

# URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Making it Happen

EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY

JERUSALEM מכון ירושלים  
INSTITUTE למחקרי מדיניות  
FOR POLICY معهد القدس  
RESEARCH لبحث السياسات



# URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

## Making it Happen

Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2016

JERUSALEM  
INSTITUTE  
FOR POLICY  
RESEARCH



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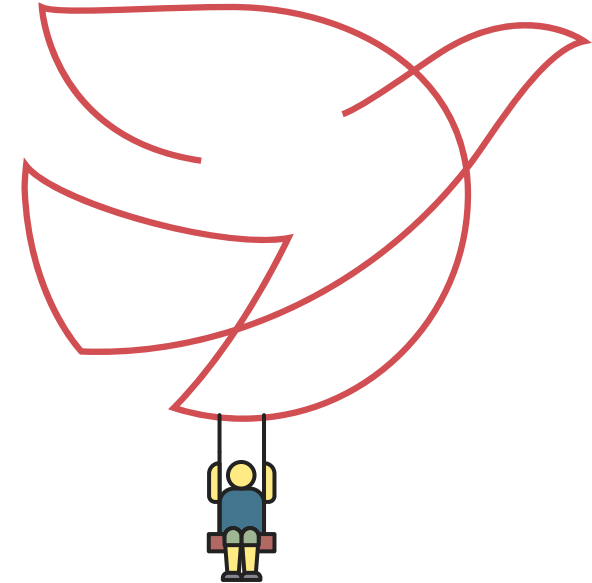
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# SUMMARY



“Urban Sustainability”, a project of the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research during 2013–2016, is the continuation of a previous project, “Sustainability Outlook 2030” which was undertaken by the Jerusalem Institute and the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

The project focuses on the city as the crucial context for human activity and it proposes policy recommendations for achieving urban sustainability through changes in urban lifestyles.

The project recognizes from the outset that despite efficiency gains in production processes and a transition to environmentally friendly products, achievements so far are not sufficient to attaining global environmental goals. The project approaches the issues from a different direction, developing insights from studies of human behavior, sociology, and economics – as opposed to the traditional focus on environmental sciences – and it seeks solutions to attaining a lifestyle which is both of high quality and sustainable. The project proposes “soft” ways of effecting changes in urban lifestyles, based on the belief that such changes can lead to fundamental behavioral change, as well as the need for adapting infrastructure. Soft changes can substantially improve the quality of urban lifestyles, at a relatively low cost.

The concept of “sustainability” has many definitions, and models of urbanity are constantly evolving. The Urban Sustainability project sought to provide a definition for a sustainable lifestyle that can ensure a high quality of living in the urban context, whilst minimizing the deterioration of global resources and reducing the level of use of materials and energy.

The project was conducted in three stages. Stage One laid the theoretical base: expert opinions were solicited in a range of fields identified as relevant to urban sustainability. These included “classic” or recognized environmental

issues such as transportation and energy, alongside issues not traditionally seen as inherently “environmental”, such as the role of design and harnessing social networks. This stage enabled the formulation of fundamental concepts of urban sustainability and a vision of a “sustainable city”. Stage Two examined the principles of the vision through a series of “urban labs” – pilot projects and test cases conducted in various cities which addressed real life issues of urban sustainability. Stage Three focused on formulating operative policy recommendations for local authorities interested in promoting sustainable lifestyles within their areas. A system of indicators for use by local authorities was developed for the assessment of urban sustainability.

# 1 BACKGROUND: WHERE CAN CHANGE TAKE PLACE?

In seeking ways to promote urban sustainability, the project examined a range of issues and subjects relevant to sustainable lifestyles:

## CHANGES IN CONSUMPTION HABITS

Increased levels of consumption have had a destructive impact on natural resources and the natural environment. As far back as 1992, Agenda 21 mentioned the need to change consumption patterns, but until recent years no country was prepared to confront this issue. For almost two decades, the issue of consumption has been raised in the context of “sustainable production and consumption” even though the two are not necessarily linked. The financial crisis of 2008 proved to be a breaking point that dramatically altered consumption patterns in the United States, and some argue that in its aftermath there has been a discernible awakening and social shift towards a post-consumptive society. This field of research addresses questions such as: How do people make decisions about what to buy, how frequently, and how much? Why do they prefer certain goods over others? Promoting sustainable consumption requires changing consumption habits at three levels: the product (production of environmentally friendly goods), manner of consumption (for example, services rather than goods), and reduction of consumption. The latter can be achieved by substantively changing human lifestyles, which includes changing people’s perspectives, social norms, and the current economic framework.



## DESIGN AS A MEANS OF BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

The field of design, in its various forms, plays a key role in soft methods of behavioral change, from the physical design of an urban shopping mall and its subconscious impact on purchasing patterns, to the design of a product that requires the consumer to make a conscious decision. In the past, design processes were primarily directed at increasing consumption and use, but in recent years their vast potential influence has also been directed to developing solutions for behavioral and lifestyle change.

One of the soft approaches to behavioral change that makes extensive use of design is the **architecture of choice**, which focuses on the decision-making contextual environment and aims to demonstrate how small changes in environmental design can promote behavioral change, thereby replacing or supplementing traditional approaches to behavioral change. This approach emerged from awareness that human behavior is not characterized solely by logical, rational processes. During the course of day-to-day lives many situations require decisions without the time or interest to evaluate all possible options. This approach, known also as **Nudge**, holds that the context in which decisions are made, including decisions with an environmental impact, could be designed in a way that automatically promotes certain decisions without the need for evaluating rational considerations. One way is through changing the default option.

## MOMENTS OF CHANGE

Worldwide research indicates that when routines are disrupted, they offer opportunities for a change in regular habits (moments of change). Examples include a change of residence, the birth of a first child, and retirement. Such moments facilitate changes to lifestyles which otherwise become automatic activities. Leveraging the opportunity requires considering the influence of many psychological factors that affect human choices or actions. These factors may include comfort, psychological association, loss aversion, and the desire to hold onto what is familiar and known. When seeking to initiate change, timing is important.

## THE POWER OF COMMUNITY IN CREATING CHANGE

Achieving a sustainable human society is, first and foremost, a social issue. Community is the most suitable context in which to adopt new norms of behavior because it is much easier to embrace new habits of a sustainable lifestyle in a group. In urban systems, the community is the social “middle ground”. Community organizations serve as intermediary actors, as agents of change that are neither “above” (such as governing bodies) nor “below” (such as residents), but rather in-between. Intermediary actors are well-placed to remove certain barriers related to the willingness and ability of other actors, and to bring various actors together in a way that facilitates action and change. The community functions as a space that is close enough and large enough to allow citizens to organize and act in order to take responsibility for the environment.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTIVITY

The digital world that emerged over recent decades has resulted in substantive changes to human society and social organization, at a pace unprecedented in human history. The digital world makes information accessible to all its users and enables direct communication among people, organizations, and groups. The internet and social media have drastically changed how humanity conducts its daily life: the ways in which people consume, collect, and exchange information, goods, and services have fundamentally changed, as have the public’s modes of communication with financial, cultural, and governmental institutions. The world of employment is also undergoing major transformation. Communication technologies have made “glocalization” possible: the boundaries between the local and global have been blurred, affecting lifestyles, from purchasing consumer goods to defining identity and status. Generation Y – namely, those born in the 1980s and 1990s – grew up in the era of social media and are therefore commonly termed “digital natives”. They were the first to embrace social media and have the potential to lead change, using media tools as agents of social change.

## THE CHANGING WORLD OF EMPLOYMENT

In the past decade employment has undergone far-reaching changes, which will continue and even intensify over the coming years. The work environment, which is greatly influenced by the options that digital media tools provide, offers new possibilities for employees and employers alike, including flexible working hours, working from home, part-time work, less dependence on private vehicles, and reduced equipment and storage costs. These changes, however, also create many risks: infringement of workers' rights, imbalance between work and leisure, less job security, and more inequality, among others. In addition, the changes affect the lifestyles and needs of residents who work in the city. They increase the need for workplaces in public areas with wireless internet access, and for accessibility between different workplaces and between residences and workplaces. Boundaries between the private and the public are becoming blurred, generating the need for planning mixed uses, and strengthening the need for efficient public transportation.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The local economy plays an important role in promoting urban sustainability. It reinforces the relationship between the city's residents and businesses, thereby ensuring greater interaction and responsibility for the environment. It reduces the need for vehicles to transport goods long distances, provides employment opportunities for local residents, and enhances local diversity and cultural capital. It also provides the city with internally based resources for its own development and reinforces engagement and identification with the community. Yet despite these and other benefits, most small local businesses find it hard to compete with large companies and corporations. A systematic policy is needed to help them maximize their many advantages and become an integral part of the local landscape.

## DEVELOPING A SHARING ECONOMY

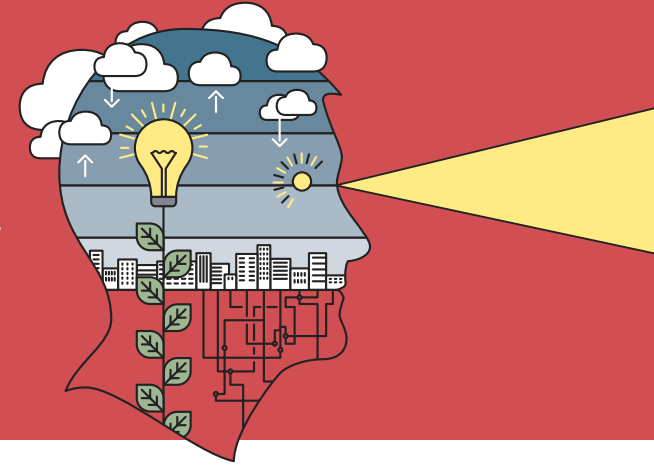
The term "sharing economy" refers to a range of practices that break away from the traditional business model of a single consumer purchasing goods for his or her exclusive use. A sharing economy is a socio-economic system based on communal sharing of human and physical resources. It is composed of platforms that enable prosumers to produce, distribute, engage in commerce, offer and consume goods and services, and conduct activities through an open peer network. The sharing platforms enable the efficient and effective use of resources, skills, and services that are currently underused by their private or public owners (for example, through short-term apartment leases, private vehicle rentals, and cooperative transport services). Sharing helps reduce the initial investment required in goods and assets, provides a way to add supplemental income and can promote more sustainable lifestyles. In combination with the changing world of employment, the sharing economy offers greater flexibility and dynamism in generating income. The city is a most appropriate context for promoting sharing platforms, given its density, the potential for better use of its existing resources, and the need to reduce rental fees and living costs in city centers.

## CHANGES IN THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SPACE

One of the most important and central components of the urban arena is its public space: the public square, the street and the park represent the physical manifestations of the principles of sustainability, including accessibility, diversity, connectivity, and inclusiveness. There is a disparity between the importance of public space in the city and how it currently functions in practice. In terms of supply, the public space does not necessarily realize its potential for promoting sustainable lifestyles, both because of the dominance of other uses (such as transportation) and because of privatization practices and multiple elements in public spaces that encourage consumption. More emphasis could be placed on understanding demands for the use of public spaces, so that it could contribute to a more sustainable urban life style. A creative and flexible approach to the design of public space could address many facets of city living in the rapidly changing modern world. The way in which public space is used, in combination with urban design for sustainability, could influence how people behave in this space and contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle.

# 2

## THE SUSTAINABLE CITY: FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES, VISION, & MODELS



The theoretical background provided the basis for identifying the key principles and the vision for urban sustainability. The vision of a sustainable city was formulated during a workshop of experts, as follows:

**“A sustainable city is one that enables people to lead fulfilling lives with a sense of dignity, within and outside the city. Its infrastructures and the material, natural, human, and social resources at its disposal, offer fair and efficient opportunities for its users and the city takes a responsible role in the management of global ecosystems. The city enhances a sense of responsibility among its inhabitants for its physical and cultural heritage and for future generations”**

### THE VISION COULD BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- ✓ **Reduced consumption / change in consumer culture**
- ✓ **Localization and local economy**
- ✓ **Wellbeing** and a culture of trust, mutual respect, productiveness, innovation, mutual support, and cooperation
- ✓ **Human diversity and freedom of choice**
- ✓ **Reduced inequality and equitable allocation of city resources**, with equal opportunity for education, employment, services, and recreation
- ✓ **Cooperation, collaboration, and connectivity** between residents and all stakeholders in government, business, and civil society
- ✓ **Citizen engagement and commitment** to sustainability
- ✓ **Efficient use of urban space and open areas**
- ✓ **Community as a driver of change and source of resilience**, socially, environmentally, and economically

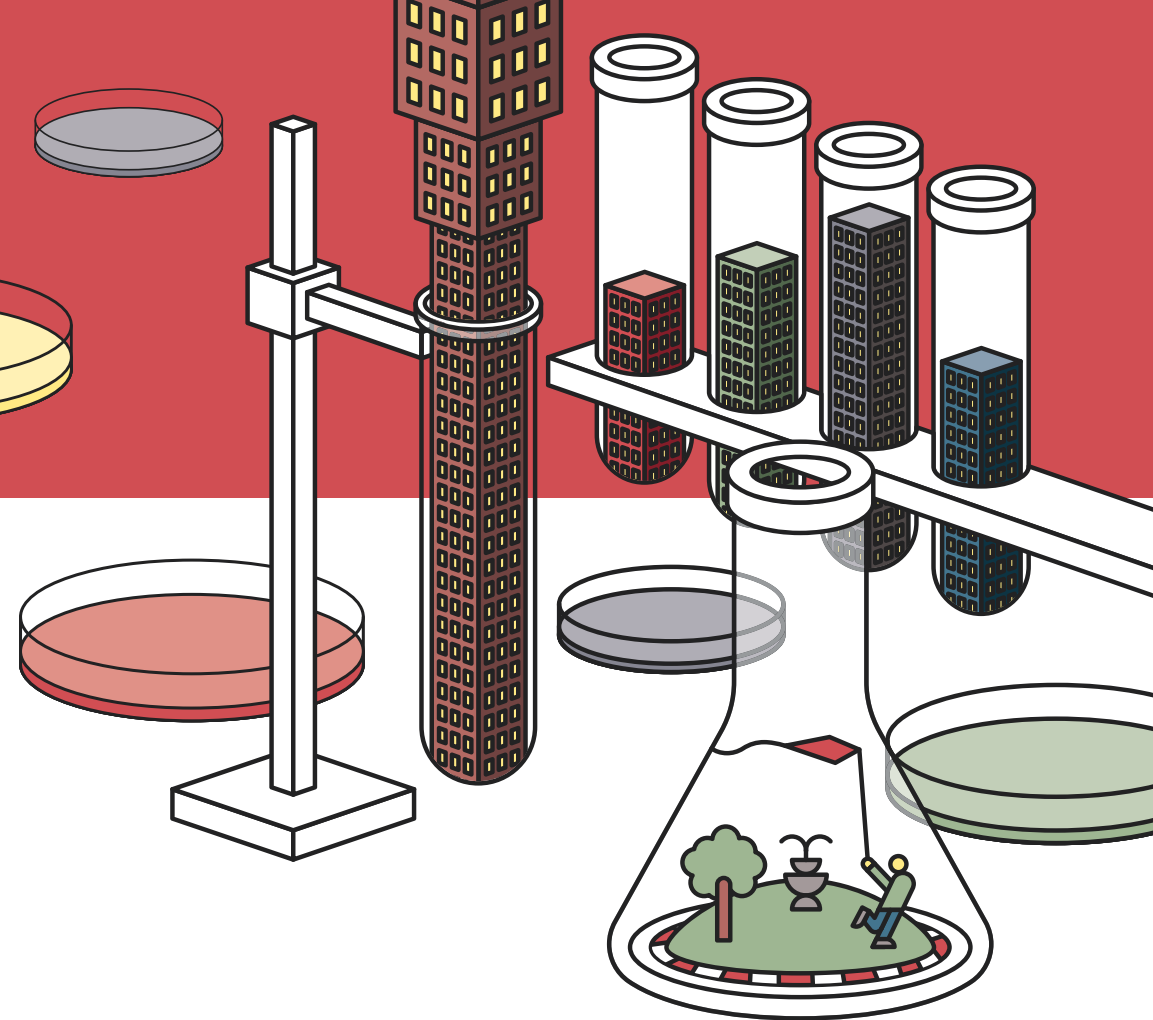


# 3

## TEST CASES: URBAN LABS

The project used a number of urban labs to evaluate the implementation of the vision and the principles in promoting a sustainable urban lifestyle. An “**urban lab**” is a targeted experiment designed to test the potential for effecting change. The issues examined and methodologies employed varied for each lab, but all were derived from the theoretical background and the principles underpinning the vision of a sustainable city. The goal of the labs was to test the potential and opportunities for, and the barriers to, transition to a sustainable lifestyle within the reality of life in Israel, and to translate these into operative tools and policy recommendations. The urban labs were conducted in cooperation with a number of local authorities and dealt with the issues of interest to policymakers in each authority. A few labs examined developments that had already taken place in the city. Most labs, in cooperation with municipal representatives, examined unique test cases that highlighted various aspects of the urban lifestyle. Labs and test cases were conducted in the cities of Jerusalem, Holon, Ashdod, Acre, and Tel Aviv.

The labs conducted in Holon addressed the issues of **local economy and the sharing economy**. In Ashdod one lab focused on the role of the **community in promoting waste management**, while another addressed the issue of promoting a **transition to more sustainable means of commuting to work among employees of the Ashdod Municipality**. In Jerusalem one lab monitored the implementation of a “**sustainable neighborhood**” in a number of neighborhoods, and another entailed a case study on the potential for promoting the sharing economy within the **Municipality**, with the aim of exploring opportunities for and barriers to local authorities’ engagement



in advancing the sharing economy. Master’s degree students in industrial design from the Bezalel Academy participated in Acre’s lab, which tested the ability of **design** to promote a sustainable lifestyle. A workshop conducted in cooperation with the Tel Aviv Municipality examined tools for **promoting urban sustainability through community activities**. Two focus groups addressed two of Israel’s special population groups: the Arab population and the ultra-orthodox population.

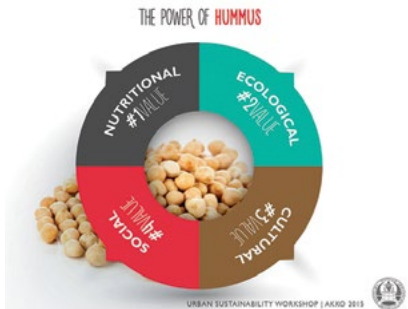
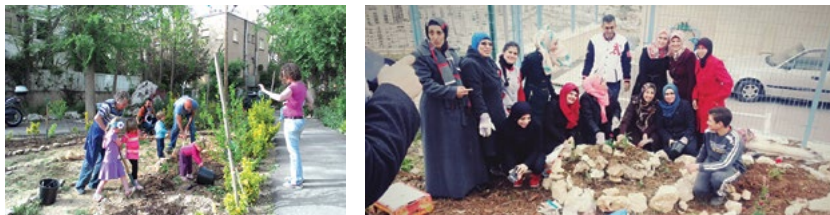

The labs enabled the identification of those aspects of an urban lifestyle that have the most significant influence on the daily lives of city residents.



Before



After

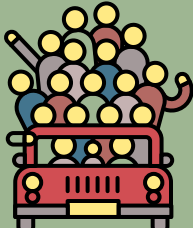
### SPATIAL- LOCAL ASPECTS

The labs underscored the importance of residents' perception of space and the ability of design to influence that perception.



### COMMUNAL- SOCIAL ASPECTS

Several labs confirmed the finding that a sustainable lifestyle can be much more effectively promoted if conducted in a group, social, or communal framework, rather than as an attempt to change the behavior of private individuals.



### BEHAVIORAL ASPECTS & CONSUMPTION HABITS

The labs that addressed the sharing economy highlighted the difficulties people face in shifting from familiar to alternative consumption patterns, even if the latter could enhance their wellbeing, increase the range of activity options, and facilitate more effective use of available resources. A transition to the sharing economy requires changing a personal paradigm, breaking down barriers to trust, and shifting to a system of sharing and engagement. Such processes require changes to commonly accepted norms.

The three aspects that emerged from the labs (relating to space, community, and consumption) cover the main activities in the daily lives of Israel's urban population. Given how critical these aspects are for the urban lifestyle, the project's operative recommendations focused on three main tracks: public spaces, communities, and the sharing economy.

# 4

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**These recommendations are targeted at a variety of stakeholders, particularly to those in local government. Implementation of some of the recommendations will require regulatory, legislative, or taxation amendments at the national level, but most may be implemented at the city or neighborhood level. The discussion below includes principles for policymaking, principles for implementation, and detailed recommendations for each of the three main tracks identified as having an influence on behavioral change in the city: sharing economy, public spaces, and urban communities as a source for leveraging change.**



## POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE

- ✓ Steps should be taken to break the link between economic growth and material consumption, on the one hand, and social status and individual welfare, on the other.
- ✓ Equal opportunities should be available to all sectors of the urban population to enjoy a high level of wellbeing.
- ✓ Efforts should be made to change consumption habits and encourage sustainable consumption, rather than aim for the “greening” of goods.
- ✓ Preference should be given to digital and participatory forms of consumption, and digital literacy should be promoted among all age groups.
- ✓ Identification and association with a community should be fostered as a means of contributing to the reduction of material consumption.
- ✓ The creation of efficient and effective urban space should be encouraged by using the tools of urban planning, design, and management.
- ✓ Flexibility will be required in planning and adaptive mechanisms should be developed to enable situations to change.
- ✓ Municipal authorities and residents should be encouraged to collaborate and take shared responsibility for public property and assets.
- ✓ Efforts should be made to identify methods for the joint management of public spaces and for developing new approaches for the governance of common property.
- ✓ The concept of sustainability should be expanded to reflect the understanding that “green” does not necessarily mean sustainable, and that sustainability policy does not necessary include “greening”.

## PRINCIPLES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE

- Formulating a **systemic, integrative perspective regarding the tools needed for change**: a strategy that integrates hard and soft methods.
- **Mainstreaming sustainability into the core activities of the city or community network**: Developing a conceptual framework of sustainability as a holistic approach.
- **Building trust as a necessary condition for promoting urban sustainability**: Supplementing every action with measures that build trust and foster connectivity among participants.
- **Encouraging flexibility in all aspects of urban lifestyle management**: Ways should be sought to simplify procedures and regulations in order to cope better with changing dynamics.
- **Encouraging distributed systems, for information as well as administration and organization**: Initiatives by residents should be encouraged and adopted by the governing authority, through cooperation between the municipality and residents. Creativity should be fostered, and access to data, digital tools, and connectivity should be promoted.
- **Identifying focal points for potential change with widespread influence**: spaces should be identified where change can take place with relatively little effort and few resources, while having an impact on as many people as possible. Focus should be placed on changing people’s habits and daily routines, so that the overall level of change is widespread and significant.
- **Identifying emerging trends, leveraging them, and harnessing them systematically through the local authority**: Local authorities can embrace and leverage existing trends and increase cooperation between stakeholders in the city, thus conserving municipal resources and benefitting from crowd knowledge.
- **Establishing collaboration among actors from different sectors**: In an era that recognizes the advantages of “the wisdom of crowds”, cooperative endeavors should be established and maximized, and

networks should be constructed to connect between and among various actors and sectors: the municipal government, administrative entities of the community, civil society organizations, residents, the business sector, and others.

- **Identifying and exploiting moments characterized by disruption of routine (moments of change):** Moments of change at the systemic societal level can serve as opportunities for innovation and change with respect to ingrained social habits. Such moments might include economic crises, new technological developments, natural disasters, political change, and the like.
- **Identifying and encouraging “early adopters”:** Early adopters are agents of change, and they can be a powerful force in the community. They have the potential to help integrate change in a more meaningful way than can be achieved by the innovators. A supportive infrastructure should be established for early adopters, and they should be recognized, appreciated and funded.
- **Identifying and using intermediary actors to promote and integrate behavioral change:** Intermediary actors are excellent agents of change. It is important to identify them and make use of their ability to bring about change.
- **Using social networks as a tool to promote the values of sustainability (collaboration, community, local economy, connectivity):** It should however be noted that the use of digital tools can create new forms of social gaps between communities that are digitally literate and those that are not.
- **Promoting visibility to change and disseminating information:** proposed changes to promote sustainability should be accessible and interesting to users. Residents of the city should be invited to feel that they are part of a meaningful process of change that is replacing previously damaging lifestyles.

Three main tracks offer specific detailed recommendations, which could serve as a basis for municipal programs of action. Detailed policies and recommendations were prepared for sustainable public spaces, the municipality as a leader towards the sharing economy, and community as a driver for change.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SPACES:



The recommendations outlined below address the adaptation of urban spaces to the demands of various users. They propose new forms of activity and how they could take place at different hours, collaboration in the management of urban spaces and how remote sensors could monitor activities in the spaces. The recommendations aim at transforming urban spaces into multiple use areas that are flexible and functional for diverse population groups, and provide a focus for community life and for the city itself. This would be a dynamic process in which the urban space is constantly being updated, changed, and redesigned, while generating interactions among the designer, the users, and the space itself. The creation of such a space would attract a wide variety of activities that generate knowledge, which in turn promotes redesign of the space. Public space planning should not be restricted to administrative boundaries that determine the planning and management of public spaces. There is a need for new thinking about the role and vision of state, regional, and municipal authorities regarding public spaces, together with a willingness to compromise market forces for profit, and to regulate (the cornerstones of the neo-liberal system) in a way which creates a context for enabling different processes.

A two-phased approach is proposed for the promotion of sustainable public spaces in the city:

### 1 CLASSIFICATION OF URBAN SPACES BY HOW THEY ARE USED:

New thinking on public space planning should begin with a classification of sustainable uses of public spaces:

- ✓ Exploitation of space for changing, moveable and temporary uses
- ✓ Planning of facilities that allow for simultaneous multiple use

- ✓ Exploitation of spaces for diverse uses, not only for recreation, with an emphasis on work space
- ✓ Integration of virtual and physical reality through transient and permanent elements in public space
- ✓ Integration of street furniture and structures in the public space to enable additional uses and additional users of the space
- ✓ Development of occasional public spaces that can be used for a single activity and then removed or cleared
- ✓ Multiple uses for parking areas during times when not in use, for example community uses, sports, and recreation
- ✓ Promotion of urban agriculture in public spaces, turning urban agriculture into an integral part of the public space
- ✓ Development of urban sensor networks that support reflexive public spaces, to enable monitoring of their use in real time

## **2 MEASURES BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR CONTINUOUS RENEWAL OF THE CITY'S PUBLIC SPACES:**

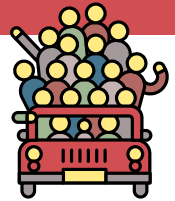
The local authority should establish a working group to consider sustainability in public spaces. The working group should be composed of representatives from various units both within and outside the municipality, reflecting multi-disciplinary aspects of the use of public spaces. Sensing devices and mapping could help identify the kind of activities relevant to public spaces, by drawing on information gathered from a range of sources regarding types of activity, space requirements, times of activities, and accessibility. (De)regulation and regulatory adjustments could enable experimental, spontaneous, and independent activities. Modifications to regulations should enable flexibility in the use of existing spaces, allow autonomy for community activities, and provide models of resourcing/fundraising to upgrade and manage public spaces.

The municipality should provide support for sustainable public spaces, for example, by supplying the infrastructure for freely accessible digital activities in public space, and by establishing and organizing an electronic, communications, or projection platform to be installed in public spaces, and by coordinating the

use of these platforms. Another example would be to provide the materials for local creative activities (single or ongoing events), such as enabling people to plant or paint.

Interactivity among users of the space and between users and the municipal network should be promoted to enhance dynamism and accessibility. The use of simple design elements could encourage sustainable use and help the municipality promote sustainable use of the space, almost subconsciously. The tools of urban design can help generate a design that by default fosters sustainability, without the need for large financial investment. The working model proposed for restructuring public spaces includes identifying the characteristics of new practices, identifying new users, and making the necessary adaptations to public spaces.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE SHARING ECONOMY IN MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION**



The sharing economy is currently evolving in Israel as around the world mainly at the initiative of business enterprise and in response to perceived markets. Active public engagement could promote implementation of the concepts of the sharing economy for the benefit of all. As the labs in Holon and Jerusalem demonstrated, the tools of the sharing economy could help individuals and cities resolve some of their problems (by providing transportation for children to extracurricular activities, or strengthening the city's small businesses, for example). The sharing economy offers ways to make better use of existing resources and skills, rather than for the production and consumption of new resources. Thus it is an effective tool for promoting a sustainable lifestyle, and has the potential to generate social benefits such as cohesive, active communities as well as a sense of belonging and social inclusiveness. The initiative and enablement of the sharing economy for sustainable urban lifestyles should come from the municipality. Initiatives launched by individual proponents encounter suspicion and obstacles that municipal engagement can help overcome. Municipalities can

provide the appropriate platform for implementation of the sharing economy in the city, thereby promoting a sustainable lifestyle. There is also a need for national-level tools and regulation to make such platforms available and suitable for the benefit of all.

### **MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING MEASURES TO PROMOTE THE SHARING ECONOMY:**

Areas where the sharing economy could offer a relative advantage need to be identified, and a strategic plan prepared that includes the necessary organizational and information systems for existing and additional platforms. A core group of leaders and personnel will require training to provide support for implementing the conceptual principles of the sharing economy.

A civil-municipal work infrastructure will need to be established to enable the implementation of the sharing economy and to redefine relations between stakeholders in the city (residents, local authority, and others). The municipality will need to create digital or physical platforms that enable citizens to join in and become prosumers (suppliers and users). When the infrastructure is available, measures for operating the sharing economy will include identifying partners, identifying resources and their suppliers, and mobilizing projects.

Supplementary activities could include encouraging sharing economy startups to operate in the city, and through them to address specific challenges; adopting regulations and bylaws designed to promote sharing economy platforms; and encouraging local communities and businesses to use the sharing economy, thereby reinforcing a sense of community and belonging, on the one hand, and local businesses, on the other.

Integrating these processes requires long-term vision as well as short-term outcomes that provide inspiration and build trust. Such a strategy could alter patterns of behavior in many areas of city life towards sharing and sustainability.

The main obstacle to the development of the sharing economy in Israel, as a strategy or integrated policy, is the lack of a coherent, systematic policy relating to the tools and platforms of the sharing economy. Changes in policies and tools will be needed at different levels (national and municipal) and of various types (regulation, taxation, conditions of employment).

**A coherent (national and municipal) public policy concerning the sharing economy in cities is required that gives priority to the public interest as seen by the municipality, rather than to the financial, entrepreneurial interests of commercial platforms. Several barriers need to be overcome, such as appropriate taxation and regulation and providing expertise and experience for managing the sharing economy in the municipal administration.**

## **COMMUNITIES AS LEVERS FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY**



There are a number of operative tools which could promote the role of communities as levers for urban sustainable lifestyles:

### **PROMOTING THE ROLE OF INTERMEDIARY ACTORS IN THE URBAN ARENA:**

Frequently the relationships between different actors (such as residents and authorities) reveal a lack of trust and differences in the way they perceive the situation. Trusted and skilled actors working with the community who know the municipal administration can help coordinate and mediate between stakeholders within the community. An effective intermediary actor can assist a community towards promoting a sustainable urban lifestyle. Intermediary actors may be part of the municipal authority or may evolve within the community. They should be familiar with the needs of the community, on the one hand, and know how to navigate the local authority or business community, on the other. Intermediary actors represent the needs of the community but are also well acquainted with the resources and opportunities to move things along in the relevant institution or organization. They are “interpreters” who can translate between civil society or the business community and the local authority. Their close familiarity with all the relevant stakeholders or institutions allows them to serve as a “Guide for the Perplexed” in the community and to expedite processes across different interfaces. Intermediary actors play an important

part in the emergence of community leadership, empowerment of residents, and encouragement of more local civil-society activity. Intermediary actors need to be identified, trained, and provided with the necessary means of action, such as:

- **Establishing “activist greenhouses” – training and empowerment programs for community activists:** Programs that offer a warm, supportive environment for community activism can help promote models for local community initiatives. They serve as a “greenhouse” for meaningful community activity that stems from residents’ authentic needs.
- **Creating areas of “reduced bureaucracy”:** Areas of minimal bureaucracy are an urban mechanism that can respond to and cope with unique or unusual activities, projects, and initiatives that emerge from the community. They provide a welcoming context in which entrepreneurs from the community can test new ideas “outside the box”. Current regulations and the complex structure of local authorities are not geared to enabling and supporting community initiatives. The difficulties are generated by budgetary restraints, the system’s lack of adaptability to unprecedented initiatives, and, as noted, bureaucracy and regulation. Tools should be developed to reduce these barriers in selected areas. Such tools may include the following:
  - **Establishing an integrated urban forum** that is flexible in granting permission for community activity, within the limits of the law;
  - **Designating municipal representatives** who are responsible for authorization to provide procedural guidance for community initiatives;
  - **Purchasing equipment for community activities** – such as stands, collapsible stages, or crowd-control barriers – and making them available upon request;
  - **Developing an application that “minimizes bureaucratic frustration”** by enabling the user to identify all relevant officials in the local authority and enable easy access to contact them;
  - **Allocating municipal buildings and facilities for community initiatives free of charge** or at a low cost; **integrating community objectives into municipal construction bids** so that the organizational structure can serve the community in a number of different ways;

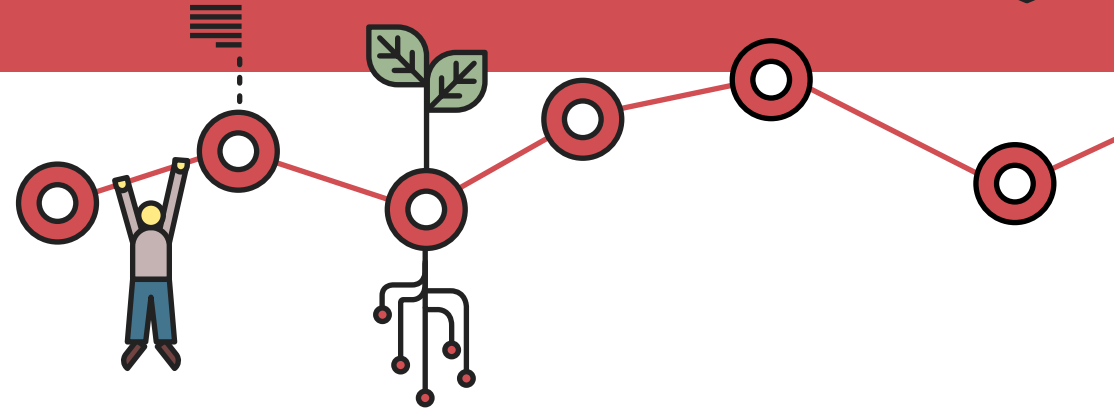
- **Enlisting the municipal marketing and advertising network to leverage community activity;**
- **Pooling funds for community activities** from the budgets of various municipal departments in order to support and proactively encourage “bottom-up” activities.
- **Creating professional networks to provide information and support cooperation:** Professional networks provide support, reinforcement, and space for learning and collaboration, with the aim of enabling steady, long-term activity. The process of establishing this network entails identifying and recruiting members, understanding and constructing the network, and developing and maintaining a program.
- **Developing tools to monitor public discourse:** Such tools help identify the important issues that need to be addressed before they become urgent including social networks. A mechanism is needed which can monitor the public and community discourse, review it, and respond to it. Procedures could be established to enable the municipal authority to maintain a “community monitor” that identifies nascent trends, so that the authority can reinforce them or address them as they emerge. This requires a willingness to accommodate plans that are not preconceived, and to work with entities that are not necessarily official (such as the community or activist residents). The project proposes a number of tools that can help the authority monitor public discourse.

**IN CONCLUSION**, the community can be a powerful lever in promoting a sustainable urban lifestyle. Local leadership can help identify the cultural characteristics of communities and adapt activities accordingly, to give visibility and publicity to activities that promote sustainability, and to enable connections among various actors in the community and between them and the local authority. Neighborhood associations can serve as integrating bodies that help imbue the concept of sustainability through local leadership by providing training and creating a shared language. Such community activities do not require large designated budgets but, rather, the pooling and harnessing of existing resources.

# 5

## A SET OF INDICATORS FOR ASSESSING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

The project developed a set of indicators (In Hebrew) for measuring urban sustainability. Using a global review of sustainability indices, and taking into account the project's vision and principles for promoting a sustainable lifestyle, a set of 42 indicators was proposed to assess to what extent the situation in a city or area correlated with the proposed principles of a sustainable lifestyle. This set of indicators could be adapted for use in a city or sub-section of a city, according to local objectives and needs. The value of such a set of indicators is the ability to apply it in stages to develop a picture of the city's progress both in relation to its own objectives and in comparison to other cities, and thus to make informed decisions regarding the appropriate policy for the city.





# CONCLUSION

The Urban Sustainability project conducted by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research looked at urban development through the lens of lifestyle changes, putting an emphasis on the following: reduction of consumption, collaboration, resource conservation, changing the city's modes of transportation, reinforcing the city's community affiliation, and using public space in different ways. The project concluded that under the guidance and leadership of the local authority, a strategy for sustainability would enhance urban wellbeing, reduce social gaps, and improve life for the residents of Israel's cities.



The Jerusalem Institute hopes that this document will provide inspiration, knowledge and tools for promoting a sustainable urban lifestyle in Israel, and will contribute to promoting the changes needed.