinated a multi-year national action research project on youth civic engagement networks for the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Early in the Obama administration, Carmen served as academic chair of Partnering with Communities: National Workshop on Federal Community-Based Programs, co-sponsored by the Brookings Institution and the Ash Center, in collaboration with six federal agencies and five offices at the White House. This project benefitted from an extended discussion at EPA's Innovation Action Council among the agency's deputy assistant administrators and deputy regional administrators.

Carmen has held appointments at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies at Harvard. He is an elected Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.

His new book, [\*Sustainable Cities in American Democracy\*](#) (University Press of Kansas, 2020), provided the basis for the initial version of this paper.

Among his other books are [\*Investing in Democracy: Engaging Citizens in Collaborative Governance\*](#) (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 2009); [\*Civic Innovation in America\*](#) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), with Lewis A. Friedland; and [\*Varieties of Civic Innovation: Deliberative, Collaborative, Network, and Narrative Approaches\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), with Jennifer Girouard.

**CivicGreen** is a collaborative project among a national network of scholars and practitioners to enrich our democratic imagination and to expand our policy options for sustainable, resilient, and just responses to climate crisis in the United States in the coming decades. Carmen is coordinating this project with Peter Levine, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University, and Ann Ward, Ph.D. student in Sociology at Brandeis University.

We developed this project to commemorate the Twentieth Anniversary of Tisch College during 2020. Thanks to Dean Alan D. Solomont for his support.

## *Executive Summary*

Federal climate policy has begun to enter a new phase. Several proposals for a Green New Deal were introduced in Congress and among Democratic primary contenders beginning in February 2019, and the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis issued its majority staff report in June 2020. Still other proposals on environmental justice for all, a CLEAN Future, and related issues, have sparked discussion and have been folded into the Select Committee's report. Virtually all of them highlight a distinct place for enhancing community engagement, public participation, and multi-stakeholder partnerships, especially but not only in frontline environmental justice communities.

This paper integrates disparate pieces of policy design that might enhance civic engagement and collaborative problem solving in communities across the country in the coming decades, and offers a basis in policy analysis and democratic theory. It proposes ways to build upon some policy designs we already have, but more ambitiously. It also discusses some new designs that might engage a still broader range of community, professional, and institutional actors. Critically, however, it proffers a formula to ensure adequate funding for the broad and complex range of civic capacity building challenges that lie ahead.

As shorthand, I use the term *civic design and investment* (Civic D&I) to capture both the policy design as well as the funding. In an earlier version of this paper, as well as in a *Public Administration Review* symposium and in the postscript to my book, *Sustainable Cities in American Democracy*, I utilized the shorthand "civic GND," since the Green New Deal initially appeared as the umbrella of preference for this kind of discussion. Whatever nomenclature or overall federal policy mix we develop to ensure a robust response to the climate crisis, we should include a central role for building civic capacities and empowering communities and institutional partners to help ensure that our resilience strategies are democratic and just. This cannot be an afterthought, one left primarily to regulatory policy, or one assigned to selective and relatively small increments of federal grants.

Civic D&I distinguishes those forms of civic engagement that promote some combination of nonpartisan democratic deliberation, relational organizing, inclusive multi-stakeholder problem solving, and hands-on public work and community service, as well as practices that enable collaboration of ordinary citizens and diverse communities with professionals in every field relevant to sustainable, resilient, and just cities and regions.

Civic D&I is distinct from the social movement mobilization that characterizes today's climate movement, though it can draw upon this and deepen it in fruitful synergy. Mass youth protests are indispensable in highlighting the terrible threats we face, shaking our political leadership and institutions, and moving us all to act. However, not all civic goals can be achieved through movement mobilization, and not all youth climate activists want to be at the barricades or spend more than a few years there before they look to apply civic and professional skills to ongoing work in communities and institutions for the longer haul. If we develop a coherent policy of Civic D&I, we can generate pathways for effective community and institutional work for a lifetime of engagement, which is what it will take to respond to the climate crisis effectively, resiliently, and democratically.

Civic D&I is an appropriate way for the federal government to invest in democratic action that helps solve problems, elicits collaboration, generates legitimacy and trust, promotes equity, and holds in check the nastier forms of political and cultural polarization that might be further exacerbated by the tough challenges and hard choices ahead. While the mobilization of climate protest movements is indispensable for progress, it is not an appropriate investment by federal agencies, or through the city and state agencies that would serve as key partners.

Civic D&I can promote innovative ways for such agencies, along with civic and professional associations, labor unions and trade associations, schools and universities, to engage in activities that would be central to a broader climate policy. These include green building and urban design, watershed and forest restoration, regional planning for multi-

modal transportation and strategic retreat from the shore, disaster planning and response, and the many other challenges that come with transforming our energy grid and responding to the disruptions that climate change will undoubtedly bring, even if we do manage to develop successful emissions reduction strategies in a timely manner.

This essay begins with a discussion of “public policy for democracy,” an analytic framework used to explore how policy design can help to “empower, enlighten, and engage citizens in the process of self-government.” Drawing from American innovations over several decades, the essay then explores some of the ways that Civic D&I can be promoted, institutionalized, and funded through federal policy design. Among these are the following:

- ***city- and community-based grants:*** build upon collaborative environmental justice problem solving grants, watershed and estuary grants, community food project grants, partnership for sustainability grants, faith-based grants for stewardship and creation care, and similar programs; further build upon existing citywide models for sustainability and resilience planning, as well as extend these to participatory and multi-stakeholder state and regional planning; leverage federal funds through matching requirements and other methods.
- ***professional association and professional school grants:*** provide competitive grants to professional associations to build upon and further develop practices of “democratic professionalism” – mission and strategy, toolkits and templates for enabling collaboration with communities through local knowledge, “street science,” and usable digital toolkits; provide similar grants to professional schools and to college and university programs to embed participatory and collaborative practice deeply into professional training; be guided by those professional associations that have already begun such work.
- ***trade union and trade association grants:*** provide competitive grants to enable unions, community/labor coalitions, chambers of commerce, central labor

councils, and trade associations to develop city and regional, as well as industrywide, strategies to engage employees and employers in team-building, participatory and collaborative skill development for sustainable and resilient work and business practices.

- ***AmeriCorps and other national service programs:*** expand funding and support through state service commissions and align further with sustainability and resilience strategies, such as FEMA Corps and the Corps Network, for disaster response, river restoration, prevention of wildfires, home weatherization, and related activities.

These types of grant programs can be leveraged for far greater strategic impact than the typical community-based federal program that provides a dozen or so grants per year to explore program innovation or mollify grassroots groups. Civic D&I cannot be simply an afterthought or an add-on.

To make Civic D&I substantial, strategic, and systemic, I suggest the following:

- ***Civic D&I funding rule of 1-5 percent of federal climate action spending:*** Congress should establish a minimum baseline rule of 1-5 percent for Civic D&I of all relevant federal spending that would impact neighborhoods, cities, regions, workplaces, coastlines, and other ecosystems. Climate banks to mobilize further public and private investment should have a similar rule. Thus, for every \$1 trillion in overall investment, the 1-5 percent rule would yield \$10-50 billion for Civic D&I as an investment in *civic infrastructure* appropriate to and well aligned with the larger federal investment in *green infrastructure*. Such a dedicated funding rule would permit us to invest and to imagine at the scale needed.
- ***Civic D&I mission statements and strategic frameworks for federal agencies:*** every relevant federal agency would be required to develop a mission statement for engaging communities and civic associations in the environmentally just and

co-productive work of that agency; strategic framework documents would elaborate on specific activities, such as co-producing digital, cloud-based and other planning toolkits, generating preferred or required participation and governance templates, enabling multi-stakeholder networks through training grants and conferences, and providing appropriate grants for specific types of communities and climate-related challenges. Within each agency and across interagency working groups, citizen advisory committees (established according to the Federal Advisory Committee Act) would help guide agencies in the development and iterative revision of mission and framework.

- *Civic D&I office in the White House and a National Citizen Advisory Committee:* such an office would provide overall strategic direction, in concert with relevant OMB staff, representatives from relevant citizen advisory committees, as well as a Civic D&I national advisory committee drawn partly from associations with the most appropriate experience in collaborative governance and climate resilience.

## *Introduction*

To succeed, ambitious federal climate action policy will have to include a mix of public investments, market incentives, and regulatory tools. Virtually all proposals agree on this, even as they disagree about what mix will be most effective and transformative. However, such a transformative initiative will not be able to sustain itself without policy designs that enable productive forms of civic engagement and collaborative problem solving, and thus generate sufficient social trust and democratic legitimacy within local and regional governance arenas.

Such policies will thus require a robust and well-aligned set of civic and professional toolkits appropriate to specific policy challenges and institutional fields, such as urban design, transportation planning, watershed restoration, disaster response, and healthy communities. For short, let us call this Civic Design and Investment (Civic D&I).

The language of some of the most prominent climate proposals reflects these concerns. Thus, House Resolution 109, introduced on February 7, 2019 by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and cosponsored by Senator Edward Markey (D-MA), speaks of the need for “community-defined projects and strategies” to mitigate effects and build resilience in the face of climate-related threats and disasters. It also calls for “ensuring the use of democratic and participatory processes that are inclusive of and led by frontline and vulnerable communities and workers to plan, implement, and administer the Green New Deal mobilization at the local level.” HR 109 thereby envisions a robust and ongoing role for ordinary citizens, in “partnership” and “collaboration” with a wide range of “civil society groups, academia, and businesses...”<sup>1</sup>

The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis issued a 538-page majority staff report in June 2020 that would significantly increase funding for several categories of grants to support collaborative environmental justice and community action. It would also increase public engagement more broadly, and enable community leadership networks to collaborate across economic regions, watersheds and shorelines. It would

seek to ensure public engagement and environmental justice in climate adaptation and resilience plans, which would be required by Congress for all states, local governments, tribes, and territories as a condition for loans and grants through the National Climate Adaptation Program. The select committee report also proposes to establish a climate resilience corps within the Corporation for National and Community Service and to re-establish the Civilian Conservation Corps.<sup>2</sup>

Former vice-president Joe Biden, the Democratic nominee for president in 2020, speaks of “empowering local communities” in developing transportation solutions, including bicycle and pedestrian options. His climate plan promises to “incorporate skills training into infrastructure investment planning by engaging state and local communities; reinvigorate and repurpose AmeriCorps for sustainability, so that every American can participate in the clean energy economy. These efforts will be worker-centered and driven in collaboration with the communities they will affect.” In addition, Biden’s plan calls for “all agencies to engage in community-driven approaches to develop solutions for environmental injustices affecting communities of color, low-income, and indigenous communities.”<sup>3</sup>

Civic D&I is distinct from the social movement mobilization that characterizes today’s climate protest movement, though it can draw upon this and deepen it in fruitful synergy. Mass youth protests are especially indispensable in highlighting the terrible threats we face, shaking our political leadership and institutions, and moving us all to act. However, not all civic goals can be achieved through movement mobilization – or indeed through political and electoral participation – and not all youth climate activists want to be at the barricades or spend more than a few years there before they look to apply civic, technical, and professional skills to ongoing work in communities and institutions for the longer haul. If we develop Civic D&I coherently, we can generate a panoply of pathways for effective community and institutional work for a lifetime of engagement, which is what it will take to respond to the climate crisis effectively, resiliently, and democratically. *We certainly owe our youth nothing less.*

And we owe nothing less to our democracy, buffeted already on many sides and further threatened by climate disruption of many sorts.

The sooner we begin to think through policy designs that can engage communities in partnership with professionals, and to assemble actors across these many fields to develop strategic responses that are effective, democratic, and just, the better we will be positioned when new political and policy opportunities present themselves. If we cannot do this after the 2020 presidential elections, we will need to do it after 2024 or 2028. Heaven help us, though, if too much time goes by without adequate responses to the climate crisis or before our civic ethos is further corroded by climate chaos, statist mobilization, movement fatalism, or climate barbarism that responds to crisis with supremacist ideologies that rank those worthy and unworthy of being protected. An ambitious Civic D&I strategy that sparks broad community initiative yet remains within the bounds of pragmatic, collaborative, and accountable governance, provides the most solid foundation for effectively managing the wilder swings between climate movement passion, denier opposition, and diffuse fatalism that we may witness in the coming years.

In this essay, I begin to elaborate on what “policy design for democracy” might mean for an ambitious federal climate initiative. Making Civic D&I a core part of policy framing and design could enhance its chances of being enacted and implemented, diminish popular resistance in communities wary of technocratic and statist overreach, and generate sufficient trust and mutual respect to help contain cultural and political polarization and chaos incitement. Broad legitimacy and trust are essential for any federal policy that promises to be transformative in various institutional arenas over decades, and that will inevitably have to manage as resiliently as possible the uncertainties and disruptions portended by climate change, even if we begin to lower carbon emissions dramatically in the years ahead. There can be no effective climate policy of sustainability and resilience unless we enhance public participation, but in ways that are appropriately attuned to specific communities, ecosystems, institutions, and policy fields.<sup>4</sup>

I begin by discussing how policy design can enhance democracy and civic engagement. I then turn to designs of recent decades that have addressed some of the challenges of sustainable communities, cities, and regions, and that we will have to build upon and reconfigure as part of much more ambitious Civic D&I. Such designs will take time to bring to scale and to refine in response to the many challenges of resilient urban and regional planning, watershed restoration and stormwater management, strategic retreat from the shore and equitable relocation, disaster and emergency response, reforestation and land management, and much more.

Such policy designs include federal grants for community-based projects, such as environmental justice collaborative problem solving grants and watershed planning and restoration grants. A significant expansion of AmeriCorps and other national service programs would also provide millions of young people with ways of contributing to community resilience, ecosystem restoration, and disaster response, while also refining civic skills for a lifetime of productive civic engagement and public work.

Federal grants could also be designed for projects that anchor civic norms and practices within professional associations, professional schools, and colleges and universities to enable the effective alignment of civic and professional skills in fields that are at once highly technical yet impact communities significantly and could benefit from the initiative and wisdom of everyday citizens, indeed all residents in our communities. Such grants can also be tailored for unions, central labor councils, chambers of commerce, and trade associations to enable their members to further develop and diffuse best practices in green building, industrial ecology, sustainability management, and other forms of corporate citizenship and employee participation to ensure collaborative skill development at every level.

Policy designs can also include strengthened and refined federal mandates for public participation, as well as a more ambitious use of citizen advisory committees within federal agencies. With their civic counterparts, federal agencies can help fund and co-produce user-friendly digital toolkits, visual applications, and alternative scenario

tools for watershed and regional planning, green neighborhood development, environmental and climate justice, and other vital practices in urban resilience and ecosystem restoration.

Finally, I briefly consider how strategic leadership for Civic D&I might be coordinated at the level of the White House, interagency working groups, and citizen advisory committees. If climate crisis is an historic challenge to democratic civilization, then we will need strategic leadership at the highest levels to ensure that we implement and refine Civic D&I across multiple policy and institutional fields, among various types of communities, cities, and regions, and over many years of policy learning buffeted by concatenating disasters and disruptions, yet embracing a pragmatic and grounded democratic politics of hope and effective public work. Civic D&I provides some of the handles, within a federal system of public investment and accountable governance, to meet the democratic challenges of the climate crisis. Public infrastructure investments, private markets, technical breakthroughs, regulatory controls, and movement mobilization – all indispensable – will not suffice without a robust and finely textured civics.

### *Policy Design for Democracy and Civic Engagement*

The terms “public policy for democracy” and “policy design for democracy” were coined in a series of contributions beginning in 1993 by Helen Ingram, Anne Larason Schneider, Steven Rathgeb Smith, and others to explore how policy design could help “empower, enlighten, and engage citizens in the process of self-government.” Policy design could and should aim to strengthen civil society and community capacities for public problem solving, rather than routinely shift ever greater authority and initiative into the hands of bureaucrats or market actors. To the extent that all policies are “teachings,” policy for democracy aims to teach civic responsibility, community initiative, relationship building, and the arts of public deliberation. It seeks to encourage citizens to mobilize the hidden assets of communities and institutions, to define common values, and to collaborate across divisions wherever this might prove fruitful and enhance legitimacy and trust. Policy for democracy recognizes “multiple ways of knowing,”

where expert knowledge is important, but needs to be melded with local knowledge and civic insight to “co-produce expertise” most relevant for problem solving. Policy design should signal respect, dignity, and capacity to the targets of interventions. It should not demean, nor foster helplessness and dependency, nor deceive publics about relative costs, benefits, and potential tradeoffs.

Administrators and public managers, for their part, can help to produce “toolkits” to enable civic initiative, local knowledge, and collaborative problem solving. They can provide resources, convene partners, and help facilitate networks across entire institutional fields, so that policy learning is robust and distributed, not concentrated at the top of public agencies. These policy design studies have built upon a flourishing scholarly literature on social capital, collective efficacy, and collaborative governance, among other relevant concepts, as well as in response to civic innovation occurring in many fields, as well as across national boundaries.<sup>5</sup>

Jeffrey Berry, Kent Portney, and Ken Thomson, who coordinated the National Citizen Participation Development Project at Tufts University over a ten-year period, published *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy* in 1993. This comparative study of seventy U.S. cities focused on how a specific design for a citywide neighborhood association system, receiving public funding and staff support while recognizing civic autonomy, could enhance participatory governance relative to cities with neighborhood associations but no citywide design. This policy design also tended to accommodate, complement, and encourage other forms of independent civic organizing, including environmental and community development groups. Portney and Berry have since extended this research by examining other civic and nonprofit sources for sustainable city strategies. Other scholars have built upon the core insights of these scholars in the years since.<sup>6</sup>

Wesley Skogan and Archon Fung further developed this framework in their studies of Chicago community policing, with concepts such as “accountable autonomy,” in which the city’s police department devolved problem solving to local beat meetings of residents and beat officers beginning in 1993, while providing extensive training to

officers and residents on how to identify crime and safety problems and develop collaborative strategies within a template of mutual accountability. The model also required collaboration across city agencies whose policies might enhance safety. After significant disinvestment and slippage in community policing over the past decade, Lori Lightfoot was elected mayor in April 2019 after the Police Accountability Task Force that she headed had identified community policing, with some new components, as an important key to responding productively to the heightened crisis in crime and community relations, especially between police and African American neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup>

My own research on the neighborhood planning components of *Towards a Sustainable Seattle*, the city's comprehensive plan, built further upon this line of thinking. The city council and department of neighborhoods, in collaboration with disgruntled neighborhood activists and with the eventual support of Mayor Norm Rice and then Paul Schell, designed a policy that promoted and funded local initiative and appropriate toolkits for multi-stakeholder visioning and effective planning during the 1990s and into the 2000s. Each neighborhood center in the 38 neighborhoods that chose to participate had a literal 12x12x24-inch "toolbox" of policy tools that residents could utilize in developing collaborative initiatives with public agencies for land use, affordable housing, stream restoration, bike lanes, local libraries, and youth development. The policy design also included training for relationship building among staff and residents, as well as requirements for diverse stakeholder participation to ensure greater racial and class equity. Mutual accountability for producing workable and equitable plans was institutionalized through iterative city council and agency staff review among all relevant city agencies, and further revision among neighborhood planning groups. The city's notable sustainability initiatives on many fronts in the past two decades have clearly built upon the local empowerment and collaborative practices among interagency teams and civic associations.<sup>8</sup>

A similar design promoting civic skills in planning, problem solving, and public deliberation among high-school aged youth in Hampton, Virginia, resulted in arguably the most robust system for citywide youth civic engagement in the U.S., and perhaps the

world, recognized by an Innovations in American Government award from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, as well in international venues. The system has included a citywide youth commission of twenty-four young people who deliberate and problem solve in the city councilors' seats every month. Their work is facilitated by two paid part-time youth planners (a junior and senior in high school), with an office directly adjacent to that of the planning director. Each of the seven public and private high schools has a principal's youth advisory group, as does the superintendent of secondary education. Planning, parks and recreation, and other city staff, as well as a major youth development nonprofit, provide leadership training and mentorship. In a city with historic racial divisions, black and white teens have worked together with a dynamic mix of spirited fun, serious deliberation, focused problem solving, and relentless relationship building.<sup>9</sup>

Different from these place-based policy designs for democracy are two of the major social policies that have revealed strong participatory policy feedback effects over the decades, namely Social Security and the G.I. Bill. Since both, however, are individual benefit programs, it is important to appreciate some distinctions.

Established in 1935, Social Security's programmatic development gradually generated increased resources (money and time), relative stakes (as percentage of retirement income), and cognitive effects (contributor deservingness and dignity) to enable the building of an institutional field of senior advocacy and service organizations, as well as increased levels of political participation. The latter extended to seniors with lower incomes, thereby significantly narrowing the class-based participation gap. By the 1960s, the demographic participation and institutional field effects were substantial enough to protect the program from later onslaughts. The Social Security policy design, with some redesign along the way, generated an engaged public among seniors.<sup>10</sup>

The G.I. Bill, providing veterans with educational and other benefits after WWII, had powerful civic feedback effects as well, though primarily for men. Administration of the program was perceived as fair and relatively easy to access – the major exception

being the South with its segregated educational and training institutions – and the majority perceived these benefits as having provided them with life transforming experiences. The policy signal they received was that they were deserving and dignified citizens. Since G.I. Bill users had not been promised such benefits as part of a *quid pro quo* before enlisting in the military, they also felt a deep sense of gratitude, which elicited powerful normative commitments to give back to their communities by becoming engaged in a range of civic and political organizations. The interpretive effect was one of reciprocity. Those veterans who utilized the G.I. Bill joined approximately 50 percent more civic organizations, such as parent-teacher associations, neighborhood and homeowner organizations, and fraternal and other translocal groups, than did veterans who did not utilize the bill’s benefits. They were also about 30 percent more likely to join political organizations, contact public officials, donate money to campaigns, serve on local boards and councils, and protest, including those black veterans who became part of the civil rights movement.<sup>11</sup>

Place-based policies for sustainable and resilient communities and ecosystems in the era of climate crisis cannot rely upon such individual-benefit policy designs. The participatory policy feedback literature has tended to focus much less on policy design elements that *intentionally encourage* citizen participation, especially at the city and neighborhood level, than on “large identity-making federal social programs in which the individual is a client,” typically receiving cash benefits or their near equivalent, such as the G.I. Bill’s payment of education costs.<sup>12</sup>

In this essay, I focus on federal policy designs that might further enable place-based action, broadly conceived, to engage local, regional, and national civic associations in collaborative problem solving and governance, as well as the professional associations, educational institutions, unions and trade associations whose strategic action will be required to transform communities and institutional fields to meet our climate crisis with a politics of democratic resilience for decades to come. Such policy designs should be consistent with and further enable a broader range of inclusive sustainable development initiatives that Bruce Katz and Jeremy Nowak call “the new localism,” which mobilizes

assets from civic, market, and public sectors across multiple geographic levels – district, city, county and metropolitan – for the pragmatic work of problem solving and through a “deep system of networked governance.” To be sure, there are no policy designs that can *guarantee* sufficient engagement and appropriate alignment among institutional logics operative within any given field or across related fields.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, all policy designs have potential downsides, even perverse effects. Some policy designs might exacerbate disparities in who participates, and hence further deepen civic and political inequality. Of special concern for sustainable cities and regions is that there are already deep patterns of environmental injustice, gentrification dynamics, and spatial inequalities, which might be exacerbated by some forms of policy-induced engagement. Climate adaptation policy options, such as coastal city retreat and resettlement in the face of sea-level rise, may tend to impose asymmetric costs. Other policy designs might demobilize local movements over time, skew participation to some associations over others, and send conflicting messages to local citizens. Or they may elicit participation that is not especially deliberative in terms of workable solutions within realistic budgets.<sup>14</sup>

Since specific policy designs cannot guarantee the most effective and appropriate forms of civic engagement, we need to pay specific attention to how strategic leadership and policy learning can be coordinated at the federal level – and with cities, regions, and civic and professional associations – to help ensure sufficient adjustment, responsiveness to new challenges, and faithfulness to core norms of democracy and equity. The climate crisis may be our most momentous and encompassing challenge in the years ahead, and we thus need to design more intentionally and invest more substantially in democracy than we have ever done before.<sup>15</sup>

## *Federal Support for Civic Capacity Building*

Over the past several decades, federal agencies have provided a range of supports for collaborative civic action to address problems of sustainable and environmentally just communities and ecosystem restoration. These have admittedly *never* been funded at sufficient levels, *nor* broadly enough across policy fields. *Nor* have they engaged as diverse a range of stakeholders or redistributed power as much as they might. *Nor*, indeed, have they always been well aligned with regulatory and other tools. Nonetheless, civic innovation has proliferated at all levels of the federal system and in virtually every relevant policy field. There is much to build upon and multiple ways of leveraging such innovation for sustained policy learning as Civic D&I is brought to scale in the coming years. The breadth and depth of civic and institutional action that will be needed to address climate mitigation and resilience effectively and equitably will require many more types of actors, much higher levels of funding, and indeed still other repertoires of civic and movement action. Let me briefly address the issue of funding before turning to other issues, since without it not much else can happen.

### *Very Dedicated Funding*

Funding for Civic D&I needs to be substantial and systemic, not a tiny add-on to explore program innovation or mollify the grassroots with a dozen or so grants per year in each policy area. To be sure, funding should be distributed according to appropriate criteria and on timetables that are manageable and support learning among networks of grantees and agency staff, as happens in many grant programs. Yet funding for place-based grants to community groups tends not to attract the active attention of major national environmental organizations, and indeed sometimes attracts their passive opposition if it seems to threaten their own preferred regulatory tools or internal allocation of agency funds. In addition, metrics for short-term accomplishment and return on investment often cannot capture civic and organizational capacity-building over the medium and longer term, which is especially important where sustainability and resilience challenges are so complex and uncertain and where the quality of engagement, trust, and legitimacy is so important and context specific.

One possible way around these funding conundrums would be for Congress to stipulate a minimum percentage funding rule for any federal climate policy. This could establish a minimum baseline of 1-5 percent for Civic D&I of all relevant federal spending that would impact cities, regions, workplaces, coastlines, and other ecosystems. Thus, for every \$1 trillion in overall federal investment, the 1-5% rule would yield \$10-50 billion for Civic D&I as an investment in civic infrastructure appropriate to and aligned with the larger federal investments in green infrastructure. Let's call it the *1-to-5 percent funding rule*.

The more complex the set of community, economic, and ecosystem challenges and the more diverse the configuration of stakeholders, the more this type of grant could be calibrated at the higher end of the 1-5 percent scale, with special emphasis on ensuring the active engagement of typically underrepresented parts of the community or region. Other types of grants might fall at the medium or lower end, but with a minimum that signals the indispensability of investing in civic voice and community stewardship. Matching grant incentives or requirements could expand the amount available, as determined among various state, business, and philanthropic partners. *Very dedicated* funding thus means, first and foremost, specifically designated for the civic components of federal climate spending.

Such a rule could be justified in terms of a clearly defined mission of Civic D&I to foster effective, collaborative, and equitable engagement from all sectors of American society. It would then help relieve the budgetary process of permanent competitive struggles between the *green infrastructure* and the *civic infrastructure* of federal investment. A similar principle could be extended to proposed national climate bank legislation aimed to mobilize public and private investment. A relatively modest and appropriate, but clearly specified overall investment percentage would signal a fundamental commitment by Congress and the president to involve ordinary citizens and diverse communities in developing local and regional solutions, as well as to hold in check statist overreach and political and cultural polarization. Civic D&I would be

broadly publicized and prominently branded as an investment in community and democracy, in addition to its substantive goals of sustainability and resilience. Such a funding rule would permit us to invest, incentivize, and imagine at the scale needed.

### *Federal Grants to Communities, Cities, and Civic Associations*

Federal grants to communities represent a well-worn path that incentivizes and enables cities and/or local community partnerships to craft suitable strategies for sustainability and resilience. Administrative form can vary, with states playing greater and lesser roles, but the core feature is that communities can leverage federal funding to enable associational capacity building and active engagement among local partners, as well as to leverage further funding from states, cities, foundations and institutions. The overall architecture should provide *multiple portals* to access funding and *dynamic mixes* that elicit creative (re)configuring of partners over multiple rounds of funding. If grants are designed with multiple portals and to elicit dynamic mixes, many community groups, civic and professional associations, and other partners will step forward enthusiastically, eager to leverage their own innovative practices and toolkits for larger purpose, as well as to learn from others as part of a network of grantees.

Watershed grants, for instance, have taken a variety of forms since they were first instituted through the Chesapeake Bay Program and the National Estuary Program (NEP) in the 1980s, and then also through watershed assistance grants and targeted watershed initiative grants in the 1990s and 2000s. EPA has provided funding, as has the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through its Community-based Habitat Restoration (Coastal and Marine Habitat) grants. In one iteration, EPA funding also contained a set-aside of several million dollars, distributed competitively to five national and regional intermediaries – the River Network, the Center for Watershed Protection, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the Southeast Watershed Forum, and the University of Alaska – to provide training to local groups, since the number qualifying for limited funding fell far short of the demand manifest in grant applications. These grants, as well as other watershed tools, were designed and co-

produced in conjunction with local and regional groups, whom EPA periodically helped to assemble in national and regional workshops and conferences.

NOAA's Restoration Center at its National Marine Fisheries Service has had some two-dozen major civic partners, such as Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) and Ducks Unlimited, as well as other federal partners and an interagency restoration council that includes the Army Corps of Engineers. Since coastal restoration is a key component for adapting to sea level rise, NOAA and EPA have designated RAE to establish a Living Shorelines Academy to further diffuse science, toolkits, databases, and hands-on practices among volunteers, utilizing a multi-scenario approach to planning. The earlier 396-page civic toolkit developed within NEP, *Volunteer Estuary Monitoring*, provides a good sense of the meticulous combination of technical knowledge and civic practice represented by EPA's collaborative work with some of these organizations and their local partners. Developed in partnership with the Ocean Conservancy, this methods manual covers all manner of project planning, recruiting and organizing volunteers, managing safety, and testing the broadest spectrum of nutrients, oxygen, toxins, alkalinity, temperature, salinity, turbidity, bacteria, submerged aquatic vegetation, and other living organisms – each has a chapter.

The process for developing the manual, however, is as significant as the product. With EPA funding, the Ocean Conservancy had been conducting regular trainings for local networks of volunteer groups since 1998 in all 28 NEPs. The latter, according to the legally prescribed governance template of the Clean Water Act revisions of 1987, are multi-stakeholder nonprofits established with federal funding to develop a consensus-based estuary management plan. Some six hundred groups had participated in the trainings as of 2005, when the second edition was prepared. The Ocean Conservancy worked with experts in each technical area of monitoring and shared the draft with all its local group trainees over the previous two-year period. As part of an expansive watershed movement network, prominent volunteer monitoring organizations around the country contributed case studies. The final draft was reviewed by a broad array of leading practitioners from these groups, as well as from universities and Extension Services, local

and state agencies, EPA regional and headquarters offices, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. From local knowledge and civic organizing methods on one end to laboratory science and rigorous quality assurance technique on the other, this network has produced and refined a form of democratic knowledge indispensable to the stewardship of estuaries throughout the country.<sup>16</sup>

The Digital Coast at NOAA now adds economic, land cover, and satellite tools; it includes a Sea Level Rise Viewer and Land Cover Atlas to enable coastal communities to plan more effectively and transparently. NEPs and other estuary groups also help develop and utilize analytic tools for estimating the economic costs and benefits of estuary services (pollution filtration, fishing, tourism). In this they have been aided by academic economics, and sometimes directly by economists and businesses who take part in official committees or special work groups, but also by elaborate sets of tools that have been specifically developed by the National Research Council and other researchers.

These kinds of tools are especially important for community decision making when planning recommendations may call for a bond issue to fund sewer upgrades or green infrastructure investments. They enable broader publics to understand the comparative benefits and costs of investing in improving estuary and ecosystem services – indeed, in understanding the very concept of such services. The data partnership of Digital Coast includes a very broad array of civic associations and nonprofits, local and state governments, academia and tribes, and private organizations. Civic D&I funding could substantially enhance the capacity of these groups and provide further resources for local and regional communities to plan collaboratively, consider strategic options for retreat from the shore, and contribute millions of hours of volunteer work in hands-on monitoring and restoration. The benefits to social trust and institutional legitimacy for this kind of estuary planning can be substantial.<sup>17</sup>

Another type of federal grant is the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement, first introduced in 2004. It was designed by EPA staff who had previously been leaders in the EJ movement, as well as by EJ leaders

and other stakeholders in prominent organizations who sat on the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), a multi-stakeholder federal advisory committee. The aim of EJCPS grants is to achieve visible improvement and meaningful involvement in vulnerable communities through the partnership of community-based organizations with local stakeholder groups, such as health departments and medical centers, local business and industry, local government and academia. The June 2020 report of the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis gives special recognition to expanding EJCPS and CARE grants.<sup>18</sup>

The Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program was designed in 2005 by EPA's Innovation Action Council comprised of all deputy assistant administrators and deputy regional administrators. It builds directly upon the EJCPS model. In addition to funding, local partnerships receive ongoing technical support from EPA staff across all regional and media offices (air, water, solid waste, toxics). EPA staff volunteered across the agency as multimedia and cross-program teams of their own; their duties were formally negotiated as a percentage of CARE work and their regular duties (say 50/50 percent), and they were thus in the position to fruitfully align community-based work with other regulatory and technical tools. Community grantee teams were required to attend annual trainings in cities around the country, where they shared lessons in a thoroughly non-hierarchical learning design with regional EPA and headquarters staff. Further training was provided by civic and EJ intermediaries and local agencies, such as WE ACT West Harlem Environmental Action, the National Civic League, and the National Association of City and County Health Officials, as well as local health departments with innovative community strategies.

CARE innovators set a goal of spreading this model across hundreds of communities, and the formal evaluation by a panel of the National Academy of Public Administration recommended it as a model with broad application. By the early years of the Obama administration, EPA and the White House Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) celebrated the one hundredth community to become part of the network. The main impediment to further expansion has been budgetary and staff capacity.<sup>19</sup>

Many other federal agencies have had community grant programs, and some persist in the Trump administration, though staffing for these will have to be replenished, indeed expanded. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has had a Community Food Projects (CFP) Competitive Grants Program, with matching grants to nonprofits that seek to develop comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues, especially for low-income communities. EPA, along with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Transportation (USDOT), have had a Partnership for Sustainable Communities that includes regional planning grants, leveraged in many cases through state programs and local partnerships. EPA has funded the Environmental Education and Training Partnership among various environmental education associations, universities, foundations, and corporations to enhance professional training and standards and to encourage civic engagement among students. The North American Association for Environmental Education, a core partner for more than two decades, has recently developed an ambitious toolkit, *Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence*, which provides standards for collaborative and inclusive engagement based on sound principles of scientific knowledge and community practice. Many grant programs permit funding for art projects that enable creative components of community revitalization and resilience, and these could be encouraged more widely.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, Civic D&I grants can also be made available to faith-based groups. Many faith traditions are developing responses to climate crisis under rubrics of environmental justice, responsible stewardship, and creation care. Groups such as Interfaith Power and Light, Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, the Episcopal Ecological Network, and the Evangelical Environmental Network engage their members in various forms of stewardship. Federal funding to such networks, coordinated through the faith-based office in the White House, could become an important means to engage communities of faith in local work. To be sure, there have been some tricky issues of separation of church and state, but the diverse Advisory Council appointed by President Obama seems to have navigated these reasonably well.

Federal grants for faith-based organizations working on climate change, community resilience, and ecological stewardship could help build the organizational capacity of faith groups that generate deep and sustained civic motivation to act, provide new sources for a politics of hope, and defuse some of the cultural polarization around climate change.

### *Grants to Professional Associations and Professional Schools*

Empowering communities to develop effective initiatives for sustainability and resilience is implausible without also providing more robust strategies to engage professionals to collaborate with them. Virtually all areas of climate policy depend on professional knowledge and expertise, and no strategy to secure greater democratic legitimacy can be successful without professional and technical legitimacy. The rub, of course, is that professional expertise has often been challenged on many fronts by local community groups and civic associations, with claims that experts tend to ignore local knowledge, utilize inappropriate models of risk, downplay equity concerns, and too readily exclude alternative designs. The big claims of climate science, as sound as they might be, do not translate smoothly and seamlessly to local and regional planning responses. Broadside attacks on expertise and science coming from the populist right make it ever more imperative to align strategies for professional legitimacy with fine-grained strategies for civic legitimacy.

Political theorists and social scientists have addressed some of these concerns in terms of “democratic professionalism,” “civic professionalism,” and “street science,” among other concepts. Democratic professionalism builds upon the strong historical traditions of public trusteeship, but complements its claims to expertise and authority with forms of local knowledge generated by everyday citizens, marginalized communities, engaged students, and civic associations. It seeks to accommodate and enable local knowledge, and to engage lay actors in coproducing knowledge and mutually adjudicating claims of epistemic truth and practical effectiveness. Democratic professionals work in teams with local civic actors, facilitate deliberation among diverse groups, and engage across narrow disciplinary boundaries with other professionals. They

recognize that their own claims to legitimacy and trustworthiness are often vulnerable without broader forms of civic insight, local practice, and deliberative public scrutiny.<sup>21</sup>

A robust Civic D&I of democratic professionalism does not require that all professionals practice at some ideal level, but that enough of them work in ways appropriate to the problems and communities they encounter, and that the institutions in which they work enable the best mix possible of professional norms and civic practices. Not every coastal scientist needs to co-facilitate a public meeting, co-author a civic guide on green infrastructure, or get her feet wet planting eelgrass with local volunteers, but enough of her colleagues need to work with coastal communities to enable effective, collaborative, and resilient responses to sea level rise. And many delight in getting their feet wet.

Or keeping their feet dry in other waters. As Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells – Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District CEO, professional-of-the-year and past chair of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) Stormwater Management Committee – framed her plenary presentation to the 2019 River Rally in Cleveland, “It is *way more fun, way more exciting, and way more authentic* for utility directors and staff to partner with communities, and to get on the right side.”<sup>22</sup>

Way more fun and way more authentic for a professional identity that sees climate change not as a narrow technical problem, but as a threat to democracy and an opportunity to build resilient communities.

Professional associations are central actors that can help shift institutional and policy fields towards a more robust democratic professionalism. Civic D&I should help them do so. Federal grants could go to professional associations to encourage strategic initiatives focused on the civics of professional practice, such as the development of core principles, best practice guides, toolkits, awards, sections, internships in communities, consulting teams, and strategic plans to transform their professions to be able to work more effectively, collaboratively, and extensively with communities. Those professional

associations that already have such initiatives could be asked to serve on citizen advisory committees within relevant federal agencies to help design such grants.<sup>23</sup>

The American Institute of Architects (AIA), for instance, has built capacity through Regional/Urban Design Assistant Teams (R/UDAT), which are multi-disciplinary teams of architects, planners, economists, sociologists, engineers and others, who assist communities in collaborative planning and participatory design charrettes, typically interspersed with open town hall forums and other community outreach. Volunteer professionals donate their time, with travel funds provided by AIA. Local nonprofits, city offices, mayors, and other partners receive services at a very low cost, subsidized by AIA. Learning has been significant over more than five decades, though the number of projects each year has been limited by budgetary constraints.<sup>24</sup>

Federal support could help expand such programs significantly, provide more resources to the professionals working with them, as well as to local partners, and extend them to professional school training and internships. In the case of the Rockaways R/UDAT that was conducted in 2013 after Hurricane Sandy had hit this South Queens neighborhood severely, team recommendations placed a special emphasis on how to bring greater coherence and collaboration to a civic sector that was at once impressive in activity yet cacophonous in voice, partly due to existing inequalities and neighborhood balkanization. Drawing upon experience from other cities, the team saw its role as helping the community to design and build appropriate civic capacity for the longer run, especially in situations where disaster and climate change may generate significant divisions on the value of future rebuilding – or retreat from the shore.<sup>25</sup>

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) has developed capacity over the past several decades and is committed to civic engagement, as manifest in sponsored webinars and creative work by its members in major cities. As Inbar Kishoni, Deputy Director for Public Engagement at New York City’s DOT, explained vividly in a NACTO webinar, her office utilizes “street ambassadors” to meet and talk to residents where they typically congregate – libraries, shopping centers,

churches, senior centers. They utilize one-on-ones to build relationships, as well as fun-filled design tools for kids and adults on the street, and online tools and public forums to envision street alternatives and address the concerns of multiple constituencies, from local businesses concerned with curb loading spaces and times to local groups such as the Harlem Bike Network.

A grant to NACTO could enable it to diffuse such practices more evenly across many more cities, and to perhaps further challenge the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO) to continue its belated progress on multimodal and greener transportation planning. AASHTO's recent strategic plan signals its concern over the competition. Perhaps a federal grant could help it to strategize an ambitious shift to greater collaboration with biking and pedestrian groups. Competitive federal grants could, indeed, encourage healthy competition and emulation among professional associations to more deeply embed and widely diffuse collaborative civic and professional practices.<sup>26</sup>

The American Planning Association also has community assistance teams similar to those of AIA, but with even fewer resources to devote to them. Many of its practitioners and scholars have been grappling creatively with deliberative, collaborative, and equity planning for several decades, and university training and textbooks have come to reflect this. Over the past decade, APA has focused much greater attention to substantive issues of sustainability in urban planning to enable a closer interweaving of democratic process and ecological content. APA progressively generated further policy guidance, metrics, and best practice standards, and then convened a series of task forces beginning in 2010 to learn from recent models and new pilots to systematically produce sustainability standards for the comprehensive (or general) plan.

The point of departure in 2010 was that “planning for sustainability is the defining challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” These new standards include (among others) “authentic participation,” “livable built environment,” “harmony with nature,” “healthy community,” and “interwoven equity” in housing, services, and environmental justice.

Philip Berke, director of the Institute of Sustainable Communities at Texas A&M University who joined the APA team with David Godschalk, recounted how the participatory sustainability model has become further embedded in recent years in APA practices, awards, standards, and staff support. He argues, however, that there is a still much further to go on equity and environmental justice in the planning profession. The next big challenge, he says, will be for universities to produce a new generation of scientists – including hydrologists, civil engineers, planners – who can produce information for use by ordinary people in their communities, including youth in inner cities, to enable “citizen science” through the full range of apps and data uploaded into the cloud. Civic D&I funding could help accomplish this, and indeed help to mobilize the talents of our young people for digital applications to problem solve in communities rather than to polarize them.<sup>27</sup>

In virtually every field that has relevance to grappling with climate change in communities and regions, there exist innovative professionals who have worked collaboratively with diverse communities and stakeholders, and some associations that have developed mission statements, engagement strategies, toolkits and textbooks for refining civic professional practices. This is true not just for architects, urban planners, city transportation engineers, and clean water agencies, but also for hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness professionals, state and tribal wetland and floodplain managers, western wildfire teams, and more. Civic D&I grants should be designed in such a way to encourage core visioning and baseline strategic planning for professional associations, as well as to help those who have already begun doing this to roll out ambitious strategies to their sections, local chapters, and selective partnerships at the local level. The latter would incentivize associations to collaborate with community groups and civic intermediaries that might receive grants under the previous category of federal grants to cities and communities, and vice versa. Encouraging strategic partnership initiative from multiple directions and through multiple funding portals should, indeed, be a core principle of policy design for a Civic D&I grant program.

Let's say, for instance, that \$50 million – a mere drop in the federal climate policy bucket – were made available over the first grant cycle, for an average three-year grant of \$1 million. By the end of the third year, some 50 professional associations across the most important fields of climate planning and resilience would have had the opportunity to develop and begin implementing a strategic initiative for aligning civic and professional practices in ways most appropriate to the challenges they face. They would have articulated core principles of practice, developed several new toolkits, implemented innovative pilot projects in a range of their chapters, and engaged in learning that could feedback into citizen advisory committees in relevant federal agencies for iterative policy redesign. At joint annual workshops, grantees could share best cases, celebrate successes, honor champions and emerging young professionals, and reflect on persisting barriers.

Another round of funding could deepen and broaden practice further, and generate still further incentives for emulation and what organizational theorists call “institutional isomorphism,” namely making the productive alignment of professional and civic practice the “standard practice.” Community partners could join them at such workshops in signaling the moral and practical power of collaborative democratic action to solve problems. Fifty professional associations in this position could also lend a movement ethos to the spread of civic professional practice, without loosening their commitments to professional legitimacy and accountable governance. Having visible and broad engagement among civic professionals would further legitimate climate action.<sup>28</sup>

Grants to professional schools, as well as to college and university programs in relevant disciplinary fields, could also advance civic practices considerably. They would be a most suitable complement to grants for professional associations and could be developed jointly with them through still another funding portal. A wide array of programs might be eligible, not just some of those mentioned above or the usual college majors for community-based learning, but also insurance and real estate, sustainability management in industry and retail, computing and engineering, and still others. The educational priority of such professional programs is, of course, the analytic and technical core of such disciplines. However, Civic D&I grants would encourage students to learn

how their disciplines impact communities, including vulnerable ones, how they might communicate more effectively for broad public purposes, and how they can collaborate and coproduce with community partners. Such grants can help them learn how they might step up for a life of civic leadership as they move through various stages of their careers. One can imagine grants to develop core and advanced Civic D&I courses in each relevant discipline, as well as community internship programs. Enhanced civic professional training through such grants could also enable federal, state, and local agencies – and nonprofits and businesses – to recruit staff with relevant collaborative skills, thus renewing the public service to help sustain civic initiative for all the challenges of climate change and community resilience for decades to come. A pipeline for young civic professionals is a pipeline worth building.

Campus Compact, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and similar organizations promoting civic engagement and service learning could be eligible for similar grants. State University Extension programs, many with practitioner and research networks that have deep commitments to local knowledge and civic participation in sustainability work, could also be funded more substantially. Of course, federal grants to further build the field of environmental education in K-12 schools is essential. With expanded funding for National and Community Service programs (below), we can begin to see a range of diverse pathways for youth leadership and civic professional development over a lifetime of commitment to create sustainable and resilient communities.

Civic D&I grants could also be made available to the specialized organizations that help build city capacities for sustainability, such as ICLEI USA and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, which work directly with hundreds of cities. Both are committed to broad and equitable participation, though most of their work is focused on refining and diffusing best technical and organizational practices. Grants could also be made available to the generalist professional organizations in local governance, such as the National League of Cities, the International City/County Management Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National Association of Counties. Some of these

have already produced toolkits on civic engagement or sustainability, but their work could be raised to new levels with appropriate federal funding.<sup>29</sup>

### *Grants to Labor Unions and Trade Associations*

Still another type of competitive federal grant could be made available to unions, central labor councils, labor-community coalitions, trade associations, and local chambers of commerce to enable their members to further develop and diffuse best participatory practices in green building, industrial ecology, sustainability management and retail, and other forms of corporate citizenship and employee engagement to help ensure technical and collaborative skill development at every level. Some building trades, as well as state and city building trades councils, are beginning such work in collaboration with the U.S. Green Building Council, and many others are available in transportation and energy sectors and elsewhere. Such grants might help shift the internal dynamics of unions that remain overly wedded to fossil fuel models, as can various forms of retraining and community development for hard hit workers that are central to other core programs in federal climate policy.<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, some leading companies are pursuing models of “embedded sustainability,” with sustainable business strategies embedded in communities and networks. These models vary, but most emphasize the co-creation of solutions with stakeholders, including community groups, nonprofits, and regulators, as well as leveraging local knowledge, self-organizing communities of practice, and engaging employees and even youth task forces.<sup>31</sup>

Federal agencies such as the Labor and Commerce departments could administer such grants to ensure that an all-hands-on-deck strategy to combat climate change and develop resilience strategies truly means hands and heads, as well as hearts, are available broadly for transforming the way we work and do business in our everyday lives. Priority might be placed on grants that include labor-management cooperation in developing collaborative leadership and participation strategies for their firms and industries. Imagine a grant category for a city’s central labor council, chamber of commerce, and

community-labor coalition to collaborate in developing best participatory work practices for a sustainable city. Stir into the pot vocational and community college programs. Then imagine the first 5-10 cities that stepped forward to help us learn how this might be done more broadly and deeply.

The Department of Education, or some more appropriate agency, could also provide grants to school systems that emulate all or parts of the Poudre district approach in Fort Collins, Colorado, the fourth largest city in the state. Here the district operations staff enabled a systematic process of “relationship building” that generated trust, respect, and mutual accountability across professional categories (architects, engineers, teachers) and blue and pink collar trades and staff (plumbers, custodians, HVAC, kitchen), as well as across potential political divisions among school board members and the broader public, including parents of school-age children. The collaborative process reduced the risk to administrators when making bold choices. In this “flat-team” approach, “everybody’s job is important” and staff are “empowered” to contribute knowledge and help drive change. Student learning on sustainability has led to still other partnerships – for instance, with the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, a professional nonprofit association and an affiliate of the North America Environmental Education Association. The district’s cable TV station airs shows on sustainability, including one in which students analyze climate data in the context of school building energy use. The expanded district team, still comprising multiple professions and trades, has also come to include city and state government agencies and state university centers on climate and sustainability – with the intent to partner with still more community groups in citywide sustainability leadership. Such models are transferrable, and Civic D&I grants to other school districts can make them more so.<sup>32</sup>

Workplace democracy, a noble ideal going back more than a century and sometimes embedded in institutional practice in the U.S. and Europe, will mean little in the coming years if it cannot develop the appropriate mix of participatory, team-building, and technical and information skills to help make our private businesses and public services sustainable. Federal climate policy must empower labor not just in wages and

benefits, as important as these are, but also in collaborative decision making and resilience skills, refined to be sure in arenas still defined by labor-management contestation on other levels. Workers and unions that can step up to the plate for this kind of Civic D&I project will have still further strategic leverage and broader public support in making all workplaces more rewarding, democratic, and just.

Prominent CEOs stressing the need for a new capitalism, more equitable and sustainable, can provide leadership on the broad civics that must inform sustainable business strategies. Imagine grants that enable and incentivize worker and employer associations collaborating to raise such perspectives to new prominence in their industries or across a city or region. Environmental organizations, such as the Environmental Defense Fund and Ceres, would almost certainly step forward to help businesses and investors with creative proposals, as they have been doing on related projects for the past three decades. Perhaps competitive federal grants can help make it shameful for business and labor leaders to not at least apply for such Civic D&I grants. Can they afford to be turned down because they are not perceived as innovative enough to warrant support from the Commerce and Labor departments for, say a three-year, \$1 million grant to develop a collaborative strategy? Let's do the simple math again and ask what fifty such grants might do in the first three years to spur new initiatives and establish models that can be diffused widely for the next round of \$50 million or \$100 million, still only a few drops in the bucket of projected overall federal climate spending.

The civic leadership of labor and business are *both* indispensable for a climate strategy that empowers everyday people in communities and workplaces of all kinds. A Civic D&I can help make this visible and possible, indeed desirable in the eyes of the broad public and other institutions.

### *Corporation for National and Community Service*

National service programs, especially those institutionalized through AmeriCorps beginning in the early 1990s, can play an important role in Civic D&I. Melissa Bass, who has analyzed national service as “public policy for democracy” in its three main periods

of expansion (1930s, 1960s, 1990s), argues that the AmeriCorps variant has embedded itself further into states, which have a large role in determining projects and controlling funding through state service commissions, as well as into civic and social entrepreneurial innovations of recent years. This makes them available for robust partnerships with the types of community-based groups, as well as the civic and professional associations, that have been a large focus of this essay. Within the range of civic activities and “teachings” of democracy that have characterized national service programs, AmeriCorps programs have generated ample space for hands on public work to solve common problems and coproduce public goods and to build civic leadership through teamwork, while also guarding against activities that can be perceived as partisan and hence potentially undermining broad support.<sup>33</sup>

Such programs, funded and partially organized through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), can play a critical role in sustainability and environmental stewardship, disaster response, and a range of other community building initiatives. The National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) enlists teams to work on community projects across the country. FEMA Corps – part of NCCC – works directly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and can help to further bring to scale its “whole community” approach, first developed by the agency in 2011. The YMCA’s Earth Service Corps, which AmeriCorps volunteers helped to initially build at the Seattle YMCA Metrocenter, works on environmental service, habitat restoration, and leadership projects through school and club projects. The Corps Network, funded partially through CNCS, includes some 130 local Corps administered by cities, states, and nonprofits. They enlist young adults (ages 16-25) and veterans (up to age 35) in disaster response, river restoration, reforestation, park conservation, prevention of wildfires, and home weatherization, among other activities.

Civic D&I could help increase funding for such groups, strengthen multi-stakeholder state service commissions that re-grant as well as raise additional dollars, and foster partnerships of many kinds. The numbers enrolled in such programs through AmeriCorps, for a long time stuck at 75,000 per year due to lack of appropriations for the

full authorization of 225,000 (under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act), could be increased stepwise but quite significantly, while avoiding the conundrums and potential backlash of calls for universal service. Service programs can and should be viewed as part of an integrated Civic D&I strategy that enhances civic infrastructure and skills across a broad array of arenas and for the medium and long run.

### *Strategic Coordination and Policy Learning*

Central to federal climate policy that aims to mobilize civic, professional, and institutional assets for the sustained work of resilience and transformation, are strategically configured policy and administrative designs to enable community problem solving locally and regionally, while constraining perverse consequences. I noted some of the potential downsides and unintended consequences in the general discussion of participatory policy design above, such as exacerbating participatory inequalities, skewing civic voices, or promoting unjust outcomes. Any systemic attempt to institutionalize an appropriate mix of designs must thus be both vigilant and corrective. Civic D&I must also be crafted to limit policy backlash from organized opponents to ambitious climate policy, as well as from communities that might feel that their voices and local knowledge are excluded from resilience planning, preparedness and disaster response, green workplace strategies, and hands-on ecosystem restoration. As Eric Patashnik argues more generally on limiting policy backlash, we should design to “help load the dice in favor of sustainable policy change.”<sup>34</sup>

Tackling climate change and resilience over the next decades is perhaps the most complex strategic challenge that our system of governance has ever faced, and we need to be able to weather many kinds of storms – natural, social, economic, political – and live to tell our shared democratic stories. Civic D&I thus requires strategic coordination, policy learning, and democratic accountability on a scale unmatched. It should assuredly not be an artless afterthought or aimless add-on.

Federal climate action promises a bigger state, to be sure, but if it is not simultaneously a better state, a more civically embedded and democratically accountable

state, it may very well collapse of its own weight, with a lot of help from honest skeptics as well as outright opponents. It will likely be replaced by something far worse. Neither progressive state builders nor social movement mobilizers should assume that we will not have to *design* to get appropriate mixes and feedbacks. These will not emerge spontaneously and independently, although civic spontaneity and associational independence must remain key components of any overall mix of organizational ecologies and policy designs.<sup>35</sup>

To begin to design policy strategically for Civic D&I, several institutional components should be part of congressional authorization and continued oversight, as well as executive management and leadership.

- funding rule of 1-5 percent for civic infrastructure (above)
- mission statements and strategic frameworks for federal agencies
- dedicated office in the White House and a national advisory committee

### *Civic Missions and Strategic Frameworks of Federal Agencies*

Federal climate funding that directly impacts communities, regions, and workplaces should require relevant federal agencies to develop Civic D&I mission statements – the *why* of appropriate civic engagement in any given policy and institutional field – as well as Civic D&I strategic frameworks mapping pathways for the *how* of getting there.<sup>36</sup>

*Mission statements: the WHY.* These should state the purpose and importance of civic engagement in the work of the agency, as well as through its specific offices and programs, and include case studies and popular narratives to make the mission accessible to broad publics, local actors, and lawmakers. Mission statements will have many common elements, as well as ones that are agency- and office-specific. They should include such topics as:

- **co-production:** civic action can help coproduce public goods vital to sustainability and resilience, as well as to the core mission of the agency or office;
- **partnerships:** communities can be robust partners of government and other stakeholders needed to solve problems;
- **local knowledge:** can complement professional knowledge for better solutions and more effective collaboration among partners;
- **local voice:** especially but not only for frontline communities, essential for developing environmentally just and inclusive solutions;
- **agency authority:** the agency rightly uses its authority and resources to enable local action, incentivize collaboration, and catalyze broader networks for problem solving and collaborative governance among public agencies, civic and professional associations, business and labor, and other institutions;
- **tool alignment:** civic design should align properly with other agency tools and statutory requirements; they are not a substitute for good regulation or other tools, such as market incentives, where appropriate;
- **dignity, efficacy, respect:** all civic actors should be treated with dignity and respect, with important contributions to make, and all stakeholders should be recognized as having legitimate interests and concerns;
- **American civic culture:** supplies a rich foundation upon which to build, even though it has had serious deficits in terms of racial, gender, class, and other forms of inclusion; the agency builds upon the positive, but remains alert to the serious challenges, and redesigns as needed.

*Strategic frameworks: the HOW.* These should include a full panoply of tools, templates, and resources that are usable by local actors and partnerships working on distinct kinds of problems or across various communities, regions, and types of institutional stakeholders. Among these should be:

- **grants:** available to enlist active partners, encourage collaborations across communities, professions, and institutions; how these are made available and

- at what end of the 1-5 percent scale; which appropriate mixes help ensure multiple sources of initiative, such as grants to cities, states, multi-stakeholder partnerships, professional associations and schools, unions and trade associations, AmeriCorps;
- **toolkits:** best practice guides, online and digital planning, scenario building, visualization, volunteer monitoring, hands-on restoration, charrette and design models, logic models, collaborative and relational models, valuing models for ecosystem restoration and similar projects; which partners are available within the agency, among state and local governments, or among civic and professional intermediaries for training to use the most appropriate tools effectively; which grants are available to such intermediaries to enable their work;
  - **governance templates:** required (as in the National Estuary Program) or recommended (as in Community Action for a Renewed Environment); participation and deliberation recipes, relevant for specific kinds of publics and problems;
  - **lesson sharing:** multiple types of evaluation within the agency and through inspectors general, Government Accountability Office and the like; external evaluations by NAPA and the broad range of academic and other institutes; conferences and workshops with grantees and other partners; critical examination of best cases;
  - **citizen advisory committees:** list of existing and new Civic D&I committees, with range of tasks most relevant; establish according to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requirement of “balance;” design of mission and strategy should be a shared endeavor among federal agencies and civic associations, rooted in learning from local and state agencies, grassroots community groups, and other actors in the broader institutional field;
  - **alignment:** how civic toolkits, grants, and governance templates can most appropriately align with statutes, regulations, rules; how the agency remains alert to misalignment and responds correctively.<sup>37</sup>

### *White House Office of Civic D&I and National Advisory Committee*

A White House office of Civic D&I, working with appropriate staff at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), would provide overall strategic direction, and a national Civic D&I advisory committee would advise the White House/OMB group to provide robust civic guidance, learning, and evaluation across all fields. The national advisory committee would build upon the work of the relevant citizen advisory committees within agencies and interagency working groups, and would draw from leading scholars and practitioners of public engagement from the National Academy of Public Administration, the International City/County Management Association, the American Planning Association, the National League of Cities, the American Society for Public Administration, and similar professional groups, as well as leading professional schools, advocacy groups, and major organizations experienced in public participation. Business and trade associations, as well as labor organizations, would also be appropriately represented, all consistent with FACA. As in NEJAC, representatives of environmental justice communities would also have a significant voice. A White House office and national advisory council for Civic D&I would be well aligned with any new White House office for environmental justice, as well as with NEJAC, to ensure the richest cross-pollination of approaches that are both democratic and just.

The White House Civic D&I office, along with federal agency staff, can hold regular workshops and conferences with civic and professional associations to provide relevant input, feedback, and further strategic initiatives across the larger field. Foundation funding would, of course, also be welcome in such endeavors, as would the collaboration of The Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, the Environmental Grantmakers Association, and other strategic funder networks.

The overall design of Civic D&I must be a shared endeavor, with appropriate evaluation and continual revision along a pathway that will be filled with much uncertainty, significant contention, and enormous disruption by climate-related events. If fashioned and implemented well, Civic D&I can help to manage these challenges in ways

that contain conflict and backlash and help steer civic energies towards public work that is co-productive, pragmatic, hopeful, and just.

Whether in this or some other variant, mechanisms for strategic coordination and “meta-governance” of civic policy design and iterative learning will be needed if a very large federal initiative on climate, with an extraordinarily ambitious overall goal yet with many differentiated local and institutional actors and fields, is to be able to help generate appropriate mixes of civic action. It is highly unlikely that one or two big participatory policy feedback designs – as in Social Security or the G.I. Bill – could be crafted to serve this purpose.<sup>38</sup>

Many other policy design components are available, and many others could be invented along the way, to be sure. But all such designs have unintended and potentially perverse consequences in need of revision that is well attuned to specific institutional logics, field dynamics, and power plays. No systemic ecology of deliberative, relational, and co-productive forms of engagement are without such risks. Strategic field actors thus need to remain highly alert to how these can best be configured and reconfigured to achieve overall policy goals, enhance equity and legitimacy, and revitalize our civic democracy. An ambitious federal climate initiative intent on saving our communities, our country, and our planet for democratic habitation should attempt no less.

## Concluding Thoughts

Civic D&I is not all there is to civics in an era of climate change, to be sure. Social movement action remains an essential ingredient for shaking up our politics and waking up our populace. It will bring many people, especially youth, into the arena of vital contestation and help ensure that, even as we begin to make more progress, we do not become lazy and lulled. Movement protest challenges power imbalances at the national level, as well as in the many community and institutional venues that do not take unjust distributions of power, resources, and risks seriously enough. Movement mobilization can help ensure that we shift the balance of power in Congress and elect a supportive president to be able to enact, fund, and sustain a federal initiative, even if we

may still disagree about its size and components, indeed its nomenclature. Climate justice for frontline communities must be foremost, both in movement action and in Civic D&I. However, the rhetoric and symbols of Civic D&I must be thoroughly inclusive of all communities and institutional stakeholders and remain focused on collaborative and co-productive action. There can be many synergies between climate movement and Civic D&I, though some will also see unwarranted tradeoffs.<sup>39</sup>

An important and distinct federal role in Civic D&I is warranted for a variety of reasons. First, the federal government, in collaboration with state and local governments as well as civic and other associations, has a responsibility to try to get optimal civic mixes, given the range of challenges in various community settings and institutional fields in which federal action will play out over the coming decades. If large public investments are to be made, then some commensurate investments in Civic D&I should be made to ensure effective, appropriate, well-aligned, and legitimate civic action. There exists much precedent for such a federal role, many available civic repertoires and toolkits, professional associations ready to do their part, and persistent interest among a broad array of community groups for federal support.

Second, as important as movement repertoires are in generating grassroots power, they have significant limits for sustaining collaborative public work with democratic accountability. Unhinged from other forms of civic and pragmatic institutional action, climate movement rhetoric sometimes tends toward metaphors of “all-out war” to repair all forms of historic oppression in one interconnected and inseparable bundle of social justice programs and to “change virtually all aspects of society on an extremely tight deadline.”<sup>40</sup>

Such overwrought rhetoric, including declaring a “climate emergency,” may help mobilize, but it will not help institutionalize, and it may very well erode social and political trust and legitimacy needed to sustain broad-based action over decades. Movements contest, but they often do not make for reliable governance partners unless they, or some of the actors within them, shift their civic styles. Civic D&I should leave as

much room as possible for style shifts and blended forms of civic action, and should promote civic and policy learning from multiple directions, including responding to movement protest. Civic D&I, however, can enlist enormous civic energies for grand purpose without veering into grandiose rhetoric that invites backlash.

The overall goal of Civic D&I must be to enhance public problem solving capacities, civic trust, and democratic governance across multiple types of communities, institutions, and professions. Democratic governance, especially for such extended and uncertain challenges as climate change poses, must not only respond to conflict, but must also seek to contain it and help direct it to co-producing public value with broad legitimacy. Government rightly invests in civics to promote democratic governance and broad collaboration. It does not rightly invest in protest that promotes conflict, *as important as other resources for movement contestation will assuredly continue to be.*

Third, Civic D&I must help to manage the cultural and emotional facets of climate change over the coming decades of certain disruption and tempting despair. As social movement theorists argue, all movements face strategic dilemmas on emotions. They develop cultural toolkits to help construct and manage emotions, to integrate emotive elements with cognitive ones in framing problems and solutions, and to motivate action in deep and ongoing fashion. Movements cultivate anger, elicit shame, and generate hope in various mixes and at diverse junctures of political blockage and opportunity. Today our culture is divided on climate change not only due to an organized countermovement of denial or a deficit in information, but because of a “cultural schism,” as Andrew Hoffman most poignantly argues. End-Times prophets appear on the right and on the left, and ordinary citizens will hear recurring messages of fatalism and despair. Climate futility can even be clever and entertaining, while eroding our capacity to act.<sup>41</sup>

A federal climate policy that includes a central role for civic design and investment must help anchor democratic faith and hope by enlisting us in deeply meaningful stewardship and the pragmatic work of making our communities and

institutions sustainable, resilient, and just. And by providing pathways, toolkits, and resources to enable our young people to sustain an engaged and robust democracy throughout their lives and those of their own children and grandchildren. Shame on us – civic, movement, political, professional, religious, cultural, educational, business and labor leaders alike – if we cannot develop the policy and institutional supports to enable their work.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> [House Resolution 109](#), 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session (sponsored by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, with support from Sen. Ed Markey), February 7, 2019. Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal.
- <sup>2</sup> House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, [Solving the Climate Crisis: The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America](#), 116<sup>th</sup> Congress (2019-2020), Majority Staff Report, June 2020. See also H.R. 5986, “[Environmental Justice for All Act](#),” 116<sup>th</sup> Congress (2019-2020).
- <sup>3</sup> Joe Biden, “[Joe’s Plan for a Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice](#).” See also proposals of the presidential campaigns of Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and others.
- <sup>4</sup> On civic engagement initiatives in response to the broader crisis of democracy, see especially Peter Levine, *We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: The Promise of Civic Renewal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- <sup>5</sup> Helen Ingram and Steven Rathgeb Smith, eds., *Public Policy for Democracy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 1993), quotation 1; Anne Larason Schneider and Helen Ingram, *Policy Design for Democracy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997); Anne Schneider and Mara Sidney, “What Is Next for Policy Design and Social Construction Theory,” *Policy Studies Journal* 37 (2009): 103-119; Martha S. Feldman, Anne M. Khademian, Helen Ingram, and Anne S. Schneider, “Ways of Knowing and Inclusive Management Practices,” *Public Administration Review* 66 (2006, supplement): 89-99; Martha S. Feldman and Anne M. Khademian, “The Role of the Public Manager in Inclusion: Creating Communities of Participation,” *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions* 20 (2007): 303-324; Lisa Blomgren Bingham and Rosemary O’Leary, eds., *Big*

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*Ideas in Collaborative Public Management* (New York: Routledge, 2008). For some of the broader literature, see Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000); Xavier de Souza Briggs, *Democracy as Problem Solving: Civic Capacity in Communities Across the Globe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); Robert J. Sampson, *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). These studies link empirical research with normative democratic theory, though they have some different emphases.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey M. Berry, Kent E. Portney, and Ken Thomson, *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 1993); Kent E. Portney, *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously: Economic Development, the Environment, and Quality of Life in American Cities*, second edition (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); Kent E. Portney and Jeffrey M. Berry, "Participation and the Pursuit of Sustainability in U.S. Cities," *Urban Affairs Review* 46 (2010): 119-139; Kent E. Portney and Jeffrey M. Berry, "The Impact of Local Environmental Advocacy Groups on City Sustainability Policies and Programs," *Policy Studies Journal* 44 (2016): 196-214; Kent E. Portney and Zachary Cutler, "The Local Nonprofit Sector and the Pursuit of Sustainability in American Cities: A Preliminary Exploration," *Local Environment* 15 (2010): 323-339.

<sup>7</sup> Wesley G. Skogan and Susan M. Hartnett, *Community Policing, Chicago Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Archon Fung, *Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), on accountable autonomy; Wesley G. Skogan, *Police and Community in Chicago: A Tale of Three Cities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Police Accountability Task Force, *Recommendations for Reform: Restoring Trust Between the Chicago Police and the Communities They Serve* (April 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Carmen Sirianni, "Neighborhood Planning as Collaborative Democratic Design: The Case of Seattle," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 73 (2007): 373-387.

<sup>9</sup> Carmen Sirianni and Diana Marginean Schor, "City Government as Enabler of Youth Civic Engagement: Policy Designs and Implications," in *Policies for Youth Civic Engagement*, edited by James Youniss and Peter Levine (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009), 121-163. For related analysis on democracy and pragmatic problem solving, see Jason Corburn,

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*Toward the Healthy City: People, Places, and the Politics of Urban Planning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009); Edward P. Weber, *Bringing Society Back In: Grassroots Ecosystem Management, Accountability, and Sustainable Communities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003); Christopher K. Ansell, *Pragmatist Democracy: Evolutionary Learning as Public Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Andrea Louise Campbell, *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Christopher S. Parker, *Fighting for Democracy: Black Veterans and the Struggle Against White Supremacy in the Postwar South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009). For broad overviews of this literature, see Andrea Louise Campbell, “Policy Makes Mass Publics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012): 333-351; Suzanne Mettler and Mallory Sorelle, “Policy Feedback Theory,” in Christopher M. Weible and Paul A. Sabatier, eds., *Theories of the Policy Process*, fourth edition (New York: Routledge, 2017), 103-134; Donald P. Moynihan and Joe Soss, “Policy Feedback and the Politics of Administration,” *Public Administration Review* 74 (2014): 320-332.

<sup>12</sup> Elaine B. Sharp, *Does Local Government Matter? How Urban Policies Shape Civic Engagement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), quotation 13.

<sup>13</sup> Bruce Katz and Jeremy Nowak, *The New Localism: How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism* (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 2017), quotation 13. For analytic approaches to institutional and policy fields and logics, see Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam, *A Theory of Fields* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Stephanie Moulton and Jodi R. Sandfort, “The Strategic Action Field Framework for Policy Implementation Research,” *Policy Studies Journal* 45 (2017): 144-169; and Patricia H. Thornton, William Ocasio, and Michael Lounsbury, *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure, and Process* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> For discussion of some of these problems, see Sharp, *Does Local Government Matter?*; Campbell, *How Policies Make Citizens*, 138-145; Marc K. Landy, Marc J. Roberts, and Stephen R. Thomas, *The Environmental Protection Agency: Asking the Wrong Questions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Carmen Sirianni, *Investing in Democracy: Engaging*

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<sup>15</sup> Sirianni, *Investing in Democracy*, 13-25, on the problem of *relative underinvestment* in civic infrastructure. On undersupply in collaborative governance networks, see Mark Schneider, John Scholz, Mark Lubell, Denisa Mindruta, and Matthew Edwardsen, "Building Consensual Institutions: Networks and the National Estuary Program," *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (2003): 143-158.

<sup>16</sup> Ronald L. Ohrel Jr. and Kathleen M. Register, *Voluntary Estuary Monitoring: A Methods Manual* (Washington, DC: Ocean Conservancy, 2006). The use of the manual extends to the one hundred or so non-NEP estuaries as well.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Lubell, "Do Watershed Partnerships Enhance Beliefs Conducive to Collective Action?" in Paul A. Sabatier, Will Focht, Mark Lubell, Zev Trachtenberg, Arnold Vedlitz, and Marty Matlock, eds., *Swimming Upstream: Collaborative Approaches to Watershed Management* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005) 201-232; National Research Council, Committee on Assessing and Valuing the Services of Aquatic and Related Terrestrial Ecosystems, *Valuing Ecosystem Services: Toward Better Environmental Decision-Making* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2005); Robert I. McDonald, *Conservation for Cities: How to Plan and Build Natural Infrastructure* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2015); Linwood H. Pendleton, *The Economic and Market Value of Coasts and Estuaries: What's at Stake?* (Arlington, VA: Restore America's Estuaries, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> For the original framing and design of the EJ grants, see U.S. EPA, *Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: A Framework to Ensure Local Public Problem Solving* (Washington, DC: Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice, 2002); Charles Lee, "Collaborative Models to Achieve Environmental Justice and Healthy Communities," in David Naguid Pellow and Robert J. Brulle, eds., *Power, Justice, and the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 219-249; and Marva King, "Collaboration Program Effectiveness: Comparing Two Community Partnership Programs," Ph.D. dissertation (Washington, DC: George Mason University, 2012). For some of the barriers that prompted this design, see Holly D. Gordon and Keith I.

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Harley, “Environmental Justice and the Legal System,” in Pellow and Brulle, *Power, Justice, and the Environment* 153-170; Christopher Foreman, Jr., *The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice* (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 1999). For fuller treatment of EJCPS and CARE, see Carmen Sirianni, “Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving (EJCPS) and Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE): Two Models at EPA,” **CivicGreen Policy**.

<sup>19</sup> Author’s interviews and field notes at national trainings, workshops, and conference calls, as well as discussions at the Innovation Action Council of EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (2004-2011); Sirianni, *Investing in Democracy*, 207-213; National Academy of Public Administration, *Putting Community First: A Promising Approach to Federal Collaboration for Environmental Improvement – An Evaluation of the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) Demonstration Program* (Washington, DC: NAPA, May 2009).

<sup>20</sup> North American Association for Environmental Education, *Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence* (Washington, DC, 2017).

<sup>21</sup> See Albert W. Dzur, *Democratic Professionalism: Citizen Participation and the Reconstruction of Professional Ethics, Identity, and Practice* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); William M. Sullivan, *Work and Integrity: The Crisis and Promise of Professionalism in America* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), who uses the term “civic professionalism;” Jason Corburn, *Street Science: Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); Harry C. Boyte, *Everyday Politics: Reconnecting Citizens and Public Life* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 113-133.

<sup>22</sup> Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, plenary presentation, River Rally, Cleveland, June 23, 2019, author’s field notes, speaker’s emphasis. The River Rally of 2019 was convened jointly by the River Network and American Rivers.

<sup>23</sup> As one group of scholars argue, such associations can play an important role in “theorizing” change across fields by managing debate within a profession, legitimating new approaches, reframing professional identities, and representing themselves differently to other field actors. See Royston Greenwood, Roy Suddaby, and C.R. Hinings, “Theorizing Change: The Role of

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Professional Associations in the Transformation of Institutionalized Fields,” *Academy of Management Journal* 45 (2002): 58–80.

- <sup>24</sup> Carmen Sirianni and Rachel Madsen interviews with R/UDAT staff, Joel Mills and Erin Simmons, May and November, 2018; Peter Batchelor and David Lewis, eds., *Urban Design in Action: The History, Theory and Development of the American Institute of Architects’ Regional/Urban Design Assistance Teams Program* (Raleigh: American Institute of Architects and the Student Publication of the School of Design, North Carolina State University, 1986); American Institute of Architects, *Local Leaders: Healthier Communities Through Design* (2012).
- <sup>25</sup> AIA Communities by Design, *The Rockaways R/UDAT: Bay to Beach* (AIA, 2013). See also Eric W. Sanderson, William D. Solecki, John R. Waldman, and Adam S. Parris, eds., *Prospects for Resilience: Insights from New York City’s Jamaica Bay* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2016). The challenge of governance is compounded by the 25 or so federal, state, and local agencies that have jurisdictional responsibilities in the Jamaica Bay watershed, making collaboration essential. The Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay, composed of a wide array of academic and other institutions, was established in 2013 to facilitate research and engage community and government stakeholders.
- <sup>26</sup> Inbar Kishoni, presentation for NACTO, *Public Engagement that Counts*, Webinar, February 6, 2018; American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, *AASHTO 2014-2019 Strategic Plan Update: Draft V2* (2014). On the role of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 in helping to institutionalize public participation in highway planning, see Thomas A. Horan, Hank Dittmar, and Daniel R. Jordan, “ISTEA and the New Era in Transportation Policy: Sustainable Communities from a Federal Initiative,” in Michael E. Kraft and Daniel A. Mazmanian, eds., *Toward Sustainable Communities: Transition and Transformations in Environmental Policy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 217-245.
- <sup>27</sup> Author’s interview with Philip Berke, director of the Institute of Sustainable Communities at Texas A&M University, June 15, 2018. See David R. Godschalk and David Rouse, *Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans* (Chicago: APA Planners Press, 2015), quotation 7 (“planning for sustainability”); David R. Godschalk and William R. Anderson, *Sustaining Places: The Role of the Comprehensive Plan* (Chicago: APA Planning Advisory

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Service, 2012); Philip R. Berke, “Commentary: Twenty Years After Campbell’s Vision: Have We Achieved More Sustainable Cities?” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 82 (2016): 380-383. See also Beth Simone Noveck, *Wiki Government: How Technology Can Make Government Better, Democracy Stronger, and Citizens More Powerful* (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 2009); *Smart Citizens, Smarter State: The Technologies of Expertise and the Future of Governing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> For a foundational statement on institutional isomorphism, see Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields,” *American Sociological Review* 48(1983): 147-160. To be sure, some grantees would not be as successful as others, but this is always the case.

<sup>29</sup> For some relevant toolkits, see California’s Institute for Local Government, *Sustainability Best Practices Framework* (Sacramento, CA: ILG, 2013); Matt Leighninger, *Civic Engagement and Recent Immigrant Communities* (Washington, DC: National League of Cities, 2010); *Beyond Civility: From Public Engagement to Problem Solving* (Washington, DC: NLC, 2011); Matt Leighninger and Bonnie C. Mann, *Planning for Stronger Local Democracy: A Field Guide for Local Officials* (Washington, DC: NLC, 2011). See also Tina Nabatchi and Matt Leighninger, *Public Participation for 21st Century Democracy* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Charles Heckscher and Paul S. Adler, eds., *The Firm as a Collaborative Community: The Reconstruction of Trust in the Knowledge Economy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Thomas A. Kochan and Lee Dyer, *Shaping the Future at Work: A Handbook for Action and a New Social Contract* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017); Jody Hoffer Gittel, *Transforming Relationships for High Performance: The Power of Relational Coordination* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Chris Laszlo and Nadya Zhexembayeva, *Embedded Sustainability: The Next Big Competitive Advantage* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Rebecca Henderson, Ranjay Gulati, and Michael Tushman, eds., *Leading Sustainable Change: An Organizational Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Andrew J. Hoffman, *From Heresy to Dogma: An Institutional History of Corporate Environmentalism*, expanded edition (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002); Ceres and KKS Advisors, *Systems Rule: How Board Governance Can Drive Sustainability Performance* (2018).

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<sup>32</sup> Michele A. Meyer, Jennifer E. Cross, Zinta S. Byrne, Bill Franzen, and Stuart Reeve, “Green School Building Success: Innovation through a Flat Team Approach,” in Rebecca L. Henn and Andrew J. Hoffman, eds., *Constructing Green: The Social Structures of Sustainability* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 219-38; Poudre School District and the Brendle Group, Inc., *Sustainability Management System* (Fort Collins: Poudre School District, 2006); Poudre School District, *2013 Annual Sustainability Report* (Fort Collins, CO: Poudre School District, 2013); Chelsea Schelly, Jennifer E. Cross, William S. Franzen, Pete Hall, and Stu Reeve, “Reducing Energy Consumption and Creating a Conservation Culture in Organizations: A Case Study of One Public School District,” *Environment and Behavior* 43 (2011): 316–43; “How to Go Green: Creating a Conservation Culture in a Public High School Through Education Modeling and Communication,” *Journal of Environmental Education* 43 (2012): 143-161.

<sup>33</sup> Melissa Bass, *The Politics and Civics of National Service: Lessons from the Civilian Conservation Corps, VISTA, and AmeriCorps* (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 2013); Peter Frumkin and JoAnn Jastrzab, *Serving Country and Community: Who Benefits from National Service?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); E.J. Dionne, Kayla Meltzer Drogosz, and Robert E. Litan, eds., *United We Serve: National Service and The Future of Citizenship* (Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 2003). See also Constance A. Flanagan, *Teenage Citizens: The Political Theories of the Young* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> See Eric M. Patashnik, “Limiting Policy Backlash: Strategies for Taming Counter-coalitions in an Era of Polarization,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 685 (2019): 47-63.

<sup>35</sup> Here I am guided by the literature on civic ecologies and “systemic deliberation.” See especially Jane Mansbridge, James Bohman, Simone Chambers, Thomas Christiano, Archon Fung, John Parkinson, Dennis F. Thompson, and Mark E. Warren, “A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy,” in John Parkinson and Jane Mansbridge, eds., *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-26; Jane Mansbridge, “A Systemic Approach to Civic Action,” in Jennifer Girouard and Carmen Sirianni, *Varieties of Civic Innovation: Deliberative, Collaborative, Network, and Narrative Approaches* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 239-246. See also

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Doug McAdam, Robert J. Sampson, Simon Weffer-Elizondo, and Heather MacIndoe, “‘There Will be Fighting in the Streets’: The Distorting Lens of Social Movement Theory,” *Mobilization* 10 (2005): 1-18.

<sup>36</sup> For an emergent civic mission at EPA over several decades, along with appropriate toolkits and networking practices, see Carmen Sirianni, “Bringing the State Back In Through Collaborative Governance: Emergent Mission and Practice at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,” in Girouard and Sirianni, *Varieties of Civic Innovation*, 203-238. On recipes of design choices, see Archon Fung, “Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 11 (2003): 338-367; “Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance,” *Public Administration Review* 66 (2006): 66-75 (Special Issue: Collaborative Public Management).

<sup>37</sup> For instance, before releasing the Community-based Environmental Protection (CBEP) framework in 1999, EPA vetted the draft with national environmental organizations and regulatory offices to ensure proper alignment with command-and-control rules and tools. Framework statements should address relevant costs and benefits, and develop tools to enable communities to measure these and communicate them to relevant publics, as the National Research Council did with *Valuing Ecosystem Services*.

On the surprisingly robust legacy and potential of citizen advisory committees, see Susan L. Moffitt, *Making Policy Public: Participatory Bureaucracy in American Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). As Moffitt argues, citizen advisory committees are especially relevant when there is interdependent task implementation among public agencies and increasing reliance upon third parties for co-production. They facilitate emergent knowledge sharing and policy learning among networks of actors, and can fruitfully combine bureaucratic initiative and public accountability among the full range of implementers, as well as broader publics. “In the right conditions, public participation yields not just better policy outcomes but better bureaucracy. Public Participation is not necessarily bureaucracy’s opposite but instead can be its complement” (p. 226).

In his far-reaching analysis of potential components of a Green New Deal, Jeremy Rifkin builds upon the experience of *peer assemblies* in several regions of Europe, and suggests ways that these might be laterally scaled in the U.S. as complementary forms of governance suitable to the “distributed, open-sourced, and laterally scaled design and engineering principles” of a

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green post-carbon energy future. These assemblies would include representatives from labor unions and chambers of commerce, elected officials and civic associations, economic development agencies and universities, among others. While the participatory design details of these peer assemblies remain vague, Rifkin has one proposal that is quite consistent with my stress on strategic federal coordination to enable distributed and collaborative governance: that Congress provide a three-year grant to each state, conditional upon a match, to “establish and staff an operational center whose sole purpose is to organize and coordinate peer assemblies across their cities and counties for the express purpose of preparing Green New Deal roadmaps,” suitable to each city and region. The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis also establishes an important role for state adaptation and resilience plans within a cooperative federalism framework, and such operational centers might enhance its approach. Jeremy Rifkin, *The Green New Deal* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2019), 42-45, 231-244.

<sup>38</sup> On meta-governance challenges generally, see Jacob Torfing, *Collaborative Innovation in the Public Sector* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> Among the sociological critics of the new public participation, who see it legitimating inequalities and diverting from social movement solidarities, see Caroline W. Lee, *Do-It-Yourself Democracy: The Rise of the Public Engagement Industry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Caroline W. Lee, Michael McQuarrie, and Edward T. Walker, “Rising Participation and Declining Democracy,” in Caroline W. Lee, Michael McQuarrie, and Edward T. Walker, eds., *Democratizing Inequalities: Dilemmas of the New Public Participation* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 3-22, As I discuss at greater length in *Sustainable Cities in American Democracy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020), I see this approach as raising some important concerns. However, it largely wishes away the messy challenges of civic, institutional, and policy transformation at urban and regional levels in the hope that sweeping logics of movement solidarity will come to the rescue. There is little evidence offered of how this might happen, or even how designs for public participation have prevented it from doing so in the recent past. Structured public participation through policy and administrative design is not a zero-sum, binary alternative to social movement mobilization. For a similar critique, see Albert W. Dzur, *Democracy Inside: Participatory Innovation in Unlikely Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), chapter 6.

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<sup>40</sup> Naomi Klein, *On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2019), quotations 51, 39.

<sup>41</sup> For some relevant analyses, see Andrew Hoffman, *How Culture Shapes the Climate Change Debate* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); Kari Marie Norgaard, *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); James Jasper, “Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011): 285-303; Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York: New Press, 2016); Andrew McMurry, *Entertaining Futility: Despair and Hope in the Time of Climate Change* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2018).