



# URBAN BUILDING CLEAN, HEALTHY CITIES FOR OCEAN CLEAN, HEALTHY SEAS

A first-of-its-kind initiative empowering cities to reduce plastic waste, develop a circular economy and build cleaner, healthier, and more resilient communities.

- Approximately 11 million metric tons of plastic flows into the ocean every year, most from mismanaged waste streams on land. Larger cities are a major source; but they are also a major driver of solutions.
- Research shows that one of the main ways to reduce the flow of ocean plastics is to improve waste collection and recycling systems. At the same time, analysis by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation revealed that to reach a circular economy, 50% of plastic packaging will have to be recycled, which requires basic waste collection and management infrastructure.
- To address this issue, we must implement policies that strengthen basic waste collection, increase the demand for recycled goods, attract private funding and investment, and increase public education and participation.

## CITIES: GOING FROM SOURCE TO SOLUTION ON OCEAN PLASTIC

- With over half of the world's population now living in cities, cities will be critical in driving solutions to the ocean plastic crisis.
- Cities generally have a leading role in building and running water, sanitation and waste management systems, so they are a natural partner to develop solutions in this area. Cities are also key actors in other areas critical for solving the marine plastic waste problem, including citizen education and awareness.
- At the same time, cities have interconnected policy priorities that lead them to prioritize investments in waste management, including public health, economic growth, and job creation. A multi-pronged approach that embeds the reduction of marine plastic waste into other core city priorities, with a range of co-benefits or “resilience dividends,” offers the best chance of sustainable solutions.





Photo: Mat Szwajkos / Aurora Photos

## WORKING WITH A RANGE OF PARTNERS ON SOLUTIONS

Many cities are taking action, but generally in isolation. Ocean Conservancy, Resilient Cities Network, The Circulate Initiative and the Trash Free Seas Alliance® is bringing together civil society actors, leading academics, financial institutions, and private sector leaders to develop, share and scale solutions to the ocean plastic problem that cut across silos and achieve multiple benefits. The initiative will bring new actors to the table, including:

- Global companies looking to reduce marine plastic waste across their supply chains that can implement and scale their programs across different localities;
- Waste management and city sustainability experts focused on stopping leakage who can bring their expertise to bear to improve recycling and help build a circular economy;
- Financial partners that can tap into the network to incubate, invest in, and scale innovative solutions; and
- Educators and others seeking to reduce waste and improve consumer involvement who can work through the platform to engage citizens and advocates in multiple cities simultaneously.

The platform will allow for faster, more effective development and deployment of solutions, so that policies that work in Seattle or Semarang or Santiago can be shared and adapted quickly elsewhere.

## PROGRAMMING AND APPROACH

Programming addresses three priorities: 1) Building public-private partnerships between cities, businesses, and financing organizations; 2) Encouraging waste reduction and consumer recycling through education; and 3) Sharing best practices and developing model policies through peer networking and exchanges.

In June 2020, Urban Ocean announced its first cohort of learning and mentor cities. Nine cities were selected because of their commitment to improving waste management as part of resilience-building efforts and their potential to provide solutions in geographies with high waste leakage rates (learning cities), or because they are leading the way in the fight against river and ocean plastic or in implementing circular economy approaches (mentor cities).

### WHO WE ARE



### GET IN TOUCH

For more information contact  
Keri Browder, Cities Project  
Director at Ocean Conservancy:  
[kbrowder@oceanconservancy.org](mailto:kbrowder@oceanconservancy.org).



URBAN  
OCEAN