

Sustainable infrastructure for healthy, thriving cities

Cities need **integrated planning and development** in order to make changes that really improve citizens' lives³.



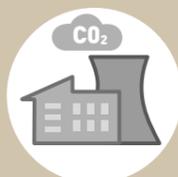
Improved sustainable infrastructure in cities may be one of the best ways to address today's greatest challenges.

Today, over **half** of the world's population lives in cities¹, and almost **three-fourths** of Europe's population lives in cities.²



Cities are threatened by the effects of a warming planet, population changes and increasing health risks like **COVID-19**.

Poor planning and lack of financial resources can trap cities in inadequate service provision, unmoderated urban and suburban sprawl, increasing **emissions and pollution**, dangerous health risks and systems that exacerbate poverty and disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.



But plans that alter the patterns of urban life can **build resilience to climate change** and **pandemics**, mitigating their negative impacts and ultimately saving livelihoods and lives.

Improvements to infrastructure that make services more efficient, resilient and sustainable can significantly impact the world's total emissions, consumption and land use. They can also help keep citizens safe, healthy and fulfilled.



Women and men, girls and boys have different needs, experience and interests. Designing urban solutions should involve diverse groups in decision-making, implementation and maintenance.

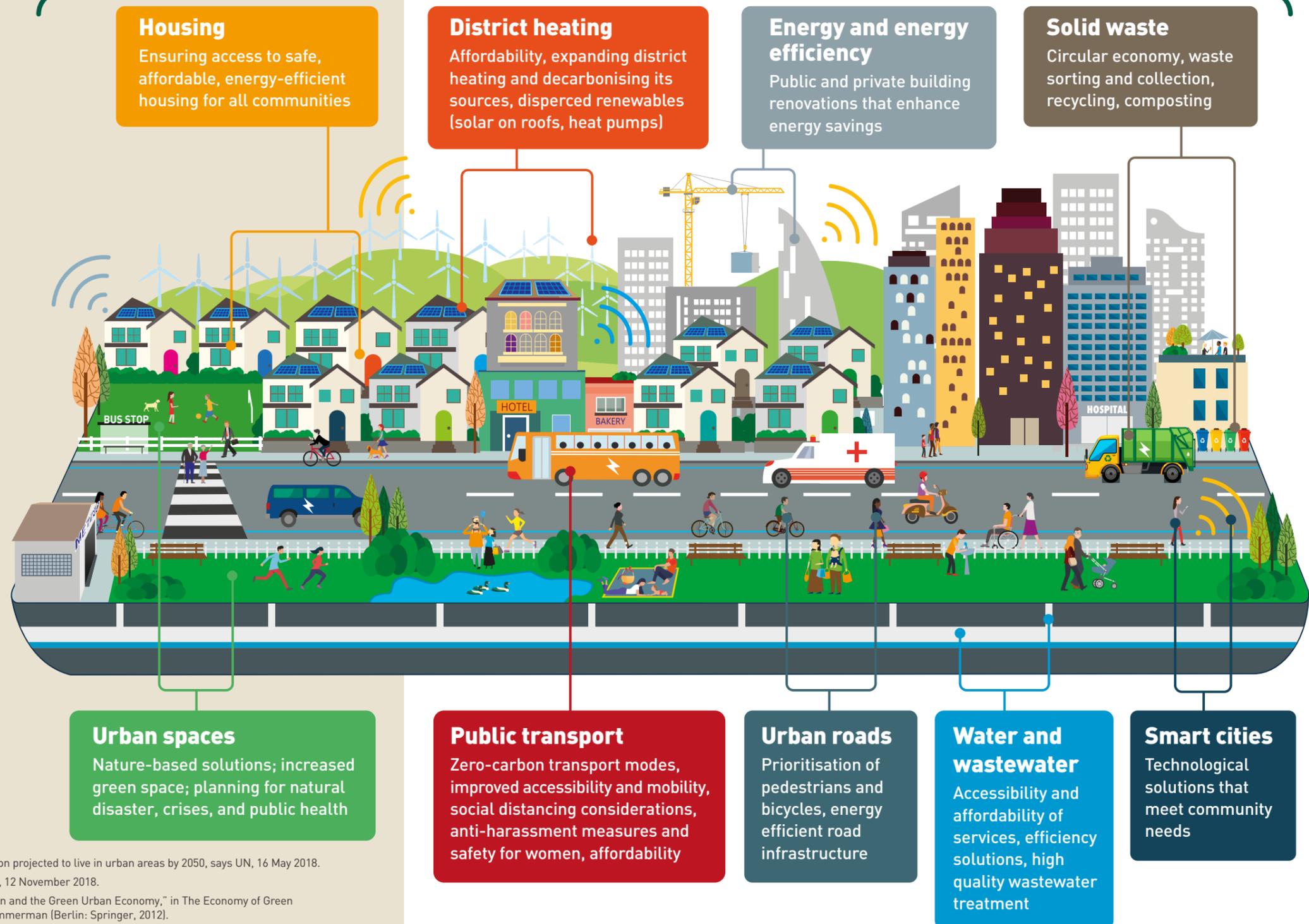
Investments in sustainable municipal infrastructure must increase, but in order for them to be effective, the right types of interventions must be made.



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Key principles:

- A set of interlocking solutions for the city as a whole rather than a series of separate projects
- Inclusive and people-centred
- Based on bottom-up community-developed strategic plans
- Financing from sources that require strategic, holistic and inclusive practices that respect human rights



¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, says UN, 16 May 2018.

² Eurostat, Urban Europe - statistics on cities, towns and suburbs - executive summary, 12 November 2018.

³ McCormick, Kes, Lena Neij, and Stefan Anderberg, "Sustainable Urban Transformation and the Green Urban Economy," in The Economy of Green Cities: A World Compendium on the Green Urban Economy, ed. R. Simpson and M. Zimmerman (Berlin: Springer, 2012).