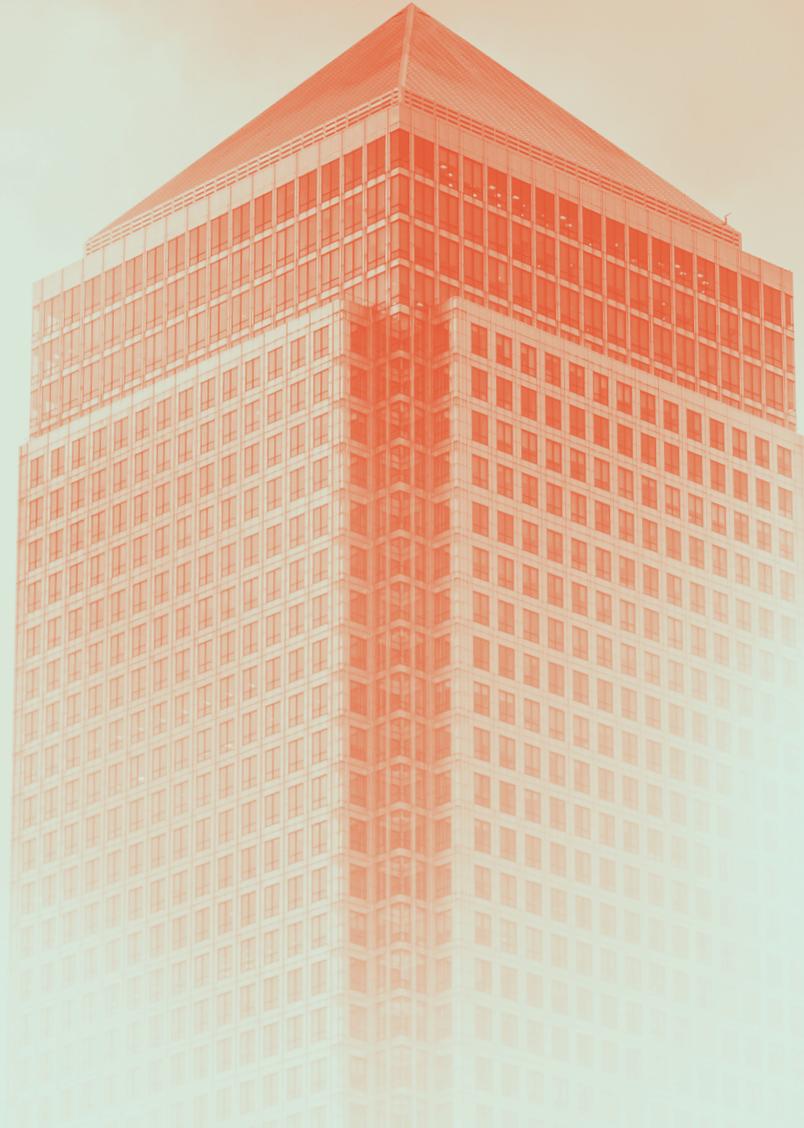


Cities & Business A Winning Partnership for Progress



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**CITIES CAN'T IMPLEMENT
MEANINGFUL SOLUTIONS
IF THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND
THE NEEDS OF EVERY
STAKEHOLDER – BE THEY
CORPORATIONS OR
COMMUNITIES**

LAUREN SORKIN
Executive Director, Resilient Cities Network

About Tejarah Talks

Tejarah Talks is organized by Oman Business Forum in association with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion. With a firm focus on Oman's current and future business, export and investment environment, Tejarah Talks is a series of informal, interactive evening discussions that brings together some of Oman's most inspirational and innovative thinkers and doers to share their stories, insights and ideas with an enthusiastic crowd. It is a platform for positive interaction.



Sultanate of Oman
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Tejarah Talks 'Cities & Business: A Winning Partnership for Progress', 1 November 2023 was moderated by Luma Al Saleh, Co-founder, Identity. The panellists were Wael Al Lawati, CEO, Muriya; Ibrahim Waili, Executive Director, Oman National Spatial Strategy, Ministry of Housing & Urban Planning; Haitham Al Busafi, CEO, Beyond XYZ; and Taavi Einaste, CEO, Middle East & Africa, Nortal.

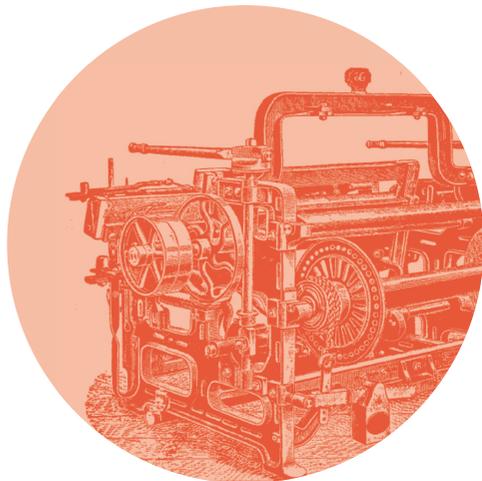
City-Business Relationship: Manchester

Manchester's evolution during the Industrial Revolution presents a fascinating case study of the interplay between urban development and business dynamics. This relationship is marked by technological innovation, demographic shifts and the city's response to emerging economic opportunities and challenges.

Tech Innovation & Economic Growth

Manchester's rise as the world's first industrial city was largely driven by breakthroughs in textile manufacturing. The introduction of the spinning jenny in 1764 and the power loom in 1785 were more than mere technological advancements; they represented a paradigm shift in production methods. These innovations led to the factory system replacing cottage industries, centralizing production in urban areas. By the early 19th century, Manchester had become the home of the cotton and textile industries. The city's cotton mills, over 108 by 1820, were not just production centres but also symbols of the new industrial age, attracting investment and fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.¹

The introduction of the spinning jenny in 1764 and the power loom in 1785 were more than mere technological advancements



Demographic & Labour Dynamics

The economic boom in Manchester led to a demographic explosion. The city's population, which was around 25,000 in the 1750s, had skyrocketed to 303,000 by 1851. This rapid population growth was fueled by rural-urban migration, as workers sought employment in the burgeoning mills. This shift resulted in a dramatic transformation of the labour market. Manchester became a microcosm of the new industrial workforce, characterized by a mix of skilled and unskilled workers, including a significant number of women and children. The labour dynamics in Manchester during this period laid the foundations for modern employment practices.²

Manchester's population growth between 1750 – 1851



Infrastructure & Global Trade

The completion of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894 was a monumental feat of engineering and economic foresight. By linking Manchester to the Irish Sea, the canal transformed the city into an inland port, significantly reducing the cost and time of transporting goods. This development enhanced Manchester's role in global trade, particularly in the cotton industry and facilitated the import of raw materials and export of finished goods. The canal's impact on Manchester's economy was profound, cementing the city's status as a global commercial hub.³



Social Challenges & Labour Reforms

Manchester's industrial growth was not without social costs. The rapid urbanization led to overcrowding, poor living conditions and public health crises. These challenges were instrumental in initiating social and labour reforms. Manchester became a centre for the union movement, advocating for better working conditions, fair wages and workers' rights. The city's response to these social issues was a precursor to modern urban planning and labour laws.

Modern Relevance

Manchester's history as an industrial leader and its relationship with business offer valuable lessons for modern urban development. The city's ability to harness technological innovation for economic growth, manage a diverse and growing workforce, develop critical infrastructure, and address social challenges are all pertinent to contemporary city-business relationships. Manchester's legacy, therefore, extends beyond its historical achievements; it provides a template for understanding and navigating the complexities of urban economic development. Manchester's industrial history is a compelling example of how cities can evolve into economic powerhouses through innovation, strategic infrastructure development and effective management of social and labour issues. Indeed, the city's journey from a small market town to an industrial giant offers rich insights into the dynamics of city-business relationships.⁴



Manchester became a centre for the union movement, advocating for better working conditions, fair wages and workers' rights

Urban Planning: Copenhagen

Copenhagen’s approach to urban planning is rooted in addressing sustainability, urban resilience and community engagement.⁵ This shift was propelled by the city’s commitment to becoming the world’s first carbon-neutral capital by 2025, a pledge bolstered by the Paris climate agreement’s emphasis on the central role of cities in climate solutions. Copenhagen’s success in sustainable urbanization is not just about adopting progressive ideas; it is embedded in sound governance. With a decentralized government system, local governments in Denmark, including Copenhagen, have significant independence and control over 60% of government spending.⁶ This financial autonomy, stemming from reforms in 2007, enables local governments to drive industrial and regional economic development, playing a pivotal role in environmental sustainability.



Copenhagen aims to be the first carbon – neutral capital by 2025

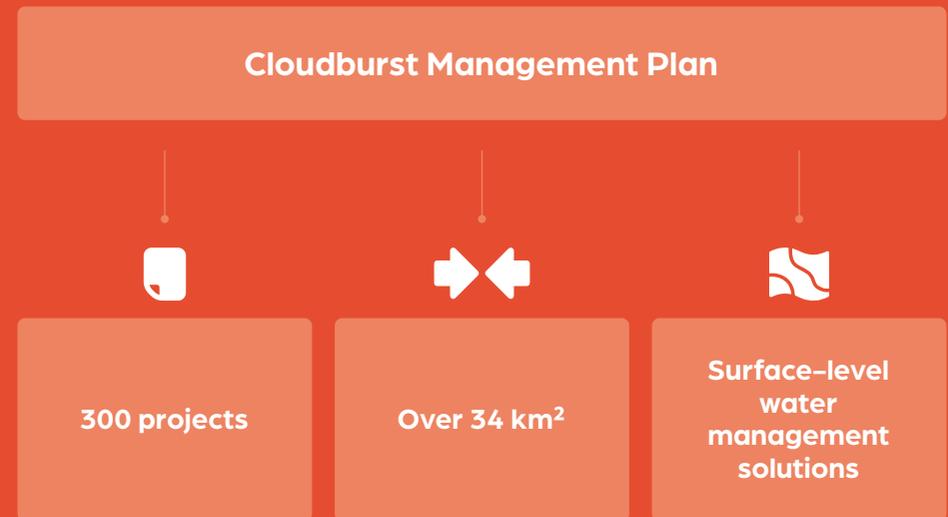


Mobility

Copenhagen’s urban planning, exemplifying innovation and sustainability, is defined by its extensive cycling infrastructure, where over 50% of its populace cycle daily for commuting. Central to this is the Bicycle Strategy 2011–2025, focusing on enhancing safety, speed and comfort for cyclists. This strategy, integral to the city’s mobility policy, includes detailed initiatives like the PLUS-net for high-quality cycling connections. The biennial Bicycle Account, tracking progress since 1995, offers a comprehensive overview of ongoing improvements and targeted goals, embodying the city’s commitment to fostering a robust cycling culture.⁷

Climate resilience

In response to climate change, the city’s Cloudburst Management Plan encompasses 300 projects over 34 km², integrating traditional and surface-level water management solutions. This plan, inspired by the severe 2011 cloudburst, merges economic prudence with ecological sensitivity, demonstrating a commitment to safeguarding the city against future climate threats.⁸





Urban redevelopment

The transformation of Copenhagen's harbour is another example of the city's visionary urban planning. Over 20 years, the harbour has evolved from industrial use to a vibrant urban space, accommodating the influx of new residents. Projects like Sydhavnen and Nordhavnen are reshaping the cityscape, adding thousands of residences and jobs, while preserving historical elements and enhancing urban connectivity. This transformation has not only revitalized the waterfront but has also integrated it into the city's social and economic fabric, making it a focal point for both residents and visitors.

People-centric

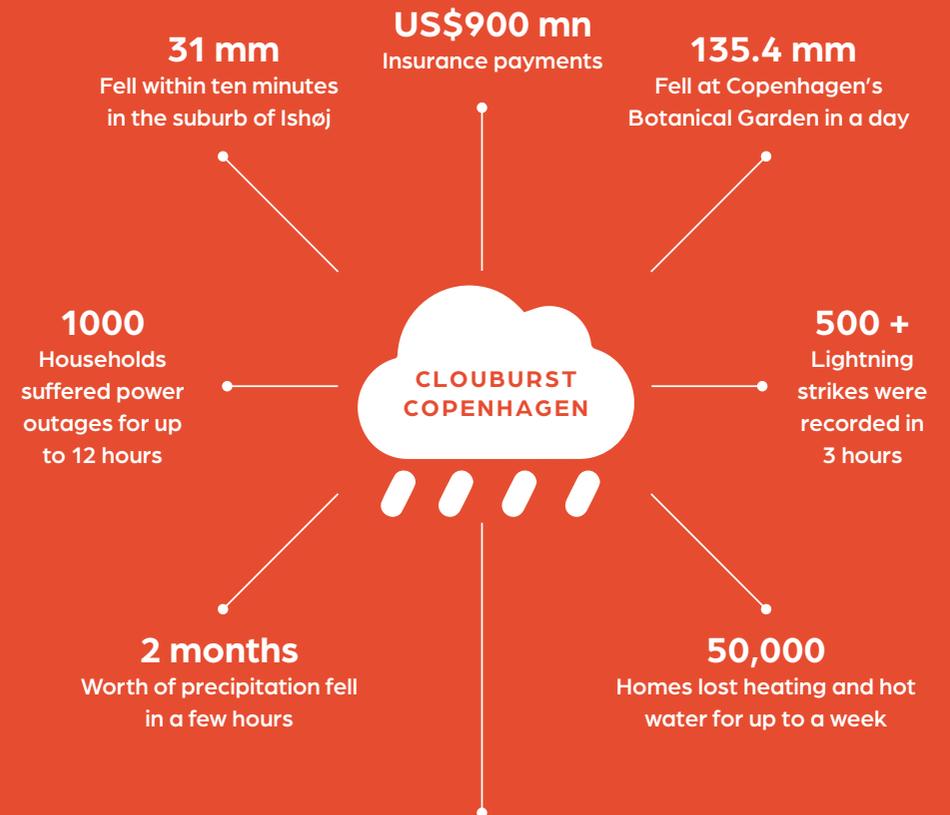
Central to Copenhagen's urban development is a people-centric approach, emphasizing active citizen participation and collaboration in shaping the cityscape. Initiatives like Sharing Copenhagen foster partnerships across various sectors, while the Copenhagen Solutions Lab drives data-driven urban solutions.⁹ This holistic approach, blending technological innovation with human-centric policies, positions Copenhagen as a leader in urban sustainability and livability. The city's strategies in cycling, climate resilience and urban redevelopment not only elevate the quality of life for its residents but also offer a blueprint for sustainable urban living globally.



Cloudburst Copenhagen 2 July 2011

The most expensive natural catastrophe in Denmark since 1999. Insurance payments amounted to over US\$900 million. In some places, two months' worth of rain fell in a few hours. In a single day, 135.4 mm fell at Copenhagen's Botanical Garden. 31 mm fell within ten minutes in the suburb of Ishøj. More than 5,000 lightning strikes were recorded in 3 hours. The heavy rain and hail caused traffic to come to a standstill in several places in the metropolitan area as roadways became rivers. Several highways were closed for 1-3 days.

Train traffic was disrupted for a week and in some places closed for days, due to everything from flooded stations to lightning strikes on equipment and landslides. Approximately 10,000 households suffered power outages for up to 12 hours and approximately 50,000 homes lost heating and hot water for up to a week.



The most expensive natural catastrophe in Denmark since 1999

Business & Urban Recovery: Detroit

Detroit's descent into bankruptcy, culminating in its filing in July 2013, was the culmination of decades of industrial decline and urban decay. Once a thriving hub of American automotive industry, the city faced a massive reduction in manufacturing jobs, leading to a significant population decline that halved its tax base. Compounded by chronic mismanagement and unsustainable financial liabilities, Detroit found itself grappling with the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history.

Downtown & Midtown Revitalization

Central to Detroit's revival was the transformation of its downtown and Midtown areas, significantly driven by Dan Gilbert, the founder of Quicken Loans. In 2010, Gilbert relocated his company's headquarters to downtown Detroit, bringing over 3,500 employees. This move was a catalyst for change, igniting a series of investments that revitalized over 100 properties. By 2018, Gilbert's firm, Bedrock, had invested or allocated US\$5.6 billion in the area. These investments were pivotal in increasing the downtown residential population by 28% from 2010 to 2016 and achieving a 98% occupancy rate for downtown residential units by 2018.¹⁰

Quicken Loans®

In 2010, Dan Gilbert, the founder of Quicken Loans relocated his company's headquarters to downtown Detroit



Public-Private Partnerships

The Detroit Future City (DFC) plan, launched in 2012, exemplifies successful public-private collaboration. Focused on repurposing vacant land, the plan targeted 5,471 parcels for redevelopment into agriculture, green space and housing by 2018. This initiative was part of a broader strategy, involving hundreds of millions of dollars in investments, to stabilize and revitalize neighbourhoods.¹¹

Small Businesses & Entrepreneurship

The Motor City Match program, initiated in 2015, has been instrumental in supporting small businesses and entrepreneurship. It provided US\$7.5 million in financial assistance, leveraging over US\$41 million in investment and leading to the opening of over 80 businesses, 70% of which were minority-owned. This program has not only boosted local economies but also created over 500 jobs in neighbourhood commercial corridors.¹²

Attracting & Nurturing Talent

TechTown Detroit, a business incubator and accelerator, has played a major role in nurturing the city's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Supporting 1,400+ companies by 2019, these ventures generated over US\$900 million in revenue and created 1,800 jobs, showcasing an average annual growth rate of 7%.¹³

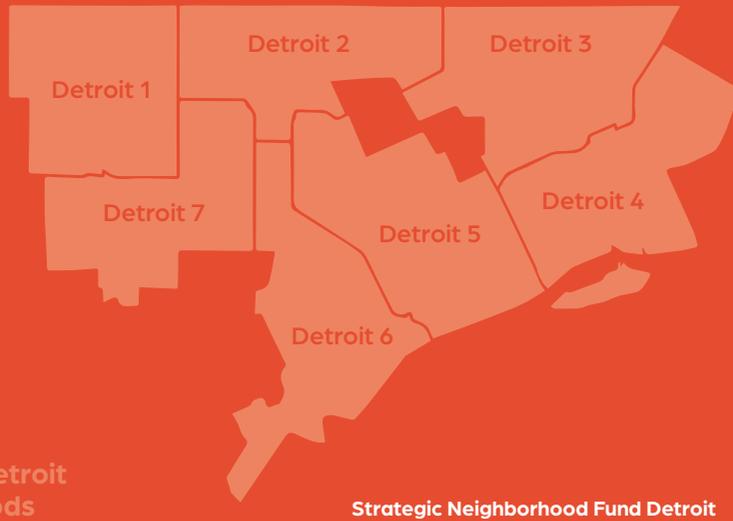


The Motor City Match program provided US\$7.5 million in financial assistance, leveraging over US\$41 million in investment and leading to the opening of over 80 businesses, 70% of which were minority-owned

Inclusive Economic Development

In 2018, Detroit launched the Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF) and Affordable Housing Leverage Fund with a collective aim to invest US\$130 million in 10 selected neighbourhoods. These funds have boosted local real estate development, improving parks, streetscapes and commercial corridors, while ensuring the availability of affordable housing.¹⁴

US\$130M



Investments coming to Detroit neighborhoods

Connectivity Improvements:

Infrastructure upgrades, particularly the QLine streetcar system which began operation in 2017, have markedly enhanced urban mobility. Connecting Downtown to Midtown over a 3.3-mile stretch, the QLine attracted over US\$7 billion in investments along its route and surpassed its first-year ridership projections with over 1.3 million passengers.¹⁵



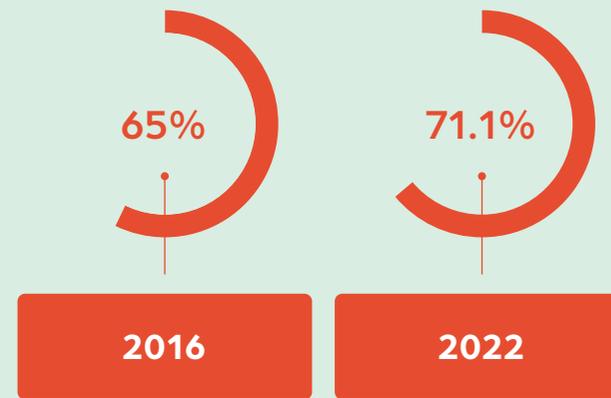
Prioritize Creative Industries

The Detroit Creative Corridor Center (DC3) was established to support the creative sector, which has grown at twice the rate of the overall city economy. This sector, employing 14,000+ people and generating over US\$900 million in wages, has been integral to the city's cultural and economic recovery.¹⁶



Education & Workforce Development

Collaborations with educational institutions like Wayne State University have led to advancements in workforce development. These partnerships have focused on training residents in high-demand sectors like IT and healthcare, contributing to a rise in Detroit Public Schools' graduation rate from 65% in 2016 to 71.1% in 2022.¹⁷



Collaborations with educational institutions have contributed to a rise in Detroit Public School's graduation rate

SNF Funding

US\$4.2 million drafting plans for each targeted area with overarching goals and potential projects

US\$139.9 million on 7,246m² of commercial space and 378 housing units

US\$7.4 million on single-family home rehab

US\$27 million for construction work on 11 parks

US\$83 million on 12 streetscapes

Sustainable Development: Cape Town

In a world increasingly focused on sustainable development, mid-sized cities are emerging as frontrunners in implementing innovative strategies for environmental resilience and economic growth.

Climate-Resilient Development

Cape Town has been at the forefront of tackling climate change, a challenge magnified by its unique geographical and socio-economic context. With a population of about 4.6 million, the city's efforts are encapsulated in its Climate-Resilient Development Plan. This plan is a comprehensive response to the city's climate-related challenges, including greenhouse gas mitigation, risk reduction and adaptation measures, all aligned with sustainable development goals.¹⁸

2015-18 Drought

The urgency of Cape Town's climate action was underscored by the 2015-18 drought. This severe drought impacted key sectors, resulting in the loss of over 32,000 jobs, predominantly affecting unskilled and semi-skilled workers.¹⁹ The city's economy, heavily reliant on tourism and financial services, faces the challenge of high unemployment rates, with youth unemployment reaching 31.2% in Q2 2023.²⁰ This economic backdrop makes the pursuit of sustainable, climate-resilient development not just an environmental imperative but also a socio-economic necessity.



Cape Town city has identified 15 of its 49 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) programs as Climate Priority Programs

Key climate-related hazards identified in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) programs include heatwaves, decreased rainfall, drought, flood risk, coastal erosion and wildfires. To address these challenges, the city has identified fifteen of its 49 IDP programs as Climate Priority Programs. These span across critical sectors such as waste removal, water and energy provision, aiming to reduce Cape Town's carbon footprint and enhance its adaptation capacity.

Waste Management

One of the key initiatives is the focus on improving waste management. The city has implemented policies to encourage recycling and reduce landfill waste, which contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. The introduction of a compulsory recycling program for certain neighbourhoods has resulted in a notable reduction in landfill waste. In 2011, South Africa generated an estimated 10.2 million tonnes of food waste along the supply chain, for a total cost of US\$321 million. Unlike more developed economies, South Africa's food waste takes place before the consumer. The Western Cape was the first province to implement landfill restrictions of organic waste, including food waste. In particular, Cape Town has a target of 100% diversion of organic waste from landfills by 2027.

The introduction of a compulsory recycling program has resulted in a notable reduction in landfill waste

Water Conservation

Post-drought, Cape Town has become a global example of water conservation. The city implemented stringent water restrictions during the drought, which led to a dramatic reduction in water consumption. From using 1.2 billion liters of water per day in 2015, consumption was down to 950 million liters per day by 2023. This remarkable achievement was supported by public awareness campaigns and the installation of water management devices in high-consumption areas.²¹

The city also invested in diversifying its water sources, including groundwater extraction, water recycling and desalination projects. These efforts aim not only to provide immediate relief but also to build long-term resilience against future droughts.



1.2bn Ltr
of water per day in 2015



950mn Ltr
of water per day in 2022

Coastal & Urban Adaptation

To combat coastal erosion and the risk of floods, Cape Town has initiated several coastal management programs. These include restoring coastal ecosystems, such as dunes and wetlands which act as natural barriers against coastal hazards. In urban areas, the city is developing green infrastructure to manage flood risks, such as constructing permeable surfaces and green roofs.²²

Social Equity in Climate Action

Importantly, Cape Town's approach to climate action is not just environmental but also socio-economically inclusive. The city recognizes that climate change disproportionately affects the most vulnerable. Hence, its climate policies are designed to be socially equitable, focusing on protecting low-income communities and ensuring they have access to resources like water and energy.

Global Recognition

Cape Town's efforts have not gone unnoticed. The city's strategies in waste management, water conservation, energy transition, coastal adaptation and social equity have set a benchmark for other cities facing similar climate challenges. The tangible results of these policies, from reduced landfill waste to diversified water sources and increased renewable energy adoption, underscore the effectiveness of the city's climate action plan.



Cape Town has initiated several coastal management programs. These include restoring coastal ecosystems, such as dunes and wetlands

Combatting Climate Change: Bloomberg's ACCC & C40 Cities Network

Urban initiatives across the globe are embracing innovative strategies to combat climate change, reflecting an urgent recognition of its impacts on our environments, economies and societies. These initiatives are characterized by their multifaceted approaches, from reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing green job markets to prioritizing equity and social justice. They represent the forefront of local and international efforts to not only address environmental challenges but also create more inclusive, sustainable communities.

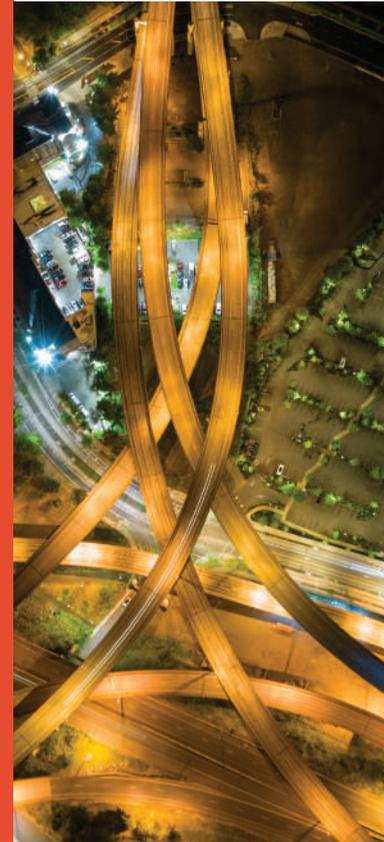
Bloomberg Philanthropies' American Cities Climate Challenge

Launched in 2018, the Bloomberg Philanthropies' American Cities Climate Challenge has been a major force in driving U.S. cities towards achieving ambitious climate goals. Recognizing the contribution of urban centres to carbon emissions, this initiative has focused on two primary emission sources: buildings and transportation. By targeting these sectors, the challenge aims to facilitate reductions in city-level carbon footprints. The support provided includes capacity building for city staff, technical assistance and fostering peer-to-peer networking opportunities. This comprehensive support system has enabled cities to devise and implement effective climate strategies that are tailored to their specific urban landscapes and challenges.²³



St. Louis & Portland

The impact of the American Cities Climate Challenge is reflected in the substantial policy changes and innovative programs initiated by participating cities. In St. Louis, Missouri, the implementation of the Building Energy Performance Standard ordinance stands out as a pioneering policy to enhance building energy efficiency.²⁴ This ordinance has led to measurable improvements in energy use in buildings across the city. The city's Office of Building Performance also has a huge stick: It can levy fines of up to US\$1,000 per day and even pull or deny occupancy permits for those who do not meet the new standards. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, commercial and residential buildings combined account for nearly 40% of total energy consumption in the U.S. – much more than cars or factories.



Portland, Oregon, has taken significant steps in transforming transportation in the city by launching a "Zero-Emission Delivery Zone" pilot to incentivize deliveries through more sustainable modes of transportation. The project received US\$2 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation SMART Grants program. Stage One of the pilot involves the use of zero-emissions transportation options – such as local fleets of electric-assist cargo trikes, electric vehicles, or electric trucks – to take deliveries of goods from diesel and gas-powered delivery trucks and then deliver them to three zero-emissions loading zones outside government buildings in the city's downtown. With this project, Portland will become the first U.S. city to pilot implementation of a regulated Zero-Emission Delivery Zone.²⁵

Collaboration

The collaborative aspect of the American Cities Climate Challenge has been a key to its success. Cities involved in the challenge have engaged in peer-to-peer learning and shared best practices, leading to more effective and innovative climate solutions. This approach has fostered a sense of community and mutual support among cities, enabling them to learn from each other's experiences and successes.

The cumulative effect of initiatives across participating cities is substantial. Collectively, they are on track to achieve a reduction in emissions of 32% below 2005 levels by 2025. This impressive achievement not only surpasses the targets set by the Paris Agreement for that period but also highlights the crucial role of urban policy and infrastructure in combating climate change.²⁶ The success stories from St. Louis and Portland are just two examples of the impactful changes brought about by the challenge, showcasing the potential of targeted, city-level climate action in making a difference in the fight against global warming.

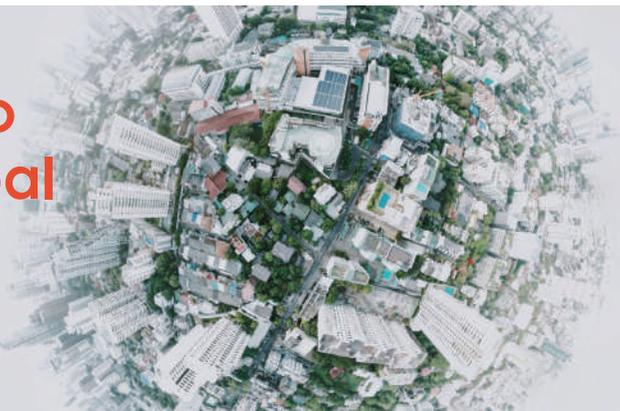
**C40
CITIES**

C40 Cities Network

With its membership of over 100 global megacities, the C40 Cities Network is a vital player in urban climate action. This network provides a platform for city leaders to collaborate, exchange knowledge and drive sustainable actions.

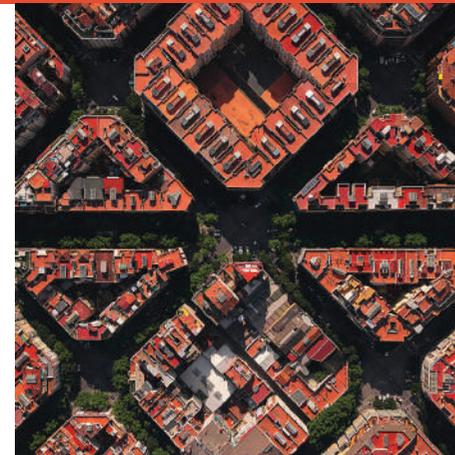
This collaboration aligns with the goals of the Paris Agreement, aiming to limit global warming to 1.5°C. One of the key components of C40's approach is the Climate Action Planning program. This initiative helps cities create and implement comprehensive climate action plans. These plans are not only about strategy but also about the effective execution, focusing on reducing emissions and fostering sustainable urban development.²⁷ The significance of this program lies in its ability to guide cities, which are major contributors to global emissions, towards substantial climate change mitigation efforts.

**Aiming to
limit global
warming
to 1.5°C**



Social Equity

In addition to environmental strategies, C40 integrates social equity into its core approaches. The Global Green New Deal is a notable initiative in this regard, combining climate action with social justice to promote inclusive growth and build resilient communities. This approach is critical because it addresses the intersection of climate change with socio-economic factors, ensuring that climate action benefits all societal layers, especially those most vulnerable to climate impacts.²⁸



Urban Redesign

Barcelona's Superblocks program, an initiative under the C40 network, demonstrates a shift towards sustainable urban living and climate resilience. Launched nearly six years ago, this ambitious urban redesign restructures nine-block grids, converting former car-centric streets into pedestrian zones.

This transformation prioritizes pedestrians and sustainable transport like trains, subways, trams and bicycles. By 2024, Barcelona aims for 80% of trips to be made on foot, by bike or public transport.²⁹ By 2030, the plan is to convert one out of three streets into green, traffic-calmed streets, fostering spaces for interaction and recreation.

The program's impact on urban environmental quality is noteworthy. In the Sant Antoni Superblock area, atmospheric NO₂ levels dropped by 25%, while in Glòries, noise pollution decreased by 9 decibels.³⁰ These improvements also extend to economic benefits, with local businesses experiencing increased sales and a reduction in car traffic both within and around the superblock areas. Supporting infrastructure projects like the tram line on Diagonal Avenue, which is set to prevent the entry of 12,000 cars daily and the redevelopment of Meridiana Avenue, reducing car entries by 17,000 daily, are integral parts of the superblock approach. This comprehensive strategy underscores Barcelona's commitment to reducing vehicle emissions, enhancing urban air quality and moving towards climate neutrality.³¹

Cities & Food Security: Baltimore, Maryland



The Baltimore City Health Department reports that as of 2022, food deserts affected 31% of Black residents, who disproportionately live in what is classified as "Healthy Food Priority Areas." This number is in stark contrast to any other racial group— especially when

compared to the 9% of White residents in "Healthy Food Priority Areas." On average, about 28% of all Baltimore children live in food deserts on any given day. Seniors also live in these areas at disproportionate rates, with 24% struggling to access fresh, quality food options in their neighbourhoods.

What's A Food Desert?



An area where the distance to a supermarket or supermarket alternative is more than 400 metres



The median household income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level



Over 30% of households have no vehicle available



The average Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) score for all food stores is low

Food deserts are problematic on so many levels, one of the main issues with food deserts is that residents who live in them are more likely to be impacted by issues like type two diabetes and heart disease. This is because things like fast food are the only options for people to choose from, there is also a lack of education on healthy eating.

To increase access to healthy, affordable food, Baltimore takes a strong policy perspective and has implemented a number of food policies. Today, it serves as a leader in U.S. food access solutions.



The Department of Planning has led efforts to refine the city's food agenda through sustainability and food access lenses. The Baltimore City Health Department is committed to making Baltimore a city where all residents can realize their full health potential, through cross-cutting collaborations and community-based programming.



Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI) an intergovernmental collaboration between Department of Planning, Office of Sustainability, Health Department and Baltimore Development Corporation aims to increase access to healthy, affordable food in the city's food deserts. Indeed, Baltimore's Resident Food Equity Advisors (RFEA) program, a part of BFPI,

exemplifies a successful model for tackling urban food in security through community-involved policy-making. The program empowers residents, particularly from marginalized communities, in shaping equitable food policies. The RFEA's approach is rooted in addressing systemic issues like food deserts and ensuring equitable access to affordable, healthy food options in low-income areas. This community-centric model ensures that policy interventions are relevant, effective and tailored to the diverse needs of Baltimore's population.³²

Reduction in Food Deserts

Since the RFEA program's implementation, Baltimore has seen a substantial decrease in the number of food deserts. Prior to the program, approximately 24% of Baltimore's population lived in food deserts, according to the Baltimore City Health Department. Post-implementation, there has been a significant reduction in this percentage, indicating improved access to healthy food options in previously underserved areas.³³



Increase in Fresh Produce Availability

One of the program's most direct impacts is a 15% increase in the availability of fresh produce in targeted neighbourhoods. This is a remarkable result considering the historical challenges these areas faced in accessing fresh, healthy food.³⁴



Growth of Community Gardens

The number of community gardens and urban agriculture projects has seen a marked increase under the RFEA program. More than 75 community and school gardens and nearly 30 urban farms exist in Baltimore and at least 55,000 kilos of food a year is produced from urban agriculture.³⁵

Improved Health

In areas impacted by RFEA's work, there has been an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption among residents. Studies indicate a 20-25% rise in the consumption of these healthy foods, contributing to better overall health in these communities.

Food-related Jobs

The establishment of new farmers' markets and food-related businesses has led to economic growth in several neighbourhoods. These initiatives have created employment opportunities, with an estimated increase of 10-15% in local food-related job openings.

Community Engagement & Participation

The RFEA program has boosted community engagement in food policy development. Over 70% of participants in the program's community consultations have reported a greater understanding of and involvement in local food policy, enhancing community cohesion and empowerment.³⁶



UN's New Urban Agenda: Mid-sized Cities

Mid-sized cities are increasingly acknowledged as engines of economic growth and innovation. And the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the UN Conference on Housing & Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, October 2016 offers these cities a blueprint for sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban development. This agenda is particularly relevant given that according to the UN, 60% of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas by 2030, with a significant portion residing in mid-sized cities.³⁷



By 2030, 6 out of 10 people in the world will live in urban areas, rising to 7 out of 10 by 2050.

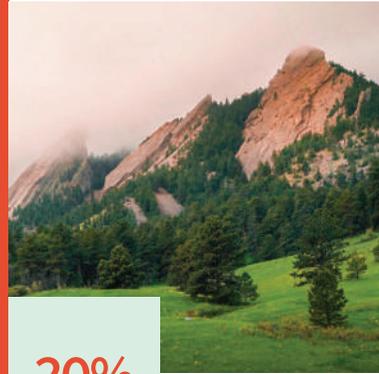


Urban Rules & Regulations

The NUA emphasizes the importance of urban rules and regulations in governance structures and policy frameworks. This focus is crucial for high-quality urban development. For example, the implementation of sustainable urban planning in Freiburg, Germany, has led to a 40% reduction in car traffic since the 1970s. This is a clear example of how robust governance and urban design principles can lead to efficient management of common goods like streets and open spaces.³⁸

Brand Enhancement & Sustainability

Mid-sized cities aligning with the NUA can enhance their brand as forward-thinking, sustainable and resilient urban centres. This aspect is increasingly vital in attracting environmentally conscious investors, businesses and residents. For example, Boulder, Colorado, known for its sustainability efforts, has seen a 20% increase in green businesses over the past decade, highlighting the economic benefits of a strong environmental brand.



20%

Boulder, Colorado, has had a 20% increase in green businesses over the past decade

Creating Sustainable Jobs

The NUA advocates for the creation of sustainable jobs, particularly in green industries. In Malmö, Sweden, the shift towards sustainable technology and innovation has led to the creation of over 15,000 new jobs in green sectors, as reported by the city's economic development board. This showcases how mid-sized cities can generate economic growth while promoting environmental sustainability.³⁹

Malmö has more than 400 kilometers of bicycle lanes. This has allowed 30% of all trips to be made by bicycle and reduced CO2 emissions by

15%

Climate Change Response

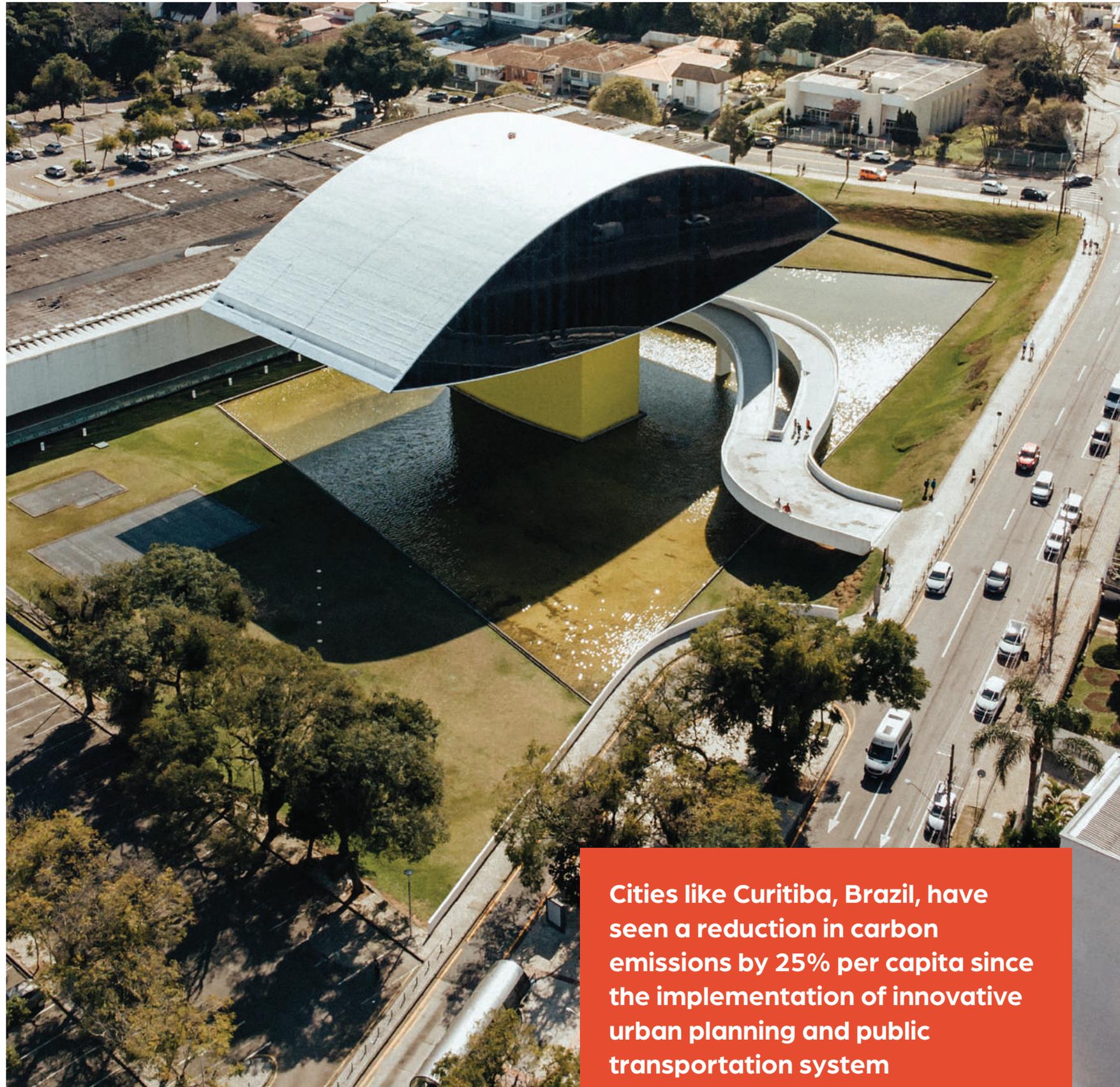
The Agenda's focus on climate change and equity integration is key. Mid-sized cities like Rotterdam have invested in climate-resilient infrastructure, reducing the risk of flooding. The city reports a decrease in flood-related damages by approximately 90% due to these investments, demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating resilience into urban planning.⁴⁰

City Extensions:

Planned city extensions and national urban planning are integral parts of the NUA. Cities like Curitiba, Brazil, have seen a reduction in carbon emissions by 25% per capita since the implementation of innovative urban planning and public transportation systems. This emphasizes how sustainable city extensions can contribute to environmental protection and emission reduction.⁴¹

The NUA provides a roadmap for mid-sized cities to enhance their global competitiveness and attractiveness through sustainable development. The success stories from cities like Freiburg, Malmö, Rotterdam and Curitiba, highlight the potential of the NUA in shaping resilient, equitable and prosperous urban futures.

As discussed, the NUA is about people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships in urban settings. However, at a time when the world is rapidly urbanizing, so far only 30 Member States have prepared national reports on the implementation of the NUA. Despite cities being the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic, few governments include urban issues in their Voluntary National Reviews on the 2030 Agenda or Nationally Determined Commitments for the Paris Agreement on climate change.



Cities like Curitiba, Brazil, have seen a reduction in carbon emissions by 25% per capita since the implementation of innovative urban planning and public transportation system

Global Culture, Local Community: London's E14

The attempt to build creative communities from scratch is one of the great challenges of city-building. It requires forging relationships with creative people, not just with corporations who feed off them. A sense of ownership and an emotional connection must be shared between a neighbourhood's leadership or developer and those who they hope will settle and live there. London's City Island is becoming something of a test bed for how this integration of global culture and local community can be achieved.



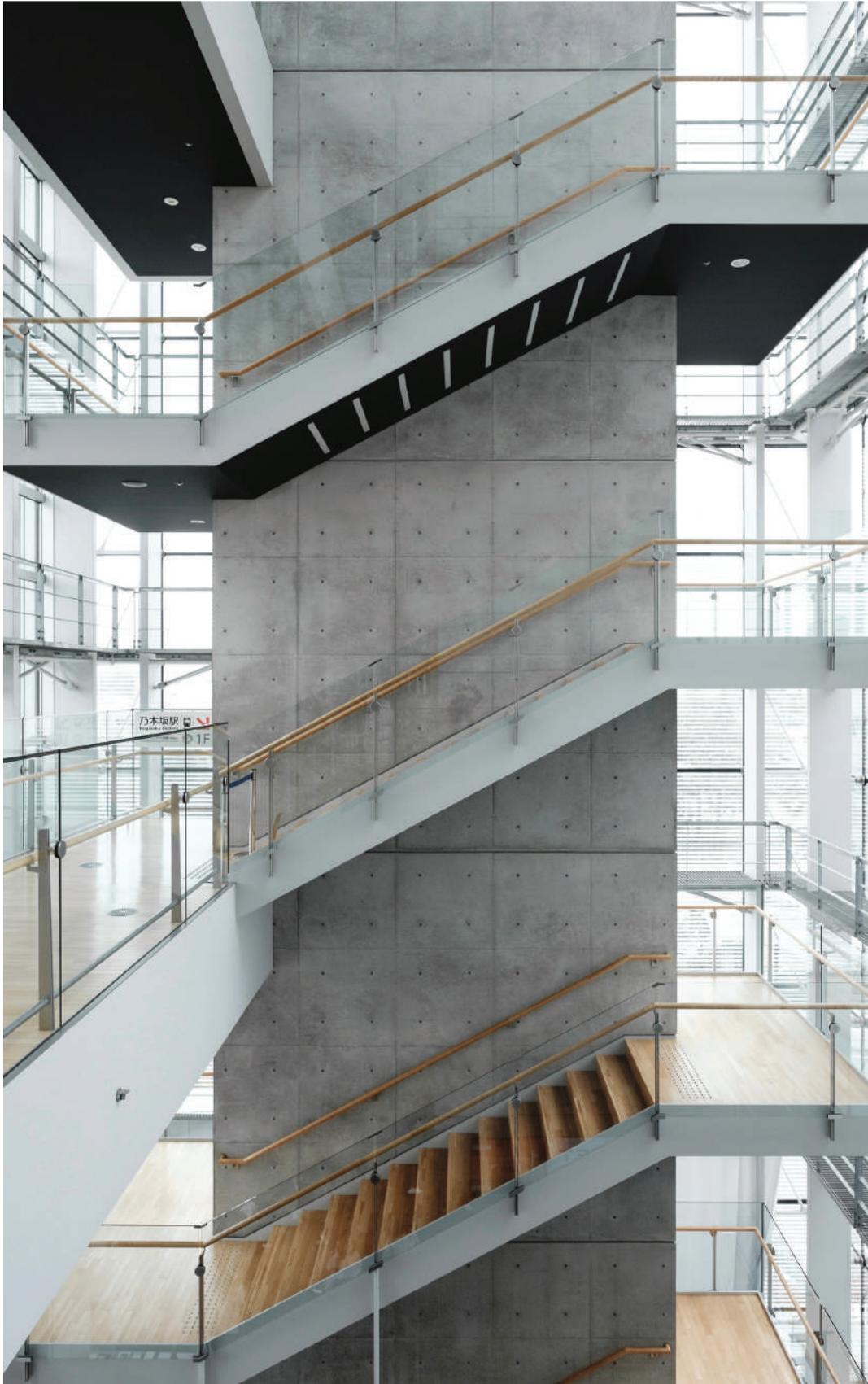
Over the past few years, it has increasingly been called a 'Mini-Manhattan,' with the towers of Canary Wharf nearby. The high-profile arrival in 2019 of the English National Ballet and London Film School are global stamps of approval, but it is a cultural scene that is flourishing in the area.⁴² When the independent Arebyte Gallery outgrew its home in Hackney Wick in 2017, it moved to London City Island to continue supporting the careers of early-stage artists, providing 20 studios across 557m².⁴³ This focus on grassroots culture as well as global development means this area of East London has, in one way or another, grown the kind of atmosphere more typically associated with a small village.

Urban Planning & Government Policies

Designed by Glen Howells Architects, the strategic development of London City Island is closely aligned with broader urban planning initiatives like the London Plan 2021 – the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20–25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. The plan has been critical in shaping London City Island's urban landscape, focusing on sustainable growth. The transformation of the Leamouth Peninsula, where London City Island is located, is a direct result of these broader strategic visions.⁴⁴

Development Details

 <p>Land area</p>	<p>4.68 ha</p> <p>London City Island covers an area of 4.68 hectares.</p>
 <p>Housing units</p>	<p>1,706 units</p> <p>The development includes 1,706 apartments and townhouses. This mix aims to provide diverse living options, catering to different demographic needs.</p>
 <p>Commercial & community spaces</p>	<p>5,978m²</p> <p>The island features 5,978m² of commercial space and 13,856m² dedicated to retail, leisure and community.⁴⁵</p>



Cultural & Architectural Aspects

The architectural design of London City Island draws inspiration from Tokyo and Chicago, combining bold architecture with pioneering landscape design. This has created a unique riverside living experience, blending business and cultural dynamics. The English National Ballet and London Film School are key cultural institutions that have established a presence in the area, further enhancing the island's cultural fabric.

Housing & Community Development

Affordable Housing: 11% of the apartments are designated as affordable housing, contributing to a balanced community development.⁴⁶

Diverse Amenities: The development is enriched with amenities like art galleries, music studios and co-working spaces. Public spaces like Hopewell Square serve as venues for local events and festivals, adding to the community's vibrancy.

Construction & Sustainability

A notable aspect of London City Island's development is its approach to construction. The use of prefabricated brick and concrete panels has allowed for high-quality, rapid construction. This method aligns with modern sustainable building practices, emphasizing efficiency and quality.⁴⁷

Connectivity & Transport

The development includes an 82m long footbridge that enhances connectivity, linking the island to Canning Town and bringing important transport links like the Crossrail and DLR within easy reach. This connectivity is vital in integrating London City Island into the broader urban fabric of London.

Community Impact

The neighbourhood's public spaces, like Hopewell Square, have become key locations for local events, fostering a sense of community. The annual Unity Arts Festival, for example, highlights the area's cultural vitality and brings together diverse cultural practitioners.

Urban Branding: Eindhoven

Eindhoven’s branding strategy, initiated in 2009, focused on transforming the city’s identity to become a leader in creative innovation by 2020.⁴⁸ This transformation was in response to its struggle with image and the economic downturn following the Lehman Brothers collapse. The city’s aim was to become one of the world’s top creative innovation regions by attracting leading talent in hi-tech and design, increasing foreign direct investment and encouraging tech companies and research institutes to set-up in Eindhoven.

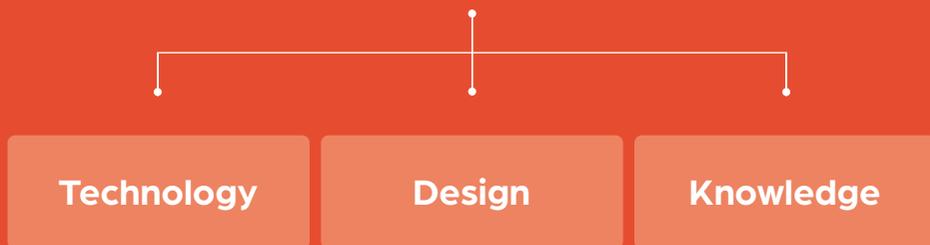


EINDHOVEN

This approach was not only about improving Eindhoven’s global competitiveness but also about enhancing the self-esteem of its residents.

Eindhoven’s branding strategy, revolved around the pillars of Technology, Design and Knowledge (TDK) demonstrating a deep commitment to involving its community in shaping the city’s identity.⁴⁹ This strategy, managed by Eindhoven365, began with a thorough research phase in 2012 to understand the city’s identity and culminated in the launch of the new Eindhoven brand in 2013. This brand aligns with the city’s marketing strategy and symbolizes Eindhoven as a hub of collaboration, innovation and creativity.

Eindhoven’s branding strategy pillars



Developing a visual identity with Eindhoven’s best creative talent and together co-creating it for the city and municipality seems logical. But it is an approach rarely taken. What stood out was the choice of a single brand visual, based on open-source principles and surprisingly no manual. Many cities have both a council logo and a city marketing logo. Eindhoven decided – influenced by Antwerp in Belgium and Bonn in Germany – to create only one logo and – adaptable – visual identity.

Central during the identity development was the ‘Magician’, the Jung-based archetype for challenge, change, vision and inspiration, which fitted the city’s desire to reinvent itself. This led to the discovery of the logo: three ‘zigzags’ stacked on top of each other, or the ‘vibe’ as it is called today.

The choice to create a single logo for the council and city marketing appears even more radical considering the city’s citizens, institutions and companies are free to use the logo as they like. Even using it to make money with merchandising is permitted, as long as the logo is kept intact. However, there is just one restriction: the colour red is reserved for official council use.

Eindhoven’s visual identity is now celebrating its eleventh year and going from strength to strength. Residents, businesses and creatives frequently use the logo, providing living proof of its integration. And the city’s branding work has been recognized for its innovation and effectiveness. For example, the Dutch Design Award for Best Client in 2015 praised the city’s courage and collaborative approach.



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The branding story of Eindhoven encapsulates the city's DNA as a mix of Unconventional x Collaboration = Energy, highlighting three core values: Imagine, Experiment and Realise. Values that represent the city's vision of the future.⁵⁰

DNA: Unconventional x Collaboration = Energy

Eindhoven's "Share the Vibe" campaign, launched in 2016, invited local visual creatives to express their connection to the city. The campaign, transitioning from video to audio in 2021, involved the city's musicians and producers, resulting in a musical tribute to Eindhoven. This initiative reflects the city's commitment to showcasing local talent and creativity.⁵¹ To further enhance brand visibility, Eindhoven also launched a sustainable clothing line The VIBE, producing a range of clothing for all ages.⁵² Through these initiatives, Eindhoven's branding strategy has not only created a strong, adaptable and effective visual identity but also fostered a sense of pride and ownership among its residents, reinforcing the city's reputation as a dynamic and innovative community.



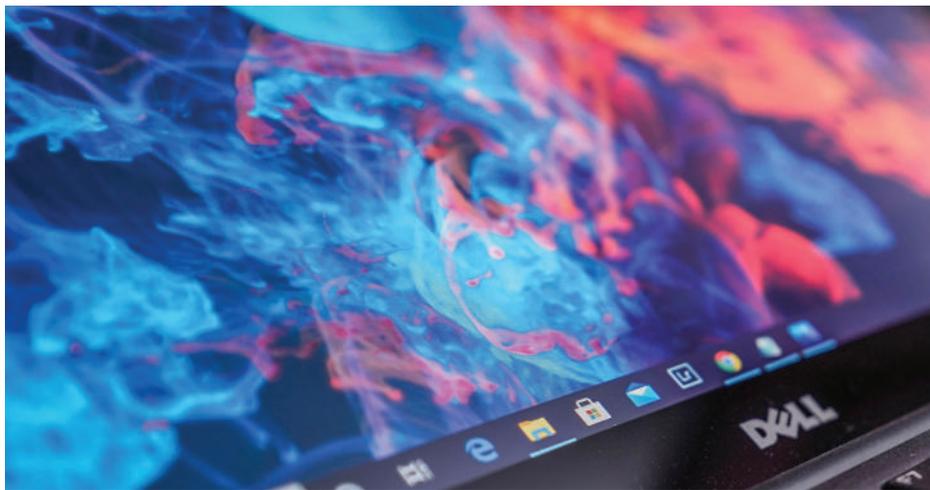
Economic Impact & Growth

The success of Eindhoven's branding strategy is also reflected in its economic indicators. The strategy has been a key driver in attracting media attention, visitors and investments, contributing to the city's recognition as a major economic player. Eindhoven's unconventional approach, focusing on smaller-scale urban environments, has proven effective, demonstrating that size is not a determinant of success in city branding. The key factors for this success include strong leadership and broad support from citizens and politicians, offering valuable lessons for other communities aiming to enhance their economic and social standing through branding.



Attracting & Retaining Gen Z Talent: Austin & Berlin

In 2023, Austin, Texas and Berlin, Germany, stand out as models for attracting and nurturing Gen Z talent. Each city, through its unique blend of economic growth, cultural richness and sustainability initiatives, has created an environment that resonates deeply with the aspirations and values of today's younger generation.



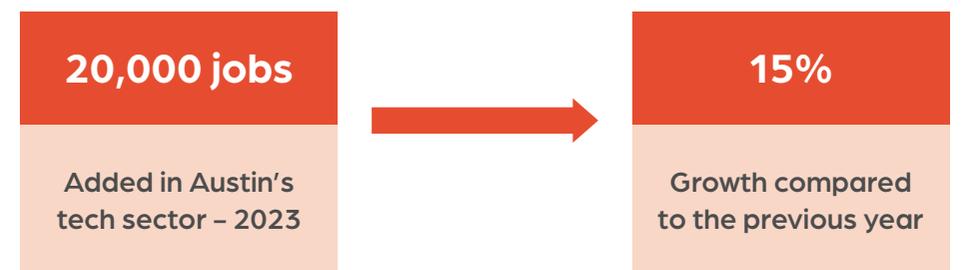
Austin: Tech & Culture

Austin's evolution from a cultural and music centre to a tech hub is a story of strategic growth and adaptability. Historically known as the Live Music Capital of the World, Austin began its journey towards tech prominence in the early 1980s with the establishment of major tech companies like Dell. This set the stage for the city's future as a tech powerhouse, attracting a diverse range of talent and fostering innovation.



Economic & Tech Growth

In 2023, Austin's tech sector experienced a remarkable expansion adding approximately 20,000 new jobs, a 15% growth rate on the previous year.⁵³ This increase in employment positions Austin as a leading destination for ambitious Gen Z professionals seeking opportunities in software development, data science and emerging tech sectors. Venture capital has played a pivotal role in this growth. In 2021, Austin's tech community saw over US\$5.5 billion invested across 412 deals, more than double the capital invested in 2020.⁵⁴ For 2022, the Austin area attracted a total of US\$4.9 billion in venture capital across 416 companies.⁵⁵ These investments were particularly strong in fields aligned with Gen Z interests, such as clean energy, AI and cybersecurity, highlighting the city's commitment to fostering innovative and sustainable technologies.



Demographic & Corporate Landscape

Austin’s population growth mirrored its economic progress, with a 3% increase in 2023, bringing the city’s population to approximately 1 million. This growth was partly driven by an influx of tech professionals and entrepreneurs. Major companies like Tesla and Oracle expanded their operations in Austin, adding to the city’s appeal as a tech hub. The vibrant start-up scene further enriched the city’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.⁵⁶

<p>TESLA</p> <p>ORACLE</p>	<p>Major companies like Tesla and Oracle expanded their operations in Austin adding to the city’s appeal as a tech hub</p>
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Quality of Life

In addition to being home to over 5,000 start-ups with a total value of US\$128+ billion – Austin is known for its rich cultural scene and recreational options. It hosts major events like the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival, attracting a global audience for music, film and interactive media. As of 2023, Austin has a cost of living index of 129.1. This is higher than the national average of 100, but lower compared to other popular cities in the U.S. like New York City, which has an index of 172.5.



SXSW



Berlin: Cheap But Cool

Berlin’s transformation into a tech and cultural hub is equally impressive. Following the reunification of Germany, the city emerged as a centre for creativity and innovation. This unique blend of history, culture and technology has made Berlin an attractive destination for Gen Z talent, who seek not just professional opportunities but also a rich, integrated lifestyle.

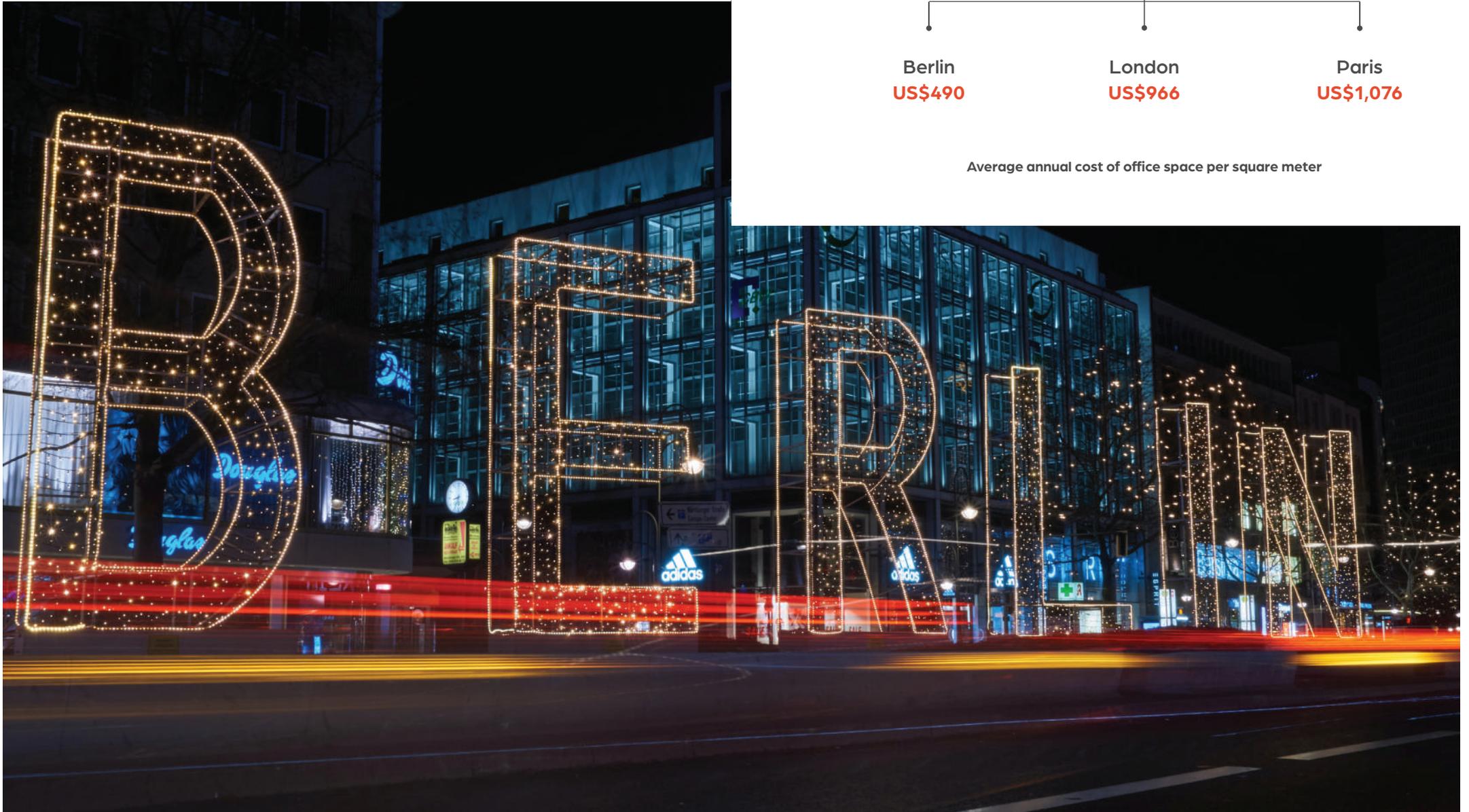
Start-up Ecosystem & Investment

According to data from the Berlin-Brandenburg Statistics Office and the German Start-ups Association, Berlin has seen significant activity in its start-up ecosystem, with around 40,000 business registrations and over 500 start-up companies annually. Additionally, in 2022, Berlin start-ups received nearly half of the venture capital invested in Germany, totaling approximately US\$5.3 billion. Investments focused on fintech, health tech and digital media start-ups, aligning with Gen Z’s tech preferences and the city’s historic strengths in creativity and innovation.⁵⁷

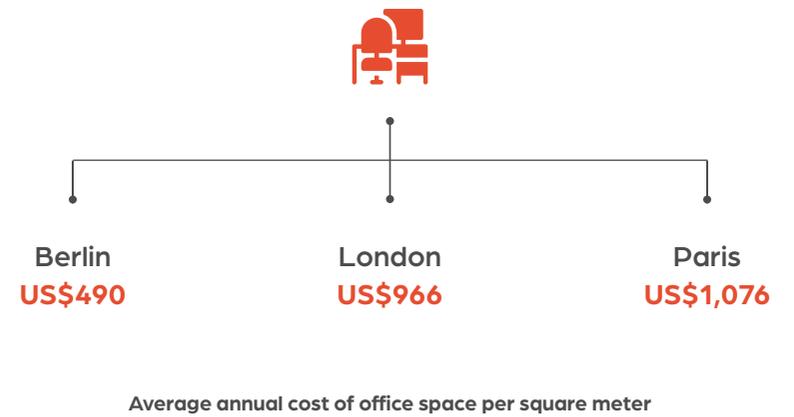
2022	US\$5.3 bn	50%
	Venture capital investments in Berlin start-ups	Berlin start-ups received nearly half of all venture capital investments in Germany

Lifestyle & Affordability

In 2023, Berlin's cost of living positions it as the most expensive city in Germany, yet it offers diverse living options to accommodate different budgets. For a family of four, estimated monthly expenses are around US\$5,555, while a single person might incur costs of approximately US\$3,104 per month. Housing expenses contribute significantly to these figures; for example, a 75 sqm apartment in a central area like Mitte costs about US\$1,119 per month. In brief, Berlin presents a range of living costs, reflecting its adaptability to various financial circumstances.



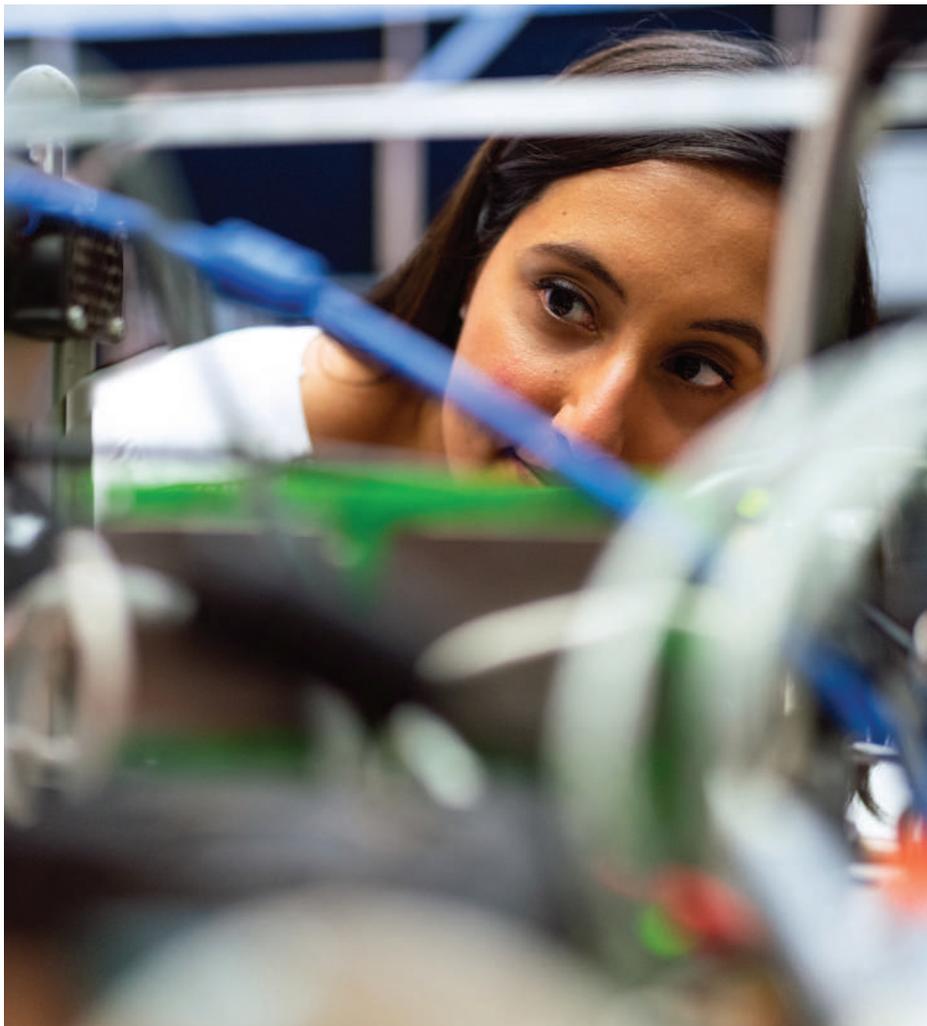
Another main reason for Berlin's growth not only as a tech centre, but as a hub for scale-ups in general, is the affordability of office space. The average annual cost of office space per square meter in Berlin is US\$490 compared to US\$966 in London and US\$1,076 in Paris. This is complemented with the rise in flexible office space providers, making office space more attainable to young businesses.



Common Goals

Austin and Berlin illustrate how cities can evolve to attract and retain Gen Z talent. Austin’s rapid tech growth, underscored by significant job creation and venture capital investments, combined with its commitment to cultural vibrancy, presents an ideal environment for young professionals. Conversely, Berlin’s integration of a rich cultural heritage with a supportive tech and start-up ecosystem continues to draw a diverse and dynamic young workforce.

Both cities demonstrate that aligning economic development with cultural and environmental values is crucial in appealing to a generation seeking professional success and personal fulfillment.



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