



## 2018-2023 Strategic Plan

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## Executive Summary

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January 2018 marks the beginning of a new strategic plan for the Partners for Places (P4P) program. Implementation of this plan will be in service to the mission and vision below.

**Mission.** Partners for Places is a matching grant program that enhances local capacity to build equitable and sustainable communities. We do this by building partnerships and implementing urban sustainability projects with local government sustainability leaders, place based foundations, and national foundations.

**Vision.** Partners for Places envisions strong and meaningful local partnerships that result in equitable and sustainable communities.

**Theory of Change.** In order to achieve equitable and sustainable communities, we need increased local funding and implementation capacity. To achieve increased local capacity, we must:

1. Foster relationships between local sustainability practitioners, local foundations, and national funders;
2. Align local and national sustainability priorities, and;
3. Enhance national funding capacity to invest in urban sustainability practices with local partners.

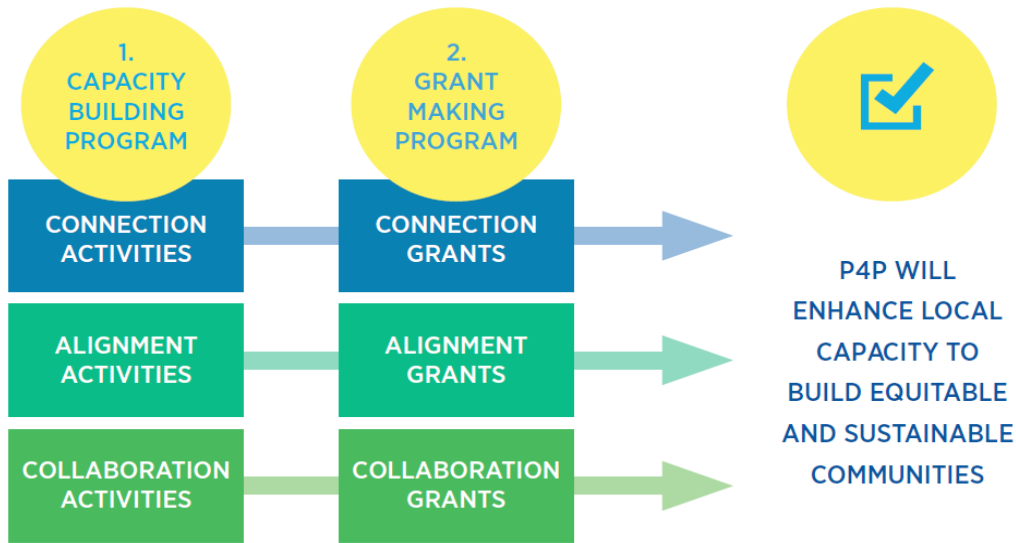
**Goals.** P4P will strive to achieve the following goals:

- **Goal 1- Continuous Improvement:** P4P is continuously improving through flexible, responsive, and adaptive program management and operations.
- **Goal 2- Inspire Interest:** P4P inspires local and national funder interest in the urban sustainability field.
- **Goal 3- Build Relationships:** P4P builds relationships between local practitioners, local funders, and national funders.
- **Goal 4- Align Priorities:** P4P aligns local practitioners, local funders, and national funders around shared urban sustainability interests.

**Goal 5- Coordinate Collaboration and Collective Action:** P4P coordinates collaboration between local practitioners, local funders, and national funders around shared urban sustainability interests to foster collective action.

**Targets.** Through implementing this plan, P4P will double its impact through partnerships that result in equitable and sustainable communities.

**P4P Program Areas.** P4P will deliver two programs that reinforce activities and grants for local practitioners, local funders, and national funders to connect, align, and collaborate.



## Document Purpose

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Partners for Places (P4P) is a matching grant program that has focused on funding projects to build long-term relationships between local government sustainability practitioners (herein referred to as “local practitioners”) and place-based foundations (herein referred to as “local funders”). P4P is a partnership between [the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities \(TFN\)](#) and [the Urban Sustainability Directors Network \(USDN\)](#).

P4P is an innovator in cross-sector funding collaboration and has been since its creation in 2012. Through deliberate coordination between national funders within TFN and local practitioners at USDN, P4P has pursued a unique grant-making model to build local funding capacity for urban sustainability practices. The purpose of this strategic plan is to guide P4P in its work in the coming years, seeking to build on the success P4P has achieved to date and amplify the partners’ resources and impact by refining its vision and doubling down on its original operating principle: that collaboration can yield results beyond what any single partner can achieve alone.

Collaborative theory is the centerpiece of P4P’s strategic plan. By coordinating and funding efforts to achieve connection, alignment, and collaborative action between local practitioners, local funders and national funders, P4P will create an enduring ecosystem at the local level that supports urban sustainability for all residents. This plan is structured to provide enough specificity to achieve measurable results in the next three to five years while maintaining the flexibility necessary to respond to emerging needs and opportunities into the future.

The P4P Strategic Plan was created with the guidance and input from individuals in nine organizations (see [Appendix A](#)). The contributors volunteered their time through interviews, calls, and retreats. Thank you to all who invested their time and perspective in shaping P4P’s future.



## Background

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The P4P program provides 1:1 matching grants to collaborative projects between a local practitioner and a local funder. Eligible projects must advance one or more aspects of the local government’s sustainability plan, or assist in creating a sustainability plan (or a functional equivalent, such as a comprehensive climate action plan or an area identified for improvement by certified STAR communities).<sup>1</sup>

P4P is hosted and managed by TFN in partnership with USDN. TFN is a membership organization that supports grant makers in advancing strategies “to create fair, prosperous, and sustainable regions and communities that offer everyone the chance for a good life.”<sup>2</sup> TFN does this by sharing knowledge, resources, tools, and models with funders; fostering networks among grant makers, practitioners, and policymakers to help funders accomplish their goals, and; encouraging philanthropic leadership by managing issue- and place-based working groups and networks, and funder collaborations.

P4P’s practitioner partner, USDN, is a peer-to-peer network of 169 cities from across the U.S. and Canada that represents over 80 million people. USDN’s vision is for its member governments to lead the way to a sustainable, low-carbon future by developing, adopting, and sharing practices that create equitable and prosperous communities and a healthy environment. Peer exchange and collaboration between local government sustainability leaders are seen as catalysts that accelerate the creation and implementation of urban sustainability solutions.

To date, Partners for Places has awarded \$5.4 million across North America in this successful matching grant program. There have been eleven rounds of grants completed in the general program totaling more than \$4,800,000 and two rounds of grants for the Equity Pilot Initiative for nearly \$616,000. Ten foundation investors provided the funding for these grants: Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, The JPB Foundation, The Kendeda Fund, the MacArthur Foundation, The New York Community Trust, Pisces Foundation, The Summit Foundation, Surdna Foundation, and the Turner Foundation. Local place-based foundations matched these grants, bringing the total invested in local sustainability projects to nearly \$11 million.

[Ullman Consulting](#), launched the strategic planning process with P4P in April 2017. They used an iterative visioning process guided by research and stakeholder interviews to develop a vision shared by the project stakeholders for this strategic plan. [Appendix B](#) outlines the research process.

## Plan Assumptions

The following assumptions and definitions should be noted and provide helpful context when reading the plan.

### Definitions:

- **Urban Sustainability Initiative:** An urban sustainability initiative is one that would advance a key aspect of a local sustainability, climate action, adaptation/resilience, or comprehensive plan provision

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<sup>1</sup> The following background summary has been sourced from the P4P program evaluation with permission from The Summit Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> TFN website: <http://www.fundersnetwork.org/about>



that specifically addresses sustainability, or any plan endorsed by the mayor or city manager that states the goal of balancing economic development, environmental quality, and equity (which means both inclusion in decisions of all parts of the community and equitable outcomes for all people in the community including people of color and low-income communities).

- **Equity:** P4P partners agree that equity is a P4P core value that should be incorporated holistically and programmatically in all aspects of the program. The plan includes specific goals and strategies to expand and amplify this ongoing process. P4P believes, as stated in its grant RFP, that the social equity dimension of sustainability seeks a fair distribution of burdens and benefits of actions among current and future stakeholders, access to resources in a way that is not reliant on position or group, and ways for all stakeholders to be included in the process of shaping the strategies and policies that are adopted. P4P's definition of equity includes a specific concern around race and inclusion as well as economic inclusion.
- **Local Partnerships:** Goals and strategies related to building local partnerships are assumed to target local practitioners (i.e., sustainability directors, chief sustainability officers, etc.) and local matching funders. The relationship between the local practitioner and local matching funder is the primary relationship and must be included in P4P implementation grant proposals. However, grant projects may also reach beyond this foundational relationship and include additional local partners, like NGOs, utilities, residents, etc. As P4P experiments with content-specific RFPs, a local practitioner could include local government practitioners with specific content expertise such as urban water management or green infrastructure, working in complementary ways with a sustainability director.
- **Capacity Building:** The scope of capacity building efforts can be targeted to impact different levels ranging from individual, to organizational, to systemic. In this strategic plan, capacity building intends to span impact across all three levels. Furthermore, capacity building activities can be designed to produce outcomes in the following areas: efficiency, effectiveness, scale/reach, and/or leveraged resources. The outcomes from capacity building to result from implementation of this plan will primarily be in the scale/reach and leveraged resources categories for the individuals and systems impacted. Increased capacity at the organizational level (Partners for Places) will be in all four outcome areas. See [Appendix C](#) for more detail and an activity to guide implementation thinking.
- **Regional Partnerships:** Historically, P4P projects have involved partnerships in a single jurisdiction. This plan envisions local partnerships that may reach beyond single jurisdictions into broader metro areas and regions.
- **USDN High Impact Practices:** References to high impact practice areas (HIPs) are used throughout the plan in a general sense to refer to specific, content-focused areas of urban sustainability. P4P stakeholders agree that these content-areas should be informed and ideally aligned with USDN's (to be) formally adopted HIPs, but that P4P's efforts would not be strictly bound by those areas. This will allow P4P to be open to emerging practices and opportunities.

## Context

- **Family of Funds:** While P4P envisions itself as a part of USDN's Family of Funds, the strategic plan does not position the fund to be the sole or main funding source for sustainable practice



adoption or wide scale implementation of USDN’s HIPs. P4P anticipates serving as an important supporter of sustainable practice adoption in local communities. At the same time, P4P will intentionally seek to complement, leverage, and avoid duplicating efforts of the Family of Funds to achieve maximum impact.

- **Implementation Timeframe:** P4P will pursue implementing strategies to fulfill the goals, vision, and mission of the program over the next three to five years (2018-2022) while maintaining the flexibility necessary to respond to emerging needs and opportunities into the future.

## Plan Framing

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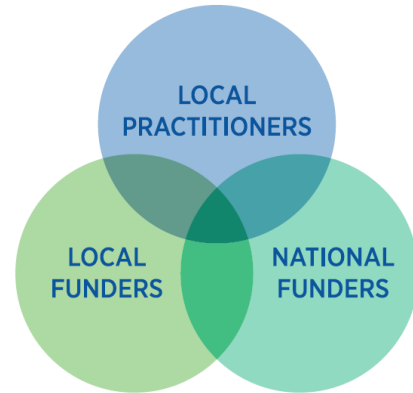
The intersection of philanthropy and urban sustainability has significantly evolved since the creation of P4P. What started as a relatively small-scale collaboration platform for national funders to experiment with local foundations and urban sustainability leaders has expanded and is positioned for a refreshed vision. This strategic plan reflects the next generation vision for P4P that includes three key shifts from past strategy.

### 1. Who: Three Target Audiences

The foundation of this strategic plan is grounded in a collaborative theory that seeks to build partnerships among three distinct audiences see Figure 1. Bringing these three audiences into stronger partnership and tighter alignment is the first key shift.

- **Local practitioners:** Local government sustainability directors or practitioners with expertise in the urban sustainability field.
- **Local funders:** Place-based foundations or other non-public sector funding entities that provide or could provide matching grant funds. These may be metro or regionally focused.
- **National funders:** Philanthropic grant making organizations that have a national focus.

Figure 1: P4P Target Audiences



Historically, P4P’s strategic vision for “partnerships” has focused on the relationship between local practitioners and local matching funders for project implementation; research for this plan revealed that this core partnership is what makes P4P unique and offers differentiated value to fund partners. This plan seeks to strengthen these core partnerships and improve sustainability outcomes in communities through new or stronger collaboration between local practitioners and local funders.

National funders have also played a historic role in P4P by collaboratively funding the program and participating in the grant Selection Committee. This plan intends to put national funders more actively in the partnership circle by building relationships and aligning national funders around priorities that are shared by local practitioners and local funders. It is anticipated that these efforts, if implemented successfully, would



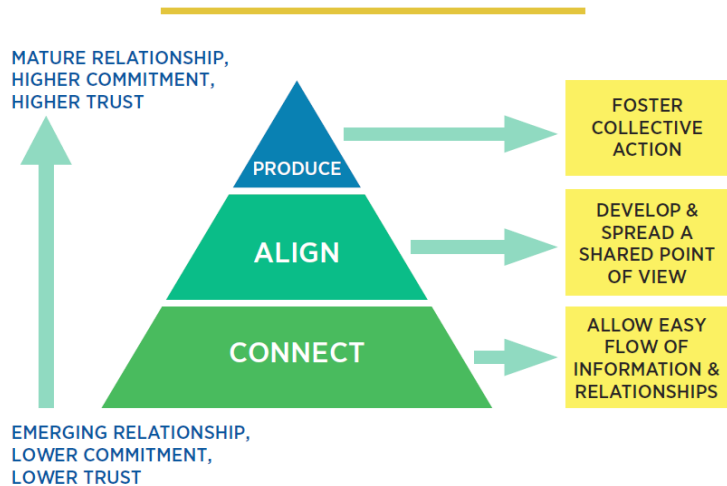
attract new funders to urban sustainability efforts. While there are questions around the capacity and interest of national funders to engage more proactively in these activities, P4P believes it is important to test and invest in these efforts to sustain and grow its vision into the future.

Developing successful collaborations among the three audiences will require varied strategies that often target these specific audiences in different ways. As a result, strategies included in this plan will specify the audiences targeted for that specific effort. It is anticipated that local practitioners and local matching funders will develop long-term, hands-on partnerships that advance urban sustainability programs and projects within local communities. The partnership envisioned with national funders is intended to grow the pipeline of support for these local efforts, where P4P intends to attract more national funders to the partnership table by expanding relationships and alignments around content-specific urban sustainability goals. By building relationships between each of these target audiences, P4P believes it can successfully build greater local capacity to produce equitable and sustainable communities.

## 2. How: Two Programs to Connect, Align, and Produce

Fostering partnerships between local practitioners, local funders, and national funders as envisioned in this plan is informed by core concepts for building successful collaborations from social impact network theory. In *Connecting to Change the World*, Cleveland, Plastrik, and Taylor detail the path to build relationships for effective collaboration. This path starts with connecting people around shared interests, weaving them together to align their interests, and supporting their alignment by fostering collaboration and collective action. *This is called the connect - align - produce sequence (Figure 2).*

Figure 2: Connect – Align – Produce Sequence



To date, most P4P resources have focused on supporting production activities by awarding grants to local partnerships between sustainability directors and place-based foundations. Production for P4P involved partner collaboration to implement a specific grant-funded project. A second key shift in P4P’s strategic plan is the decision to also fund activities that help local practitioners, local matching funders, AND national funders connect, align, AND produce in order to improve outcomes.

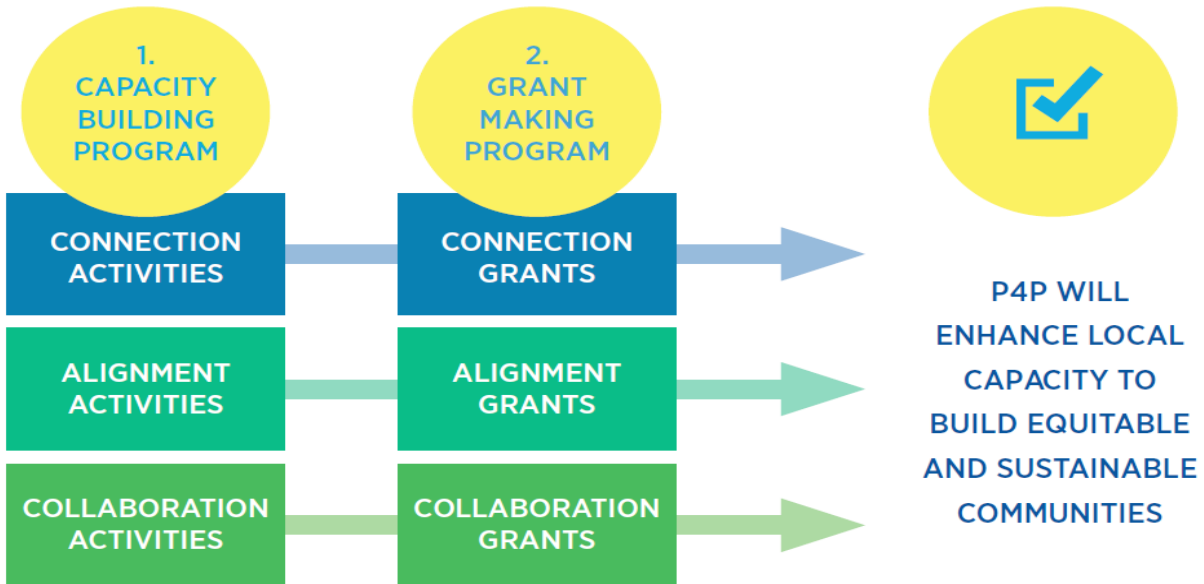
Historically, P4P offered one program focused on grant making for project implementation. Going forward, P4P will offer two programs, each of which includes activities designed to connect, align, and support collaboration of the three target audiences. These two program areas include: (1) capacity building and (2) grant making. In the past, P4P provided capacity building efforts embedded within the grant program, but this plans seeks to increase and expand these efforts through a formal program. Figure 3 depicts how the two programs will be moving toward the same mission to enhance local capacity to build equitable and sustainable





communities. Both programs will have activities that dovetail based on their connect, align, collaboration design elements.

Figure 3: P4P Program Areas



### 3. What: Broad and Focused Sustainability Topics

The third key shift in P4P's strategy is to further introduce content-specific areas of urban sustainability (i.e. water, stormwater, etc.) into the grant making program primarily to expand national funder interest in P4P's efforts, although this ideally will also attract new local funders. At this point in the still-young urban sustainability field, there has been little universal agreement and alignment around best practices or content priorities. Practitioner readiness to collectively identify a cluster of high-impact practices, as exemplified in USDN's strategic plan, signals a significant evolution and maturation for the field. It also presents a strategic opportunity to attract national funders to the mission by offering specific content areas that may fit within their existing goals. Implementation of this strategy can build on P4P's existing experience applying this approach to equity and stormwater. Full implementation will require a phased approach to allow time to learn from some experimental grants and the most successful ways to attract additional national funders to P4P.

## Mission, Vision, Theory of Change and Targets





To understand where P4P is heading, it can be helpful to understand where the program is coming from. This section of the plan details the previous guiding language for the program and the revised language to provide context.

## Mission

- **Previous Mission:** Partners for Places is a matching grant program that improves U.S. and Canadian communities by building partnerships between local government sustainability leaders and place-based foundations.
- **Revised Mission:** Partners for Places is a matching grant program that enhances local capacity to build equitable and sustainable communities. We do this by building partnerships and implementing urban sustainability projects with local government sustainability leaders, place based foundations, and national foundations.

## Vision

- **Previous Vision:** Partnerships to promote a healthy environment, a strong economy, and wellbeing for all residents.
- **Revised Vision:** Partners for Places envisions strong and meaningful local partnerships that result in equitable and sustainable communities.

## Theory of Change

**Proposed Theory of Change:** In order to achieve equitable and sustainable communities, we need increased local funding and implementation capacity. To achieve increased local capacity, we must:

1. Foster relationships between local sustainability practitioners, local foundations, and national funders;
2. Align local and national sustainability priorities, and;
3. Enhance national funding capacity to invest in urban sustainability practices with local partners.

## Targets

Through implementing this plan, P4P will double its impact through partnerships that result in equitable and sustainable communities.



## Strategic Plan Detail

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**Goal 1- Continuous Improvement: P4P is continuously improving through flexible, responsive, and adaptive program management and operations.**

Throughout the strategic planning process, there was widespread agreement on pursuing efforts to continually improve P4P’s operations and infrastructure, independent of its strategic direction. The strategies to support this goal are intended to be shorter-term priorities that are pursued over the next 12 months.

- 1.1. Strategy: Continually expand P4P commitment, practice, and understanding of equity. As a first step, review the equity pilot program to identify strengths and weaknesses including lessons that could be incorporated into the overall general grants program.** P4P program’s integration of equity principles, like the field of urban sustainability, has increased over time. In 2015, 75% of P4P grants voluntarily incorporated equity components into their projects. While equity is not a program requirement per se, based on the current scoring criteria, projects that include an equity component have a better chance of receiving funding<sup>3</sup>. The current general grant program RFP selection criteria related to equity are: 1. Extent of meaningful involvement of priority audiences/stakeholders in program development and implementation, including people of color, people with low incomes, and/or residents from immigrant or refugee communities. There is guidance about meaningful engagement. 2. Extent to which the project design reduces disparities for the most marginalized while improving well-being for all. P4P will reinforce the equity requirements in the P4P general grant program and evolve as needed.
- 1.2. Strategy: Establish a two committee governance structure for P4P that involves different stakeholders in different decision making activities for the fund.** Layer a P4P Governance Committee into the P4P governance structure in addition to the existing Grant Selection Committee and establish co-chairs for each committee. The Governance Committee will provide leadership direction, ensure program accountability, and enable fund investor participation in P4P strategy. The Grant Selection Committee will interpret Governance Committee leadership direction and provide comment on the grant program RFP designs, review grant applications, and collaboratively award grants. Currently the only opportunity for program funders and local practitioners to participate in P4P governance is to be on the Grant Selection Committee. In the future, the two committee will provide more choice for stakeholders to determine the best fit for their skills and the time they have to contribute to P4P.

**Table 1. Committee Roles and Responsibilities**

Key Decision Maker	Roles and Responsibilities
<b>P4P Governance Committee:</b> This committee includes Program Funders, Practitioner	1. Plan for and participate in raising funds for the program. 2. Set goals and strategy

<sup>3</sup> P4P Equity Pilot Program Lessons Learned Report



<p>Network Staff (TFN and USDN), and Local Practitioners, and potentially Matching Funders.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Determine where Matching Funders can participate in governance and how they are selected</li> <li>4. Review impact and performance of program</li> <li>5. Manager program management staff, support them, and hold them accountable to achieve deliverables and targets</li> <li>6. Guide marketing and communications efforts</li> </ol>
<p><b>Grant Selection Committee:</b> This committee includes Network Staff (TFN and USDN) and Local Practitioners, and Matching Funders (see strategy 4.2).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide advisory review of grant RFPs and selection criteria</li> <li>2. Review and score applications</li> <li>3. Determine grant awards</li> <li>4. Communications</li> </ol>
<p><b>Grant Program Management:</b> Grant management is performed by TFN Staff and program contractor/s reporting to the Governance Committee.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordinate the Governance Committee</li> <li>2. Coordinate the Grant Selection Committee</li> <li>3. Interpret strategy direction, create grant RFPs, and selection criteria</li> <li>4. Conduct applicant outreach, technical assistance, communications, and capacity building activities</li> <li>5. Award grants, track and monitor grant program impact and performance, serve as overall liaison to grantees</li> </ol>

- 1.3. **Strategy: Design and implement ongoing program assessment using a framework that includes impact goals, desired outcomes, metrics, and tracking system.** Measuring and reporting the impact of P4P’s grants are important ways for stakeholders to understand how the fund is achieving its vision and mission. Framework components will be broad enough to allow for continued flexibility and innovation in grant applications while not overburdening grantees. The framework will be determined through the staff work planning process in the first year of implementation of this plan.
- 1.4. **Strategy: Identify and define P4P’s core values.** An organization’s core values support its vision and shape the culture around its work. During the P4P retreat, the need to formally adopt a set of core values was identified by the group.
- 1.5. **Strategy: Continue to house P4P in TFN with an annual evaluation.** As TFN makes its way from the founding CEO to a new leader, the organization will certainly make changes. How these changes will impact P4P is unknown. Similarly, USDN is in an evolutionary period as it charts its implementation path toward its new strategic vision. Given that these two key partners are both in varying stages of strategic planning, it is logical to maintain P4P’s current place within TFN and reconsider its housing as circumstances evolve. The Governance Committee will annually evaluate TFN’s performance as well as the best organizational fit for P4P as the future unfolds.
- 1.6. **Strategy: Continue the close relationships with USDN and the USDN Family of Funds to ensure P4P complements other urban sustainability field collaborations.** Conduct an informal evaluation of P4P position within the Family of Funds to ensure the program complements other existing efforts and avoids duplication across the funds. Assess what is being funded from the Family of Funds, and seek opportunities to maximize impact. Continue to evaluate emergent opportunities for P4P to support efforts within the Family of Funds to bring local ideas to a national level, and to accelerate local adoption of innovative sustainability practices.



- 1.7. **Strategy: Evaluate and make necessary changes to the amount of resources needed to implement its strategic plan.** Stakeholder feedback consistently expressed concern about the amount of staff time available to manage the fund and improve its current operations and infrastructure. To implement the continuous improvement recommendations and drive the strategic plan, it is estimated that the equivalent of a full-time staff member will be needed to run the program, with existing staff providing oversight. Resources dedicated to P4P could be structured a number of ways, including contract assistance for specific initiatives.

### Goal 2- Inspire Interest: P4P inspires local and national funder interest in the urban sustainability field.

To build capacity locally, P4P needs to expand the audience of funders supporting urban sustainability initiatives. To move towards this goal P4P will embrace activities and strategies designed to inspire interest and increase engagement with potentially interested funders.

- 1.8. **Strategy: Integrate urban sustainability topics into existing funder calls, conversations, and meetings** to demonstrate the value and depth of the technical knowledge that could improve their grant making. P4P will leverage existing funder work groups, for example the GREEN working group in TFN, to engage other funders who have priorities that overlap with the urban sustainability field. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Funders, and (2) National Funders*
- 1.9. **Strategy: Continue to create and share communications materials that tell success stories from the P4P model.** Prepare materials to educate and inspire interest in urban sustainability and the P4P model; for example, the STAR program uses one-pagers and other materials that communicate about the program effectively and widely. Improve outreach to potential applicants, local funders, and national funders. Program staff currently perform all of these activities and more, yet the amount of time they are able to dedicate to this does not match the need. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Funders, and (2) National Funders*
- 1.10. **Strategy: Fund in-person learning tours for funders to gain perspective about urban sustainability projects and programs.** A learning tour is designed to inspire and compel an audience as they gain hands-on insight and experience related to a content area. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Funders, and (2) National Funders*

### Goal 3- Build Relationships: P4P builds relationships between local practitioners, local funders, and national funders.

In order to enhance the impact of P4P's mission, the fund needs to expand the network of local and national funders who want to work with local practitioners to implement urban sustainability best practices. Many funders have not historically invested in municipal activities and have little contacts or connection points to urban sustainability practitioners. Collaboration theory tells us that these stakeholders will more meaningfully align around a shared purpose if they first develop a trusting relationship. P4P will implement and track progress on strategies that are specifically designed to create new connections and deepen existing connections between local practitioners, local funders and national funders.



- 1.11. **Strategy: Conduct peer learning calls on urban sustainability topics between local practitioners and funders.** Leverage P4P partner organizations such as TFN, USDN, the Green Infrastructure Leadership Exchange, regional practitioner networks, and regional funder networks to weave funders and local practitioners together to learn from each other. Call topics could include stormwater, climate adaptation, and aligning strategies for public health and climate adaptation, etc. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, (2) Local Funders, and (3) National Funders*
- 1.12. **Strategy: Integrate practitioners into funder convenings when appropriate and funders into practitioner convenings when appropriate.** Continue to explore opportunities to leverage the USDN annual meeting to gather P4P committees and stakeholders and look for opportunities to engage local practitioners in funder meetings. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, (2) Local Funders, and (3) National Funders*
- 1.13. **Strategy: Offer grants for local peer learning exchanges between local funders and local practitioners.** Provide resources for in-person learning convenings between local practitioners and foundation staff. These do not have to be matching grants because it is the beginning of relationship development and collaborating to share resources is a high trust activity that takes time to build. The distinction between this strategy and strategy 2.3 is that this is specifically for local practitioners and local funders to learn from each other about local matters. Strategy 2.3. is to inspire local and national funders about urban sustainability and help them connect urban sustainability solutions to their goals. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, and (2) Local Funders*
- 1.14. **Strategy: Work toward hosting annual retreats for P4P committees.** At the retreats, the Governance Committee would tend to program performance reporting, accountability assurance, and strategy discussions. The Grant Selection Committee could focus on RFP strategy to meet Governance Committee strategy direction or go the route of in-person deliberations for grant selection. These dedicated, face-to-face meetings will build relationships and enhance stakeholder alignment as well as the overall effectiveness of the grant program. This strategy can reinforce more than one goal in this plan. Additional goals this supports include Goal 1, 4, and 5. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, (2) Local Funders, and (3) National Funders*

#### Goal 4- Align Priorities: P4P aligns local practitioners, local funders, and national funders around shared urban sustainability priorities.

The current P4P grant design intends for collaborative goal setting between the funder and sustainability director, yet this doesn't always happen. Sometimes the goal setting is done from one party of the other who then solicits interest from the other party in order to apply for the grant. Moving forward, the first priority will be a shared desire to work together and engage in processes to collaboratively determine common purposes, goals, and objectives.

- 1.15. **Strategy: Regularly survey and/or conduct focus groups with all three target audiences (local practitioners, local funders, and national funders) to identify potential alignment areas for P4P implementation grants and for P4P grant program funding.** Use these insights, and insights from regular USDN member surveys, to inform P4P Governance Committee strategy conversations, P4P collaborations



with new program funders, and matchmaking between local practitioners and local funders. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, (2) Local Funders, and (3) National Funders*

- 1.16. **Strategy: Include local practitioners, local funders, and national funders in P4P Committees.** (See strategy 1.2) Currently, P4P committees include local practitioners and national funders. By expanding to also include local funders, P4P can gain perspective and insights from all three target audiences of the program. Furthermore, by inviting local matching funders to actively collaborate with national funders and practitioners within P4P governance, we will better align investment opportunities with local funder perspectives and needs. They can also serve as ambassadors to their peers to encourage more broad participation. We can start by inviting past funders of P4P grants. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, (2) Local Funders, and (3) National Funders*
- 1.17. **Strategy: Conduct a formal process to align and “match” local practitioners to local funders for each RFP.** This matchmaking activity, which happens informally already, would benefit from a formal process that is implemented thoroughly and consistently going forward. This may look something like this: 1. Solicit interest in the grant from both local funders and practitioners; 2. Host a pitch-making call; and 3. After solicitation, if there is not a direct match, conduct outreach to instigate an introduction call. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, and (2) Local Funders*
- 1.18. **Strategy: Offer grants for community alignment activities such as collective impact or other shared planning processes.** In these processes, local practitioners, local funders, and other community partners would work together to establish a shared identity around sustainability. These don't have to be matching grants because it is the beginning of relationship development and collaborating to share resources is a high trust activity that takes time to build. The intention would be to test these types of grants to determine if they enrich local partnerships and later produce higher quality grant proposals. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, and (2) Local Funders*

## Goal 5- Coordinate Collaboration: P4P coordinates collaboration and collective action between local practitioners, local funders, and national funders around shared urban sustainability interests.

Once local practitioners and local funders are connected and aligned, they can more effectively design a proposal and work together to implement projects - and, ideally, long-term initiatives - to achieve collective impact. Collaboration with national funders will focus on expanding opportunities for P4P to offer content specific grant programming that aligns local practitioners and national funder priorities.

- 1.19. **Strategy: Continue offering matching grants for urban sustainability project implementation.** The current P4P RFP approach is well-suited to support production activities for collaboratives that are already connected and aligned. Consider adding scoring criteria that awards points for applicants who have participated in fund coordinated/funded connection and alignment activities. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, and (2) Local Funders*



- 1.20. **Strategy: Offer grants for proposal writing technical assistance similar to those from the USDN Innovation Fund.** The process to coordinate partners through an implementation project design project can be time-consuming and technical. We can support applicants by creating proposal writing grants and potentially offer in house proposal development technical assistance.. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, and (2) Local Funders*
- 1.21. **Strategy: Continue experimenting with content-specific grants (e.g. stormwater) that connect, align and support collaborative implementation projects. The content specific approach will create space for additional national funders and local funders to collaborate with local practitioners through P4P.** *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, (2) Local Funders, and (3) National Funders*
- 1.22. **Strategy: Seek to transition the P4P Equity Pilot into an ongoing grant program when the pilot is completed as the first example of P4P's efforts to pursue deep impact in a focused content area.** P4P began a pilot program to test additional equity programming in order to foster equity practice development. The pilot included coaching, training, and technical assistance support to effectively integrate equity into urban sustainability practices. When the pilot is completed, P4P should evaluate the feasibility of transitioning it to a permanent program, applying lessons learned. *Target Audiences: (1) Local Practitioners, (2) Local Funders, and (3) National Funders*

## Phase 1 Implementation Priorities

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This section of the plan includes the initial thinking regarding implementation timeline and priorities.

### 2018 Priorities

- Maintain existing programming
- Transition Equity Pilot into a program
- Build new program infrastructure (e.g. Governance Committee)
- Identify and pursue additional resources to support the expansion of the program and the hiring of additional support staff (i.e. program admin and new program funding)

### 2019 Priorities

- Expand grants programs to include new offerings
- Roll out new capacity building programs
- Design and implement ongoing program assessment using a framework that includes impact goals, desired outcomes, metrics, and tracking system.





## Appendix A- Strategic Plan Contributors

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The following people contributed to the creation of this strategic plan:

**Table 2. Strategic Plan Contributors**

<b>Strategic Planning Committee</b>		
Michael	Armstrong	Former USDN Co-Chair/ City Scale
Dana	Bourland	JPB Foundation
Jennifer	Cummings	The Funders' Network
Arturo	Garcia- Costas	New York Community Trust
Diane	Ives	Kendeda Fund
Nils	Moe	USDN
Sudha	Nandagopal	USDN Member
Susanna	Sutherland	USDN/P4P
Ann	Wallace	The Funders' Network
Darryl	Young	Summit Foundation
<b>Consultants</b>		
Maggie	Ullman	Ullman Consulting
Lauren	Bradley	Ullman Consulting
<b>Other P4P Funders</b>		
Jessica	Boehland	Kresge Foundation
Alison	Corwin	Surdna Foundation
Joaquin	Mercado	JPB Foundation
Kelly	Shultz	Bloomberg Philanthropies
Kelly	Terry	Surdna Foundation
Dawnette	Zuniga	JPB Foundation
<b>Other</b>		
Erik	Amundson	USDN
Ashley	Quintana	The Funders' Network

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## Appendix B- Process and Research

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Ullman Consulting launched the strategic planning process with P4P in April 2017 using an iterative visioning process guided by research and stakeholder interviews to develop a vision shared by the project stakeholders for this strategic plan. This process is outlined below.

- **As a first step in the process, a continuum of vision scenarios was developed and presented to the Strategic Planning Committee, a subset of fund partners selected to guide the planning process.** This [set of five possible vision scenarios](#) was developed using preliminary stakeholder input and research to illustrate different strategic directions P4P could consider. These scenarios were used as a starting point to test assumptions and gather feedback from stakeholders. The feedback from stakeholders largely reflected ideas about the fund mechanics, design, and operations, and, as a result, although titled “vision scenarios,” they were really more representative of the fund design ideas at that time.
- **Strategic Planning Committee members completed a [SWOT Assessment](#) using the five vision scenarios.** This exercise asked each member to narrow the scenarios he or she was most interested in pursuing and to complete an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for those scenarios. Committee members were also asked to share reasons they did not choose the other options. During this process, it became apparent that there were clusters of interest around three preliminary vision scenarios, number 3 (“Continuous Improvement”), 4 (“Fund Management Platform”), and 5 (“Family of Funds”).
- **Interviews with stakeholders and calls with the Strategic Planning Committee, committee co-chairs, and TFN staff were used to gather more in-depth feedback.** Interviewees were asked a [set of interview questions](#) designed to obtain input on P4P’s unique value propositions, drivers, goals, and reactions to specific scenarios. A set of [Preliminary Research Observations \(Appendix A\)](#) was developed to summarize to qualitative input received through the interview process.
- **Using stakeholder feedback, the original five vision scenarios were revised into a set of “Continuous Improvement Recommendations” and two updated vision scenarios.** The Continuous Improvement Recommendations captured goals for improving P4P’s operations and infrastructure, regardless of its future strategic direction. The two vision scenarios presented options for building local funding capacity and/or building national funding capacity for urban sustainability practices. The [Continuous Improvement Recommendations and revised vision scenarios](#) were presented to P4P partners for further discussion at its retreat.
- **Strategic Planning Committee members participated in a retreat August 17-18, 2017.** The group discussed the Continuous Improvement Recommendations and revised vision scenarios, and ultimately resolved on [key decisions and the strategic framework](#) included in this plan.
- **Additional Stakeholders reviewed the Draft Strategic Plan and provided comment via a webinar December 19, 2017.** This webinar included P4P and USDN committees.



## Appendix C- Capacity Building Framework

Capacity building is a central theme of this strategic plan and needs to be fully understood in order to implement this plan to the fullest potential. To guide shared thinking of P4P stakeholders, the Governance Committee would benefit from exploring concepts around capacity building in more depth. The information below is provided to seed this important thinking exercise.

**Levels of Impact:** Capacity building is often understood by first determining what level the activities are seeking to impact. Three levels of impact for capacity building include: individual, organizational, and systemic.

- **Individual:** improve the performance of an individual's, skills, knowledge, and competencies.
- **Organizational:** improve the performance of internal organizational systems and processes leading to stronger organizations with the ability to adapt and continue to develop over time.
- **Systemic:** improve the external environment in which organizations and individuals function, including structures supporting the way organizations interact, and/or policies and standards that must be adhered to.

**Target Outcomes:** By determining what level the capacity building activities are seeking to impact, one can then focus on what type of outcomes they seek to produce. The following categories are common capacity building outcomes: scale/reach, leveraged resources, effectiveness, and efficiency.

- **Scale/ Reach:** increased scale/reach can be measured by the number of new people served, new populations served, and/ or new or expanded services.
- **Leveraged Resources:** additional resources or assets garnered through capacity building activities (such as funding, volunteers, in-kind support, and partnerships).
- **Effectiveness:** improved ability to achieve outcomes resulting in better success rates or better quality of outcomes achieved.
- **Efficiency:** improved outcomes with the same level of resources; improved or consistent quality of services with fewer resources.

The consultant team recommends the Governance Committee conduct a conversation in early 2018 to align around their interpretation of the strategic plan as it relates to the intended level of impact and target outcomes of capacity building. The shaded table below reflects the initial thinking from the consultant team. Blocks that are shaded in blue represent the target areas for capacity building through this strategic plan.

**Table 3. P4P Capacity Building Framework**

	Scale/Reach	Leveraged Resources	Effectiveness	Efficiency
<b>Individual</b> Focus: local practitioners, local funders, and national funders				
<b>Organizational</b> Focus: P4P Program				
<b>Systems</b> Focus: local communities				