
Breakthrough Communities

Sustainability and Justice in the Next American
Metropolis

edited by M. Paloma Pavel

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Series Foreword

Breakthrough Communities: Sustainability and Justice in the Next American Metropolis is an important and compelling contribution to Sustainable Metropolitan Communities Books, a new imprint at MIT Press. In identifying the language and ideas that underlie the emerging regional equity movement and by pulling together the researchers and the advocates who are helping frame the concepts, the issues, and the organizing involved with this movement, the book serves as a strategic initiative linking research with action. In *Breakthrough Communities*, ideas, language, and stories matter. They complement the research and analysis that situate the environmental, social, and economic changes occurring at regional as well as global levels, and they establish a vivid picture of what those changes represent.

The metropolitan/regional framework is also crucial. The concept of metropolitan or regional equity provides multiple pathways for change. It recognizes environmental problems as rooted in community but linked as well to broader regional boundaries such as watersheds, food sheds, air sheds, economic networks, and transportation corridors. It focuses on the local and global dimensions of social and economic questions that often work themselves out in regional contexts, such as the movement of goods; the location of commercial and industrial facilities in relation to residential communities; the tax, investment, and financial dynamics within a region and between communities; and/or the shifting demographics that reshape and transform regions. The regional equity focus also helps situate the different movements for change, often isolated in their geographic or issue-based silos, as part of a linked process that connects the environment and the economy with daily life experiences.

Sustainable Metropolitan Communities Books are designed to overcome the divide between research and action by providing a narrative as well as an analytical representation of those regional equity issues. By addressing issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and connection to place, and also by identifying models for organizing and action and developing a more inclusive and engaging discourse, the books can establish new frameworks for understanding and evaluation and provide pathways for future research and informed action. We welcome you to explore these breakthrough stories and the narrative and analytic discussions to come.

Robert Gottlieb, Occidental College
Series Editor