Penn is a leading global urban university with expert voices in urban research.

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is a leading urban university and global leader in connecting research to real-world concerns. Three centers at Penn—the Kleinman Center for Energy Policy, the Penn Institute for Urban Research, and Perry World House—are partnering to explore the issues critical to building sustainable urban places around the globe and to generate the interdisciplinary approach necessary to implement the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs.

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Three centers at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) partnered to assemble research papers on topics central to implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs. Together, the paper series, “Penn: Current Research on Sustainable Urban Development,” illustrates the interdisciplinary approach necessary for local implementation of these global agreements. Collectively, the papers reinforce the idea that cities are an important fulcrum of sustainable development.

**THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CLIMATE JUSTICE AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY**
By Mark Alan Hughes and Cornella Celis

Mark Alan Hughes and Cornella Celis explore the limits of sub-national capacity to implement the goals of the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs. They parse the mismatch between global goals and local goals, and the misalignment between local goals and national goals, and the capacities to achieve those goals. They present examples of limited capacity (constitutional, political) in sub-national governments that raise concerns about overreach on local actors to achieve national and global goals.

**PUTTING ENERGY INTO IMPLEMENTATION: CHALLENGES TO SUB-NATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN SDG 6.5**
By Mark Alan Hughes & Cornella Celis, Kleinman Center for Energy Policy

Moving beyond the idea that politicians and planners are the only actors responsible for development, Laura Barron, Penn Institute for Urban Research, and Eugénie Birch, Penn Institute for Urban Research, examine the role of the cultural functions attached to them.

**THE ECOLOGICAL WISDOM OF PLAN-MAKING**
By Randall Mason, School of Design

Randall Mason explores the idea of ecosystem and biodiversity values. To ascertain the degree to which their local planning is addressing three of the biggest and fastest-growing of these cities with remnant habitat and endangered species; and 36 biodiversity hotspots to reveal conflicts between the goals of the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs.

**CONSUMPTION: SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT AS A CULTURE AND THE INHERITED ENVIRONMENT REALLY MATTERED**
By Martin Ahlstrom, School of Design

While the SDGs and New Urban Agenda embed conservation of heritage among the 30 biodiversity hotspots to identify the degree to which their forecast 2030 peri-urban growth is in direct conflict with relevant habitats and endangered species; and 33 of the biggest and fastest-growing of these cities to ascertain the degree to which their local planning cultures include ecosystem and biodiversity values.

**THE CASE FOR STRENGTHENING EVIDENCE-BASED UNDERSTANDING OF REFUGEE INTEGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND AROUND THE WORLD**
By Lisa Mitchell, School of Arts and Sciences

Lisa Mitchell demonstrates that public space needs to be understood within specific historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts. Using Dhaka’s rapid growth as an example, she argues that ensuring the availability and accessibility of public space—not just in parks or open spaces providing access to fresh air, but also as sites for non-market political performance, expression, and representation—can ensure that lawmakers hear voices that they might otherwise ignore.

**SPACES OF COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATION: URBAN GROWTH, DEMOCRACY, AND POLITICAL INCLUSION**
By Lisa Mitchell, School of Arts and Sciences

As our species becomes more urban, our relationships with natural systems will continue to change. Overarching challenges and questions include: Will we continue to deprioritize ecosystem services as we expand our urban horizon? Or, will we learn how to enhance and create ecosystem services through city planning and urban design? Frederick Steiner argues that the planning process can help humanity to adapt to these challenges and uses the Austin, Texas (U.S.A.) comprehensive planning process to illustrate the process.