

5018 Editorial – November 8th 2025

In 2025, climate change is no longer abstract—many of us now witness its effects in their own communities. I'm lucky to hail from the beautiful Puget Sound, home to the city of Seattle, a system of ferries, and occasionally a pod of Orcas. Growing up I climbed mountains with my father instead of going on vacations. And just over the span of 18 years I saw glaciers recede, and had friends recount unusual heat waves after I left for my undergrad.

The reality we live in now is one where carbon emissions have changed our weather and biological systems, perhaps not irreparably, but still changed. As I earn a Masters, studying how to navigate these effects, there's a few things I've noticed. One, and perhaps most importantly, is that **nature is resilient**. Given care and time, forests return, coral reefs revitalize, and species repopulate. We conserve and do environmental work not just for moral reasons, or because we simply 'should'. Our natural systems aren't broken, and when they are, encouragement will often give them a chance to rebalance.

Two: **environmental work supports everyone and just makes sense!** If you're a homeowner, or you may be one someday, imagine a wildfire creeping closer and closer to your home. Our homes contain so much of our lives and are important sources of wealth for many. We all have so much to lose with natural disaster. A good city climate plan accounts for this probability and will have fire-resilience materials mandated for homes.

Our cities are very powerful with all the services they provide and as such they're well positioned to be leaders in our environmental crisis. In my mind people make a city, not the place or the services contained within it. So, the priority that cities have is to care for the citizens contained within as they move through their lives. Within an environmental lens, this looks like shaping policies to provide affordable housing! Building flood resilient streets, providing rebates for EV vehicles, and making food cheaper.

Environmental work often looks like the things that make our lives more affordable, safer, and healthier, rather than saving Polar Bears. Though wildlife conservation is a part of what environmental-minded people do, many of us are working in city government to make our

systems make better sense for the natural world, and for populations. This work is hard! You're trying to balance maintaining current systems (like water pipes, roads, etc), while knowing that the ones we have won't withstand climate-change induced disasters to come. But we know we need to adapt, and cities absolutely can do so, even if it takes time

One of the ways I'm personally excited by a city's involvement in climate work is Boulder's aim to provide more affordable housing in the form of modular homes. Yesterday I had the privilege to tour Boulder Mod. This facility is run by Habitat for Humanity and constructs



affordable modular homes. This incredible program is formed by a partnership between our city, a non-profit, and the Boulder Valley High School. The facility sits on the high school property, so students can attend classes here to learn trade skills while volunteering time to build critically important affordable homes in Boulder.

This facility makes it possible for homes to build quickly, nearly at cost, and deployed on a site and lived in within a fraction of the time that a normal home takes to build. This helps address our housing crisis here in Boulder, which in turn reduces the need for

people to commute in for work, which in turn reduces transportation-related emissions. Not to mention, having more accessible housing means we can house people who are on our streets easier.

Cities have incredible ability to provide innovate new solutions to environmental challenges, often with co-benefits that help other common problems they face! My recommendation: go to your city council meetings, listen to the advisory boards, engage in your community, and remember to vote!