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Urban Sustainability and Community Development:

Creating Healthy Sustainable Urban Communities

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February 2011
Working Paper 2011-03
http://frbsf.org/cdinvestments

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San Francisco, California 94105
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Introduction

It seems everywhere we turn there is some discussion about "being green" or increasing our focus on "sustainability." The problem with such discussions is that there is no clear definition of "sustainability" or what it means to "be green." Economists discuss developing a sustainable economy, environmentalists discuss developing sustainable ecological systems, and urban planners discuss the importance of developing sustainable communities. The problem with most of these discussions is the lack of specificity in terms of the scale, geography, and populations being addressed. Also, much that is written about sustainability has focused on environmental conservation and has ignored the challenges facing economically disadvantaged urban populations.

Globally, the world is becoming more urbanized. As of 2007, there were 3.3 billion people living in cities, and by 2030 about 5 billion inhabitants will be residing in urban areas.[1] This rapid expansion of cities and precipitous increase in population is creating a greater drain on our natural resources. For example, cities take up less than 2 percent of the earth's surface but use 75 percent of the natural resources (AAAS, 2000).

Urbanization has been significant in the United States as well and the trend is likely to continue. Over the last 30 years, the population has grown nearly 40 percent and a significant portion of that growth occurred in metropolitan areas.[2] According to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), cities and surrounding metropolitan regions house more than 80 percent of the population and account for almost 90 percent of GDP and 75 percent of carbon emissions.[3] Future population growth in the United States will present serious challenges to the nation's infrastructure, especially the physical infrastructure (such as housing, roads and highways, and educational institutions). By 2050, the U.S. population is expected to grow by 140 million, resulting in "the construction of more than 200 billion square feet of new housing, business space, and retail development" (OMB, 2009).

Increased urbanization has also led to many challenges for urban residents. In the United States, land use and zoning, transportation and infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, and disinvestment have severely affected the quality of life of poor urban populations (Wilson, Hutson, and Mujahid, 2008; Corburn, 2009). For example, in many urban communities residents are exposed to environmental pollutants, lack access to fresh food and supermarkets, have limited access to safe parks and recreational facilities, live in substandard housing, and are struggling to find quality jobs that provide adequate benefits.

Despite these challenges, opportunities do exist to make economically disadvantaged urban communities more sustainable, livable, and healthy. This article begins by discussing the challenges facing urban communities and then considers the opportunities that exist to develop sustainable urban communities given our current economic climate.[4] Sustainable urban communities will require investment in our green economy (defined as any business that provides green products and/or services) and in our decaying physical infrastructure, such as houses, office buildings, roads and highways, power plants, and schools. Such communities will also require protecting our natural environments, supporting urban agriculture, and addressing the social and economic determinants of health that result in health inequities. Overall, the strategy to rebuild and strengthen America's metropolitan areas and urban communities warrants a comprehensive approach that will require investments from the private, government, and nonprofit sectors.

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1 United Nations, 2008.

2 Peter R. Orszag et al., Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), August 11, 2009. http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_fy2009/m09-28.pdf.

3 Ibid., 2.

4 A sustainable urban community is defined as *an urban community's ability to maintain their environmental, economic, social, and political systems, which result in a high quality of life for current and future residents*.

The Role of Green Economic Development in Creating Urban Sustainability

The global focus on sustainability, especially within metropolitan regions, supports the basic elements of community development. Community development is inherently focused on producing assets that improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents (Ferguson and Dickens, 1999). This usually consists of efforts to improve the physical and natural environment, develop intellectual and human capital, foster the creation of social capital and networks, enhance access to financial capital, and increase political participation (ibid.). All of these efforts are needed to improve the lives of economically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities that are faced with high unemployment, home foreclosures, underinvestment in the educational and workforce development system, homelessness and poverty as well as crime, environmental pollution, and poor health outcomes. Successful efforts toward developing sustainable urban communities will require strategies that will improve economic opportunities, conserve natural resources and protect the environment, reduce health inequities, and focus on equity.

Creating healthy, sustainable communities is a serious challenge in the United States. The worst economic recession since the Great Depression has adversely affected states and cities. The national unemployment rate has remained above 9.5 percent, and states including California, Florida, Michigan, and Nevada have unemployment rates well above this national average. Also, the economic challenges facing many states and cities have been exacerbated by the enormous numbers of home foreclosures and homeowners who owe more on their mortgage than their homes are worth.

For example in Detroit, the city is struggling to remake its economy and rebuild its neighborhoods. Detroit is roughly 130 square miles and once had a population close to 2 million people in 1950. Today the city is home to about 850,000 residents, has an unemployment rate above 22 percent, and nearly one-third of the population lives in poverty (ACS, 2009). In addition, the Great Recession has resulted in large numbers of home foreclosures across the city and there are more than 90,000 abandoned or vacant homes and residential lots.[5] This has resulted in a loss of tax revenue, which has made it difficult for the city to maintain critical services such as fire and police protection, adequate secondary schools, and basic infrastructure.

Despite the current economic recession and its impact on cities like Detroit, the shift toward a green economy presents many opportunities for private, government, and nonprofit sectors to make strategic investments in green businesses and services that are likely to create jobs for urban residents.[6] In 2010, the newly elected mayor Dave Bing has suggested that the city shrink itself and focus on becoming green. The mayor is considering ways in which the city can raze at least 10,000 houses and other structures to allow certain parts of the city to revert to its natural habitat. Many are calling on the city to develop a large urban park system, encourage urban agriculture, and introduce a more efficient and sustainable public transportation network linking the downtown to the outer parts of the city and suburbs.

Although the green economy is still relatively small according to the actual number of jobs that have been created over the last five years nationwide, there is reason to be optimistic about the potential for future growth. For example, in California, green jobs account for a little more than 1 percent of all jobs in the state. But in the first half of 2010, the state of California attracted 40 percent of all the global venture-capital investment in clean technology, exceeding the first half of 2009 by two and a half times (Next 10, 2010). Moreover, according to the 2009 Pew Charitable Trusts report, "The Clean Energy Economy," between 1998 and 2007 clean energy jobs grew by 9.1 percent, while total jobs grew by only 3.7 percent. Also, since 2006, venture-capital investment in clean technology has totaled more than $12.6 billion. All of this suggests that there is significant room for growth in the green economy over the next decade. The real challenge will be to understand the skills and educational demands that these jobs will require so that urban residents can be trained or retrained to capitalize on this opportunity.

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5 Alex P. Kellogg, "Detroit Shrinks Itself, Historic Homes and All," *Wall Street Journal*, May 14, 2010, online edition. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703950804575242433435338728.html

6 When I use the term "green economy," I rely on a definition developed by my colleagues and I in the study funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration called "*Innovating the Green Economy in California Regions*." According to our definition, *the green economy consists of economic activity that reduces energy use and/or improves environmental quality. It includes the four principal sectors of the clean energy economy: renewable energy and alternative fuels; green building and energy efficiency technology; energy efficient infrastructure and transportation; and recycling and waste-to-energy.*

The Benefits of Green Building

Some of the biggest possibilities for growing the green economy and creating job opportunities are in the areas of green building and construction, environmental services and remediation, and recycling and waste management. A study released in late 2009 by Booz Allen Hamilton estimated that green building will support or create 7.9 million jobs between 2009 and 2013 and will contribute $554 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product. Green building can be the centerpiece of creating a sustainable urban economy because it has the potential to create jobs and also enhance energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, toxic reduction, improved indoor air quality, and increasing the use of environmentally friendly materials (EPA, 2010). Green building can be especially effective in transforming many urban schools that are dilapidated and in need of repair. The renovation and construction of urban schools using sustainable materials is also a good local economic development strategy in that it has the potential to create jobs and enhance the quality of urban education in many school districts by reducing overcrowding and modernizing facilities (IURD Working Paper no. 3, 2009).

There are also opportunities to enhance our cities' commercial buildings. A number of states and cities across the United States have implemented green building ordinances. In January 2010, the state of California instituted a new building code that requires developers to follow green building standards that focus on areas such as energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, and recycling. These new standards went into effect January 1, 2011, and are likely to have a major impact on the state's green economy. Local governments, such as San Francisco, have also adopted their own set of green building standards that are more stringent than the state of California's. San Francisco requires that all new buildings meet the city's green building standards.[7] Such local ordinances are likely to encourage the construction of more energy-efficient buildings and create a greater demand for industries that provide green products and services.

Perhaps the biggest area where green building construction can facilitate urban sustainability by generating jobs, increasing energy efficiency and waste reduction, and improving housing quality and the physical environment of low-to-moderate-income urban residents is around home weatherization, renovation, and construction. This is especially important given the current home foreclosure crisis. Across the nation there has been a significant number of home foreclosures within urban areas, especially within lower-income and communities of color. The home foreclosure crisis has resulted in swaths of urban communities with boarded-up houses that contribute to blight, lower housing values, and reduced property taxes; they are also breeding grounds for illicit activity that can result in the social disintegration and decline of the neighborhood. One potential strategy suggested by community development practitioners, policymakers, private-sector entrepreneurs, community activists, and others is to develop a program similar to the U.S. Department of Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program, only this would be a Green Neighborhood Stabilization Program (Koster, 2010). Under this type of program, banks would be encouraged to set up a pool of foreclosed properties (anywhere between 10 and100 homes), which could then be purchased by investors at a discounted price. Investors would work with local government agencies and building contractors to rehabilitate or renovate foreclosed homes so that they are built with environmentally friendly materials and are energy efficient. The green home could then be sold to a HUD home loan qualified buyer.

This type of comprehensive strategy could result in a number of positive results for economically disadvantaged urban communities. First, homes that have been foreclosed on and are sitting abandoned can be purchased and renovated by following green building standards and principles to make them energy efficient. Second, such programs have the potential to create thousands of jobs in the construction industry and green building supplier industries (for example, green recycled materials and native plant landscaping). Most important, in a severe economic depression, this strategy has the potential to stabilize communities and jump-start (although modestly) local and regional economies.

Since a significant proportion of future population growth within the United States is going to be in cities and the surrounding metropolitan areas, a strategy to develop a sustainable, green economy must be regional in scope in order to reach economies of scale and have a real impact. This is the thinking behind the creation of the East Bay Green Corridor Partnership (Green Corridor) in the Northern California Bay Area. Established in 2007, the Green Corridor is a partnership that includes the cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito, Emeryville, Oakland, Richmond, and San Leandro as well as a number of academic/research institutions, including the University of

7 City of San Francisco, S.F. Environment, 2010. http://www.sfenvironment.org/our_programs/topics.html?ti=19.

California at Berkeley, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, California State University, East Bay, and the Peralta Community College District.[8] The primary goal of the Green Corridor is to make the East Bay region a center for emerging green technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship. In just three short years, the Green Corridor has already secured $4.5 million in workforce training aimed at individuals facing barriers to employment and $1.1 million for training in energy efficiency and solar installation. Recently it has been officially designated by the California Governor's Office of Economic Development as one of California's Innovation Hubs.[9]

In addition to investing in a green economy, we must also prepare our workforce for jobs in that economy. There is no denying that job creation is critical in the United States, especially if we are going to begin to lower the high unemployment rate among lower-skilled, undereducated urban residents. And to transform our urban communities and make them sustainable, we must create a twenty-first-century workforce development system that is able to provide effective job training and services to urban residents. This means that the workforce development system must be comprehensive in its approach and must provide urban residents with wraparound social services; it must also be innovative and work in collaboration with educational institutions, nonprofits, the private sector, and government agencies to ensure that chronically unemployed or underemployed residents have job opportunities in the new economy. A number of national organizations are already working toward this goal of creating policies and job-training programs that will prepare urban residents for jobs in the green economy (such as Green for All, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, and the Apollo Alliance). However, it will take a larger investment in our workforce development system if true gains are to be made in the near future.

Improving the Built and Natural Environment

Redevelopment and Economic Opportunities

The built and natural environments are also areas where investments can be made by the public and private sectors to establish sustainable urban communities. As the U.S. economy has shifted over the last few decades from industry and manufacturing to one largely based on knowledge and information, large areas of industrial land have been left vacant. In older Rust Belt cities and along the waterfronts of cities on the East and West coasts with former military bases, there is industrial land that is ripe for redevelopment. In the case of Oakland, California, the Oakland Army Base served as a U.S. Army facility until it closed in 1999. In 2000, the Oakland City Council designated the base and surrounding properties as a redevelopment area (CEDA, 2010). The 1,800-acre Redevelopment Project Area is divided into three major subdistricts: 16th and Wood, the Maritime, and the Oakland Army Base (OARB) (ibid.). This large amount of land set aside for redevelopment provides opportunities to create jobs for local residents where the unemployment rate within the city has been hovering around 17 percent for the past year. In addition, redevelopment of 1,800 acres of land provides opportunities to attract and retain businesses to the area, remediate contaminated soil and groundwater, and return some of the land to its natural state so that Oakland residents can have improved access to the waterfront.

Food Access

Another area of opportunity for building sustainable urban communities is food access. Far too many low-income residents live in urban communities that have an overabundance of liquor stores and almost no access or very limited access to healthy fresh food, farmers' markets, supermarkets, and grocery stores that are within walking distance of their neighborhood. These "food deserts," as they have become known, make it difficult for residents to purchase affordable, healthy food for themselves and their families. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) found that roughly 11.5 million low-income people who reside in low-income areas live one mile from the nearest supermarket (ERS, 2009). In addition, the report found that the prices in supermarkets and grocery stores are lower than those in smaller stores such as convenience or liquor stores, which are often the most prevalent in low-income communities.

Thus there is ample opportunity for investors, local municipalities, and nonprofit community organizations, via private investment or tax incentives, to encourage the development of supermarkets and grocery stores that carry healthy, affordable food options for low-income urban residents. Some grocery store and supermarket chains have

8 East Bay Green Corridor, 2010. http://www.ebgreencorridor.org/accomplishments.php.

9 Ibid., 7.

ventured into urban communities after taking advantage of government tax incentives. But this is not enough to significantly improve low-income urban residents' access to healthy foods. Efforts are under way at the federal and state levels to create financing programs designed to attract grocery stores and supermarkets to low-income urban communities and rural areas. For example, Pennsylvania has created the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI), a public-private partnership financing program created in 2004 that has successfully attracted supermarkets and fresh food outlets throughout underserved areas in the state (PolicyLink, 2010). Likewise, in September 2010, New York allocated $30 million for the New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities (HFHC) Fund to build markets in underserved communities (Low Income Investment Fund, 2010). At the federal level, President Obama has proposed the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, which calls for more than $400 million in investments to support new supermarkets and grocery stores (simultaneously creating thousands of new jobs) (PolicyLink, 2010).

Although grocery stores and supermarkets are a good start to improving the level of access to healthy food choices for urban residents, there is a tremendous opportunity to facilitate urban sustainability by improving urban agriculture, or more broadly, food systems–the manner in which food is grown, processed, distributed, marketed, consumed, and disposed (Hutson et al., 2010). In many cities across the country, residents who are concerned about health, food security, saving money, and creating local economic opportunities are focusing on developing local food systems (Nugent, 2000).

Food production is a significant component of a local food system. Increasingly, consumers prefer food that is locally grown by using sustainable methods and equitable labor practices. This has sparked the steep increase in farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, and community gardens. Unfortunately much of the urban land used for urban agriculture–growing plants and raising animals, is not the most desirable land and the parcels are small. Moreover, these small parcels tend to have the lowest land values within cities, and when land values rise, these urban gardens are converted to other uses such as housing or commercial space, which can generate larger profits for landowners.

As a result of all of these challenges, the only way urban food production can increase is to have community organizations, potential investors, landowners, and government agencies (planning, economic development, redevelopment) work together to ensure that more land is available for urban agriculture. This can be done through negotiation or zoning regulations. A number of cities around the country are currently trying to increase urban agriculture through changes in their general plans or local zoning ordinances. In addition, efforts can be made to encourage small- to medium-scale intensive urban farming by pursuing business investment and promoting entrepreneurial activities around food production.

Similar to food production, the processing and distribution of food is a critical component of the food systems chain. The growth of the "slow food" movement, as well as the interest in local and organically produced food, has created opportunities for local urban farmers to sell their goods to local restaurants, cafés, grocery stores, and supermarkets. The efforts by many Americans to buy local has put pressure on larger national and regional supermarkets, grocery stores, and fresh food outlets to buy food and other goods from local farmers. In addition, school districts can be encouraged to buy locally grown food in order to improve the nutrition of schoolchildren and young adults.

The final critical component of food systems is consumption. To ensure that urban communities are able to begin addressing costly health issues such as the high prevalence of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, developing nutrition education programs is important. Many schools already have urban gardens and teach children the importance of eating nutritious snacks and meals.

Housing and Transportation

As already mentioned, there is an enormous opportunity to facilitate urban sustainability by rehabilitating or constructing new housing that incorporates the principles of green building. One often overlooked area of opportunity is in revitalizing and repairing public housing developments across the country. Over the last 15 years, approximately 150,000 housing units have been lost and almost another 6,000 units are pending removal from federal housing programs.[10] Some cities have issued bonds to help repair and revitalize public housing developments. In San Francisco, the city raised $95 million in local bond funding for a program called HOPE SF, an initiative aimed

10 Cara Buckley, *New York Times*, October 25, 2010, p. A1.

at revitalizing the most severely distressed public housing units. Started in 2006, HOPE SF is aimed at transforming eight public housing developments and turning them into "sustainable, mixed-income communities with neighborhood retail, community centers, parks, and playgrounds."[11] The overarching goal of HOPE SF is not only to replace every existing housing unit across the eight sites but also to add additional new housing to the sites so that all the housing is built with green principles and good urban design. Moreover, the HOPE SF initiative strives to improve the larger communities in which the public housing developments exist by refurbishing schools, enhancing community amenities, and creating economic opportunities for residents.

In addition to the opportunities surrounding revitalizing the nation's public housing, upgrading transportation offers another opportunity for improving the lives of low-income urban residents. Historically, U.S. transportation policy has not benefitted the poorest urban communities. The 1956 Highway Act literally paved the way for middle- to upper-middle-class white residents to move from central cities to newly built suburban communities. The massive construction of highways plowed through many communities of color, destroying the fabric of their neighborhoods and leaving them isolated from job centers and other critical resources within cities and the surrounding metropolitan areas (Bullard, 2010; Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom, 2004; Frumkin, Frank, and Jackson, 2004). As cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas continue to grow, transportation is critical to the mobility of residents. An integrated and accessible transportation network is essential for helping residents get to work, to school, or to enable them to go grocery shopping or to their doctor. In addition, transportation is important in helping low-income residents become economically mobile (Bullard, 2010).

There are several opportunities to improve the infrastructure and reliability of our urban transportation systems so that they support the development of sustainable communities. One key effort is the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which is being spearheaded by the federal government. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities is a federal interagency collaboration between the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with the goal of funding more transportation choices that are affordable, reliable, and safe as well as to promote equitable, affordable housing near transit stations.[12]

In addition to the federal government's efforts to foster sustainable development within communities through efforts such as "lowering household transportation costs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, decreasing traffic congestion and encouraging development of housing and amenities around transit stations," many metropolitan regions have taken the lead in advocating for transit-oriented development. For example, in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Great Communities Collaborative (a partnership between four Bay Area nonprofits, Reconnecting America, and U.C. Berkeley's Center for Community Innovation) is focused on ensuring that half of all new homes in the Bay Area between now and 2030 will be built in walkable neighborhoods near transit (Chapple, Hickey, and Rao, 2007). According to a study conducted by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD), the Northern California Bay Area could see demand for an additional 423,000 homes near transit (ibid.). Even though the current economic and housing crisis might alter these projections somewhat, the market demand for more housing in neighborhoods near transit and amenities (restaurants, stores, services, educational institutions, etc.) is still likely to be high given the rise in gas and energy costs. Therefore, opportunities exist for the private sector, government, and nonprofit developers to invest in transit-oriented projects.

Parks, Waterways, and Natural Habitat

As more people move back to cities, there is a growing need to restore, develop, and protect parks, open space, waterways, and natural habitats within metropolitan areas. Cities nationwide are trying to strike a balance between community and economic development and ecological and environmental preservation. For example, in New York City, millions of dollars have been invested in restoring wetlands, creating parks, walkways, and bike paths, and improving access to the city's waterfront.[13] In addition, there are efforts to restore the Bronx River with the Bronx River Greenway and efforts to make New York City more walkable and green with the conversion of old rail lines with the elevated High Line. Chicago is also involved in a number of efforts to make the city more green and sus-

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11 HOPE SF San Francisco's Mayor's Office of Housing, 2010. http://hope-sf.org.

12 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/.

13 Amy Souers and Betty Otto, "Restoring Rivers within City Limits," *Open Spaces Quarterly* 3, no. 4. http://www.open-spaces.com/article-v3n4-rivers.php. Accessed November 11, 2010.

tainable. Chicago's Sustainable Development Division of the Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning (DZP) is focused on creating and expanding public open space throughout the city. The DZP is also developing policies and programs to increase the sustainability and environment of Chicago by improving access to the waterfront and expanding natural habitats, as well as "improvements to the environmental performance of development sites, and the promotion of urban agriculture and other aspects of the local food system."[14]

Building Healthy Communities Is Critical to Urban Sustainability

Perhaps the most important part of building sustainable urban communities is creating neighborhoods that are healthy. This requires addressing the macrosocial determinants of health—governmental policies, the economy, and the ability of institutions and organizations to be responsive to the needs of residents (World Health Organization, 2008; Syme and Ritterman, 2010). For example, the current economic crisis has left millions of people unemployed and underemployed, which significantly affects quality of life. A number of studies have been conducted to understand how unemployment or underemployment has an impact on health (Strully, 2009). In addition, many urban communities are struggling with loss of income, increased poverty, home foreclosures, high levels of crime, and underperforming educational institutions, all of which have an impact on the quality of life for residents.

Addressing the macrosocial determinants of health is challenging. Still, a number of place-based strategies being led by the White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI), an interagency collaborative, are focused on creating neighborhoods of opportunity. As part of the NRI effort, several federal agencies and departments are taking an interdisciplinary approach to community development and neighborhood revitalization. One of the key efforts that has an impact on community health is the Department of Health and Human Services' goal of providing "comprehensive high-quality preventive and primary health care to America's most medically underserved urban and rural communities" through the development of community health centers.[15] Another effort is the Choice Neighborhoods program led by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which aims to transform distressed public and assisted housing into sustainable mixed-income housing. Finally, the Department of Justice is proposing a new program called the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation. This program is a community-based strategy that aims to control and prevent violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in high-crime neighborhoods.[16]

Foundations are also investing in placed-based strategies in an effort to improve the health and well-being of residents residing in economically disadvantaged or vulnerable communities. An example is the California Endowment (TCE), one of the largest health foundations in the United States. In 2010, TCE embarked on an ambitious plan called the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative.[17] The BHC initiative plans to invest in 14 communities across California over ten years with the goal of making these communities not only better places to live but also with better health outcomes. It is estimated that TCE will invest approximately $1 billion in these communities over the ten-year span.[18] As part of the effort, TCE has already provided one-year planning grants to these communities so that they can begin prioritizing their community needs. In addition, it has been exploring ways to improve the social capital and networks of local community organizations and residents, addressing factors that shape the built and natural environments, understanding and creating policies and programs that create educational and economic opportunities for residents, and analyzing the ways in which research and data analysis can support the BHC Initiative, just to name a few examples.[19]

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14 City of Chicago, Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning, 2010. http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/zlup/provdrs/sustain.html.

15 The White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative Urban Policy Working Group memorandum, 2009.

16 Ibid., 8.

17 http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/.

18 Dr. Tony Iton, public lecture at the Robert Wood Johnson Health & Society Scholars Seminar at the University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health, November 18, 2010.

19 Dr. Malo André Hutson, course entitled "City Planning 268-Building Healthy Communities: The Oakland and Richmond Studio," Department of City and Regional Planning Studio, University of California at Berkeley, Spring 2010.

Conclusion

Despite the global challenges of creating healthy, sustainable urban communities, cities and the surrounding metropolitan areas have additional opportunities to help lead the way. Meeting these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that focus simultaneously on developing a green economy, improving our built environment, protecting our natural environments, and addressing the macrosocial factors that have an impact on population health. Such comprehensive strategies will also require collaboration and coordination between the public and private sectors and focus on promoting environmental justice, addressing poverty and inequality, reducing health inequities, and creating economic opportunities for low-income and vulnerable communities.

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