

The Transformative Potential of Local Climate Change Strategies

Publication

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With both the impact of climate change on cities and the role cities play in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions becoming increasingly apparent, many cities around the world are adopting long-term climate policy strategies or vision documents outlining how they want to adapt to and mitigate climate change in the coming decades. However, reaching the deep emissions reductions necessary to keep global warming below 1.5°C or 2°C will require far-reaching, transformative measures.

In this chapter [Ewa Iwaszuk](#), [Linda Mederake](#) and [Doris Knoblauch](#) (all Ecologic Institute) analyse the extent to which municipal long-term climate strategies contain formulations and measures aimed at promoting urban transformative change (defined as non-linear change for sustainability that profoundly transforms cities and the systems they form part of). The methodology is applied to the strategies of three cities from around the world (Austin, Texas, USA; Berlin, Germany; Melbourne, Australia) to understand the extent to which the visions outlined in these local-level strategies can be said to be transformative.

The analysis revealed that in all three cities the local long-term climate strategies exhibit transformative dimension and contain transformative elements such as fostering inclusive, multiform urban governance, convening local stakeholders around explicit future visions, applying systems thinking, and promoting reflexivity and social learning. What remains to be seen is whether the cities will be able to convert their transformative potential into actual change in the years to come.

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Authorship

[Ewa Iwaszuk](#)

[Linda Mederake](#)
[Doris Knoblauch](#)

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