

The Elm City Collaborative Community Climate Justice Plan



The City of New Haven Office of Climate and Sustainability and Greater Dwight Development Corporation will lead 6 community-based organizations in the **Elm City Climate Collaborative (EC3)**. Partners will request **\$20 million** from the USEPA under the **Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grant program** to address climate change and pollution.

Partners convened nearly 80 residents representing all New Haven neighborhoods and many relevant organizations to develop a set of executable and fundable strategies – built on extensive recent and current work around climate change and environmental justice – that will realize observable and effective results. The proposed plan funds this critical work and mobilizes additional public and private resources. Overlaying all strategies is a plan to build capacity within and among the collaborating organizations to perform the work, to engage residents in the work, and to focus benefits on Environmental Justice neighborhoods that face heightened risks from excessive heat, air pollution and other climate challenges.

Community Infrastructure and Land Use Strategy

Green Corridors

Objectives: Plant street trees to create shade to reduce street level air temperature and manage stormwater. Implement new tree watering systems that improve tree survival, mitigate runoff, and reduce reliance on volunteers and transportation of water. Integrate bikeways and other climate-friendly amenities where feasible.

Outcomes: Reduced stormwater runoff; improved street tree survival; mitigated heat island effect; increase in green jobs

Greenspaces for Community Building

Objectives: Turn existing and new community gardens and green spaces into community building hubs. Create a garden and greenspace network to connect people across neighborhoods.

Outcomes: Enhanced food security; enhanced local food economy; reduced heat island effect

Climate-focused Zoning Ordinance Revision

Objective: Create and amend zoning ordinances related to site and heat mitigation to improve climate adaptation outcomes and promote environmental justice.

Outcomes: Reduced area of impermeable surfaces; increased tree canopy; reduced heat island effect

Environmental Monitoring

Objective: Expand existing air quality monitoring across all environmental justice neighborhoods to address longstanding, neighborhood-scale environmental justice and health concerns.

Outcomes: Increased understanding of local climate-related health concerns; deeper understanding of air quality issues across environmental justice census blocks; neighborhood level participation in monitoring pollution and excessive heat; neighborhood level climate data

Housing & Health Strategy

Energy Upgrades to Occupied Homes

Objective: Retrofit 1-4 unit owner-occupied homes and CBO-managed residential buildings with materials and technology that save energy and improve indoor air quality. Remove barriers to those upgrades.

Outcomes: Increase in number of energy efficient homes; reduced load on energy grid; improved indoor air

quality; increased green jobs

Energy Upgrades to Affordable Housing Developments

Objective: Install energy saving and electrification measures in affordable housing projects (new construction or buildings under substantial renovation) managed by local Community Development Corporations.

Outcomes: Affordable housing residents: energy cost savings; improved indoor air quality; healthier outdoor air quality; reduced load on the electric grid leading to less likelihood of local power outages

Materials Management Strategy

Community Composting Web and School-based Composting, Recycling, Nutrition, and Litter Education

Objectives: Create an integrated system to reduce food and household waste by investing in infrastructure; educate New Haven Public School students and community members about materials management, food systems, and nutrition.

Outcomes: Reduce household solid waste; build a circular organic food and waste stream; increase school-wide composting and recycling; increase jobs in repair and upcycling of materials

Transportation Strategy

Zero Emission Transportation Infrastructure And Access

Objective: Expand equitable access to affordable and zero-emission transportation by improving bicycle access, infrastructure, and education.

Outcomes: Increased safety and user-friendliness of bikeways; improved health outcomes for local residents; increased access to bicycles and bike infrastructure; increased bicycle access to educational institutions, parks, and healthcare facilities; increase in new bike owners; improve overall health and well-being; reduce emissions; increase transportation resilience and increase access to important community destinations including schools, workplaces, healthcare centers, and community spaces