Action in Our Neighborhoods and Communities: Overview

Climate change has the power to disrupt and endanger every natural and social system that we're part of: our food, our health care, our homes, our surroundings. These systems can also help us survive the strains that climate change will place on all of us. Many of these relationships have to do with how we interact with the landscape and the layout of the places we live.

Plants and healthy soil sequester carbon—that is, they hold it within themselves instead of allowing it to enter the atmosphere and trap more heat on earth. They also "exhale" oxygen, provide shade, help manage stormwater, and support our physical and mental health. This is true of the plants we nurture in gardens and parks and to the woodlands that cover half the state. Composting our food waste, in addition to reducing methane emissions, means we need to use less land for landfills.

Continuing to use existing structures does more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions than building new ones, even when the new ones are designed to be energy-efficient. Maintaining the buildings we have—especially for housing—can create jobs, as well as more livable housing and safer workspaces for more people.

As we build into, move within and repair our communities, planning where we live and how we get around to minimize our fossil fuel consumption can ultimately increase our

convenience, community feeling and quality of life as well. This section offers ways to invest our relationships, making us less dependent on systems that harm, and better supported by one another.