

“It is this type of activity that should be replicated a billion times throughout the world.”

~ Dr. Wangari Maathai

Dear Friends:

CNT began in 1978 with three projects: demonstration solar greenhouses, The Neighborhood Works information service, and a neighborhood infrastructure campaign—all run out of an office in Lawndale loaned to us by Operation Brotherhood.

Today CNT and our two affiliates thrive in a 14,000-square-foot office building, boast a staff of more than fifty talented professionals, and manage a total budget of more than \$7 million.

So much has changed! And yet, much remains the same. At the beginning, our mission was to revitalize low- and moderate-income communities in new and creative ways. We were committed to devising and then implementing strategies that turn community problems into assets. And we weren't afraid to get our hands dirty—getting out in the field to pilot programs and work with communities. All of this remains true today. And the respect and recognition that CNT enjoys today is for precisely these commitments that have defined us from the start.

Though I began my role as CEO in 2005, CNT and I go back a long way. I was also a part of CNT in its first decade, and am pleased and proud to be back as part of this dynamic organization in the 21st Century.

I am very proud of CNT's accomplishments. Our renovated office building was certified LEED™ Platinum by the U.S. Green Building Council, making it one of the country's highest-performing buildings. Our new Housing + Transportation Affordability Index, linking housing and transportation costs, is reshaping how policy makers think about the cost of living in urban areas. Our real-time energy program gives residential electricity consumers access to wholesale electricity rates, and was awarded a Chicago Innovation Award in 2006.

Indeed, after three decades, CNT's focus on resource efficiency and sustainable economic development is gaining recognition and widespread acceptance. As we look ahead, CNT will maintain its commitment to researching, analyzing, advocating, and demonstrating new solutions for livable and sustainable urban communities.

We welcome your interest and involvement in our programs, and deeply appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Tholin
Chief Executive Officer

CNT: Urban Sustainability at Work since 1978

CNT was founded in 1978 as a storefront operation with a mission to turn community problems into community assets. In the three decades since, we have grown into one of the nation's most respected leaders in the movement toward urban sustainability. Our programs are turning today's challenges into solutions, focusing on resource efficiency, transportation, community development and environmental quality.

What CNT perceived in 1978 has become better understood in 21st Century America: Cities, thanks to their dense population and shared resources, are uniquely positioned to respond to the growing concerns about sustainability, resource efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, by building on what exists—infrastructure, natural resources, organizations, and institutions—our programs uncover important hidden assets, enhancing urban communities and the lives of their residents.

What has always made CNT distinctive is our multi-faceted approach. Our thinking is grounded in analysis of hard data. We present information in new ways that offer citizens and decision-makers choices that encourage efficiency and sustainability. Finally, we have developed a capacity to pilot and bring to scale—for entire communities and regions—truly innovative solutions.

CNT collaborates with diverse partners, benefits from the generosity of donors and grantors, and is guided by a visionary board and a dedicated staff.

CNT: Complex Problems, Clear Vision, Solid Results

CNT's scope of expertise and programming is broad; our tools and products complex. But our mission remains simple and clear:

To build more livable, sustainable, and equitable urban communities by uncovering and reusing hidden or undervalued assets, and creating tools, products, and programs that increase efficiencies, improve the environment, and enhance the lives of those who live and work in them.

To fulfill our mission, we work in four main issue areas:

- Transportation and Community Development
- Energy
- Natural Resources
- Climate

TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Optimizing the Location Efficiency of Cities

Some of the basic tenets of smart growth, advocated by organizations like CNT for decades, have gone mainstream. Indeed, as people today want walkable communities with jobs and amenities nearby, demand has increased for compact, transit-oriented neighborhoods.

By linking the role and cost of transportation to housing, and by studying ways to better use existing urban infrastructure such as highways and freight lines, CNT provides invaluable data-based analysis that helps create healthier, more sustainable urban communities. Our work in the area of transportation and community development exemplifies our ability to combine innovative thinking and solid research to produce new tools that support urban sustainability.

The Real Cost of Housing

Spiking fuel prices have put in high relief a key fact: the true cost of housing includes the associated cost of transportation to and from work, shop and play. The conventional measure of housing affordability – 30% or less of household income – fails to account for transportation costs, which vary dramatically within regions.

Housing located in outlying areas that require residents to rely on cars passes along hidden costs, often making such ‘affordable’ housing unaffordable.

CNT’s unique expertise in analyzing the impact of housing location and transportation on the cost of living has been invaluable to policymakers, planners, activists, and citizens, and has helped encourage efforts to locate housing development around transit hubs and improve mass transit.

H+T: The Housing + Transportation Affordability Index
<http://htaindex.cnt.org>

CNT worked with the Center for Transit Oriented Development (CTOD) to develop a groundbreaking tool: the Housing + Transportation Affordability Index. By accounting for the transportation costs that go along with living in decentralized areas, the Housing + Transportation Affordability Index provides a more realistic way of thinking about housing affordability by demonstrating how the true cost of housing varies across a region.

When tested as a pilot in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area in 2005, the H +T Index caught the attention of planners, policy makers, and TOD advocates. In 2006, The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program published a report based on the CNT/CTOD tool. In 2007, we began work on a web-based, interactive H + T Index for 52 additional metropolitan areas, for release in 2008.

Heavy Load: The Transportation Burden of Working Families

In 2006, CNT collaborated with Virginia Tech to produce a report that documented the housing and transportation cost tradeoffs of working households. Created for the Center for Housing Policy, *A Heavy Load: The Combined Housing and Transportation Burdens of Working Families*, shows that though workers often choose to live far from their place of work in the quest for affordable housing, such households often spend more than half of their income on the combined costs of housing and transportation. CNT’s work to uncover the hidden costs of transportation embedded in housing location supports smart development and expanded transit choice, resulting in reduced car use and lower transportation costs for working families.

Transit-Oriented Development - TOD

The U.S. Census projects that by 2030, the number of American households wanting to live near transit will increase from six million (2000 figures) to sixteen million. With funding from the Ford Foundation, we partnered with Reconnecting America and Strategic Economics and studied 41 transit regions nationwide to define sustainable ways to accommodate this projected population.

Working together as the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, CNT produced the 2006 report, *Preserving and Promoting Diverse Transit-Oriented Neighborhoods*, showing that mixed-income housing and mixed-use neighborhoods near transit could satisfy the growing demand for housing near transit and provide economic and environmental benefits to households, cities and regions.

“These initiatives provide a model for the many other communities across the country with underutilized transportation assets.”

Parking Lots and Elevated Highways: Repurposing Urban Infrastructure

CNT explored the redevelopment potential of parking lots near transit in nine Chicago-area communities. In our report, *Paved Over: Surface Parking Lots or Opportunities for Tax-Generating, Sustainable Development?*, we showed how parking lots could be repurposed for transit-oriented development, while generating substantial new tax revenues and increasing transit ridership. And these benefits were modeled with no net loss of parking.

As the American Interstate Highway System celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006, we worked to rethink how this infrastructure, much of which is reaching the end of its useful life, could be re-envisioned as a community asset.

When created in the 1950's, many highways cut through city centers and destroyed historic neighborhoods, often displacing lower-income and minority residents. Today, New York City, Portland, San Francisco and Milwaukee are examples of cities that have replaced elevated urban highways with newly-configured boulevards that restore the urban grid. In partnership with the Congress for the New Urbanism, CNT is working with advocacy groups in Seattle, Buffalo, and Louisville to find alternatives to their deteriorating elevated highways.

Revitalizing Communities around Rail: Transit-Smart Land Use

Many older communities fail to take advantage of the potential of their rail assets as drivers for economic development. The south suburban Chicago cities of Blue Island and Harvey, for example, are well served by commuter rail, and have extensive freight rail infrastructure. But their transit stations are surrounded by a sea of asphalt with little nearby housing, and their industrial sites do not fully utilize the extensive freight rail infrastructure.

CNT has worked with both cities and their citizens to develop rail-oriented development plans that will repurpose the community land near rail, revitalizing these areas. Progress is already being made in both communities, including substantial federal grants to plan development, plans to remediate and develop brownfield sites, and a public-private below-market loan program to finance planned business development.

Building on these successes, we have expanded our initiative in rail-oriented development and are working with the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association to identify and foster the redevelopment of neighborhoods served by passenger rail and industrial sites linked to freight rail throughout Chicago's southern suburbs.

These initiatives provide a model for the many other communities across the country with underutilized transportation assets.

A New Mobility Hierarchy

Thanks to their compact development and proximate to transit, cities offer more transportation options, as well as the possibility of living without a car. More and more urban dwellers appreciate the combination of convenient and affordable mass transit, walkable and bikeable streets, car-sharing and high-speed rail to escape from the cost, pollution and inconvenience of car ownership.

CNT promotes a mobility hierarchy that challenges current priorities—walking first, then bicycling, then transit, then car sharing, with privately-owned cars the mobility option of last resort.

I-GO® Car Sharing

www.igocars.org

Car sharing is a service that provides members with access to a fleet of eco-friendly vehicles on an hourly basis. It can significantly reduce car usage, along with traffic congestion and pollution. The practice has attracted considerable interest nationally among transportation planners and policymakers—and members, who stand to save money as gas prices rise.



I-GO, CNT's non-profit car-sharing organization created in 2002, gives Chicago-area residents the convenience of a car without the burdens of car ownership.

I-GO fills an important niche in the region's transportation network, providing mobility for city residents who rely primarily on transit, and only occasionally have need for a car.

I-GO allows members to reserve a low-emission vehicle in 32 Chicago neighborhoods, Evanston, and Oak Park. By the end of 2007, I-GO had grown to a fleet of more than 160 cars, serving nearly 7,000 members.

Policy Advocacy: Transit Future Campaign

In 2006, the Chicago region faced a shutdown of its mass transit system as a result of systematic, long-term underfunding. CNT responded with the Transit Future Campaign, a citizen advocacy effort to help elected officials understand what was at stake for their constituents.

Using our Housing + Transportation Affordability research, Transit Future maps demonstrated the extent of public transit assets for individual communities and legislative districts, and the reduced cost of transportation for communities with access to transit. With the help of this advocacy campaign, the Illinois legislature passed a comprehensive reform of the funding of transit operations.

Facilitating Civic Participation

CNT has always known that information is power. By creating tools that allow individuals to make better, more informed choices, our work empowers citizens to create more sustainable communities.

Our particular expertise is in the analysis and display of information, and the economic valuation of sustainability strategies. Today we make information available using innovative, interactive websites and participatory games.

Tools for Public Participation in Planning

www.cnt.org/tcd/transopoly

The Transopoly® Public Participation Tool is a board game that lets citizens frame and prioritize transportation and other infrastructure investments. Each Transopoly team receives an infrastructure budget, and must decide how it should be spent.

Transopoly was used to provide citizen input to the update of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan for Northeastern Illinois, to help the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District meet expected public demand for transit, and to develop public priorities for the future of Chicago's North Milwaukee Avenue corridor.

The use of this innovative game has revealed strong public support for increased investment in public transit and demand for better lighting and bike paths, making existing roads more multi-modal.

Finding Your Elected Officials

www.civicfootprint.org

The first step towards civic engagement is identifying our elected officials, and yet electoral representation is complex and often not easily understood. The welter of electoral jurisdictions to which each citizen belongs can confuse even the most savvy.

CNT developed an online tool—the Civic FootprintSM Participation Tool—that allows Cook County residents to easily identify all their various electoral maps and elected officials. It also connects residents to their police beat, community institutions, and other resources.

“creating tools to help
make individuals make
better choices”

ENERGY: Boosting Consumer Choice

Using energy efficiently has been a key strategy in CNT's efforts in urban sustainability since the beginning. In 2000, we created CNT Energy (originally the Community Energy Cooperative) to consolidate our energy programs and find new ways to help individuals and communities become more sustainable and reduce energy costs.



We have become a pioneer in developing price-based programs that allow consumers to save energy and money through individual choices. When correctly structured, innovative programs that use price signals – text messages, email alerts, and visual tools like the PriceLight – trigger consumer behavior that reduces costs and increases efficiencies. Our range of programs and products work to optimize energy efficiency in existing buildings, now widely acknowledged as one of the primary ways to reduce the cost of living and curb the effects of global warming.

Residential Real-Time Energy Pricing

In 2003, CNT created and implemented the nation's first residential real-time electricity pricing program. By offering participants wholesale electricity rates, which vary hour-to-hour, along with timely updates on price changes, real-time pricing helps consumers manage their electricity use, saving energy and money.

After a successful four-year pilot, operated by CNT in partnership with ComEd, Illinois lawmakers in 2006 mandated the program state-wide, making Illinois the first state in the country to offer real-time prices to all residential customers. In 2006, the program received a Chicago Innovation Award from the *Chicago Sun-Times*. CNT Energy now manages this program for Ameren, the electric utility serving Central and Southern Illinois.

Participants in the pilot real-time electricity pricing program decreased their peak electricity consumption and monthly costs by an average of 10%, while significantly reducing overall electricity use, thanks to greater awareness. When fully subscribed with 100,000 customers state-wide, this program is expected to decrease peak demand by 20%, and save consumers \$12 million a year.

Cook County Energy Savers

Energy costs represent a substantial component of the costs of operating multi-family housing, and growing costs threaten the viability of affordable rental housing. As part of an effort to address housing affordability in the Chicago area, CNT Energy partnered with The Preservation Compact, which is guided by the Urban Land Institute and funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, to improve energy efficiency in multi-family buildings where low- and moderate-income families live. The effort recalls CNT's stewardship in the 1980's of the Chicago Energy Savers Fund – which improved efficiency in 12,000 housing units. Since the start of Cook County Energy Savers in mid-2007, energy audits have been completed for some seven hundred multi-family housing units. The program will serve 2,500 units annually, with anticipated energy savings of 30%.



Local Garden, Global Impact: The Wangari Maathai Natural Garden

In September 2007, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Wangari Maathai presided over the dedication of a native garden planted in her honor at the Al Raby School for Community and Environment on Chicago's West Side, of which CNT is a founder. Students, teachers and community members listened as Dr. Maathai spoke of the essential role gardens play in promoting urban renewal and raising awareness — from Chicago to the Green Belt Movement in Nairobi, Kenya — of social and environmental issues.

"It is this type of activity that should be replicated a billion times throughout the world," said Dr. Maathai of the garden, a collaboration between the Al Raby High School, community members, CNT, and the City of Chicago.

Real-Time Energy Pricing Offers Choices, Saves Money and Energy

Today most energy consumers do not have the right incentives and information to manage their energy use. Over the last hundred years, the pricing of electricity has obscured key information and has led to poor energy consumption habits by households and businesses. CNT has found that when we give people the right information and they change their behavior in easy and effective ways that will save them money and energy. CNT's real-time pricing programs — the Energy-Smart Pricing Plan (from 2003 to 2006) and Power Smart Pricing (starting in 2007) — have done this by offering customers control over what they pay for electricity. Allowing people to make choices based on real-time pricing relieves stress on the grid and reduces air pollution. A tool like the Pricelight, a small glowing ball (with energy efficient LED lights inside) that changes color each hour to show the price of electricity, has been a powerful motivator for participating households to reduce their electric use during high priced times.



"The Pricelight has been a super way to help me (along with the high price alerts) in deciding when to wash clothes, run the dishwasher, etc. I always say "When it's blue, you do!"

- Kristy Herr Bartos, Energy-Smart Pricing Plan user



I-GO Car Sharing Takes Cars Off the Road

Research on I-GO members shows that: Each I-GO car takes 17 cars off the road • 25% of members increase walking • 15% increase biking • 18% increase public transit usage • 46% give up or postpone purchase of a vehicle, or consider selling a vehicle • and members report driving only 9.6 miles per week, or 500 miles per year; compared to typical car owners in Chicago, who drive 10,000 miles/year. (Research conducted by I-GO, 2003-2007)

"I-GO is convenient. The cars are right in my neighborhood and I don't have to pay for gas, insurance or parking." -Ann Smith, I-GO Member

Tool Spotlight: Housing + Transportation Affordability Index

The Housing+Transportation Affordability Index, developed by CNT and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, with funding from the Brookings Institution, reveals the transportation cost trade-offs when individuals choose low-cost housing in outer ring exurbs, and was used to publish three reports in 2006.



The H+T Index is a new and more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability by exploring the impact that transportation costs associated with the location of the housing have on a household's economic bottom line. www.htaindex.org

Maps that Tell a Story: Two Views of Cities



CNT's very popular climate maps depicting CO₂ emissions as a function of total amount versus amount per capita serve as a basis for our Climate work.

The maps tell two very different stories that challenge common views of where most greenhouse gas emissions are produced. The map shows that on a per capita basis, people that live in denser, urban environments produce less CO₂ emissions from vehicle travel than people that live in surrounding, more sprawled-out areas.

http://htaindex.cnt.org/map_tool

CNT's Platinum Building

When CNT's renovated headquarters in Chicago was certified LEED™ Platinum - the highest LEED rating - it became the 13th in the nation to receive this designation. Recognizing this accomplishment in February 2006 was Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, who has garnered national attention for his efforts to make Chicago America's 'greenest' city.



While the CNT renovation cost the same as a conventional office remodeling project, the building uses 50% less energy and produces less than half the GHG emissions of conventional offices — all while offering superior indoor air quality and a pleasant work environment.

NATURAL RESOURCES: Expanding Urban Green Infrastructure

By working with nature rather than against it, cities can minimize their impact on the environment and save money at the same time. Stormwater, for example, is typically bottled up and treated like sewage in “hard” infrastructure systems, requiring costly, energy-intensive treatment facilities while diverting water that could otherwise recharge the region’s groundwater. Instead, CNT is working to allow stormwater to flow back into the earth, restoring the rain’s value as a natural asset.

By managing stormwater more naturally – with the use of native vegetation, tree plantings, rain gardens, swales, green roofs, and permeable pavement – green infrastructure uses limited financial resources more efficiently. Green infrastructure harnesses the natural filtering abilities of plants, trees and soil. The result? Protection of water quality, reduced stormwater runoff and potential flooding, replenished groundwater, and greener, cooler, and more vital communities.

In the area of natural resources, CNT develops tools to map and analyze the benefits of green infrastructure, demonstrates stormwater best management practices, and promotes changes in local, regional, and national policy.

Smart, Green Solutions for Stormwater Management

<http://greenvalues.cnt.org>

CNT’s Green ValuesSM Stormwater Toolbox helps developers and municipalities calculate the costs and benefits of eco-friendly water conservation and stormwater management strategies such as rain barrels, swales, permeable pavement, green roofs and native landscaping. To document the effectiveness of these strategies, we have built and are monitoring four green infrastructure installations in the region, with results to be published in 2008.

To help homeowners learn about and benefit from these strategies, CNT published *Water: From Trouble to Treasure*, a pocket-sized field guide to green stormwater management practices. To date, more than 5,000 guides have been distributed among 100 Illinois ecosystem partnerships and 150 community organizations and schools. Both the toolbox and booklet are featured on the U.S. EPA’s website as a resource for low impact development.

Mapping Green Infrastructure

www.greenmapping.org

Since 2002, CNT has partnered with the Openlands Project to research and map the green infrastructure of the 19 counties of the Greater Chicago region (which includes parts of Wisconsin and Indiana). Together, we then developed interactive, online maps that allow users to select an area and call up maps of streets, wetlands, trails, floodplains and more. The site enables users to gather data and create customized maps to study and advocate for the protection of the natural environment across political and jurisdictional boundaries.

Accessed by thousands of policymakers, conservationists, and individuals, CNT’s state-of-the-art green infrastructure maps play an important role in the conservation and restoration of the natural heritage of the “Chicago Wilderness.”

Toward Community Scale Impact

CNT does not just talk about green infrastructure: we dig it, plant it, monitor it and scale it up. We build community support for natural drainage approaches through collaborative rain garden demonstrations and efforts to bring green infrastructure into public policy.

We are collaborating with the City of Chicago, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), other local municipalities, and state, regional and federal agencies to establish performance standards that will expand green infrastructure practices in the region and help to conserve clean water and enhance community health. CNT is working with the USEPA’s adoption of a green infrastructure policy framework that encourages cities to incorporate sustainable stormwater practices into their compliance with federal standards, like the Clean Water Act. We are a leader in the coalition to ensure that MWRD’s regional ordinance relies on green infrastructure, where these practices make sense.

“By working with nature rather than against it, cities can minimize their impact on the environment and save money at the same time.”

CLIMATE CHANGE: Advancing Cities as a Solution

Eighty percent of Americans and half of the world's population now live in urban areas. For this reason, well-functioning cities stand to play a huge role in efforts to respond to the climate crisis. CNT's research has confirmed this concept – by showing that, on a per capita basis, cities can be the most efficient places to live, and have the lowest greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

CNT's decades-long track record of urban sustainability innovation is the basis for our current leadership in addressing urban climate change – globally, nationally and locally. We have found that solutions such as building energy retrofits and location efficiency can lower costs and increase income for households and communities, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving sustainability.

Project 2 Degrees and Emissions Reductions in the World's Largest Cities

As a result of CNT's prior experience developing online climate calculators, the William J. Clinton Foundation invited us to help design an online tool for measuring greenhouse gas emissions in cities around the world. The project's web-based software enables cities to calculate the carbon footprint of both municipal operations and their communities in a uniform way and to plan meaningful actions that save energy and money and make a profound impact in the fight against climate change. The project is a collaboration of the Clinton Climate Initiative (CCI), Microsoft and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, with additional expertise provided by Ascentium. This partnership gives CNT the opportunity to apply our experience in urban sustainability and climate change worldwide. The greenhouse gas accounting tool will be released in mid-2008.

The Project 2 Degrees Emissions Tracker software allows cities to establish a baseline on their greenhouse gas emissions, manage emissions inventories, create action plans, track the effectiveness of their emissions reduction programs, and share experiences with each other. It is the first global, multi-lingual emissions measurement toolset available 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the web. Cities seeking to reduce GHG emissions can use Project 2 Degrees to develop and put in place mitigation measures that are based on sound practices and focused on economic development.

Presidential Climate Action Project

www.climateactionproject.com

CNT is a founding member of the Presidential Climate Action Project, a bold, non-partisan proposal for presidential leadership to combat climate change. The plan frames an agenda for the first 100 days of the next administration and beyond. CNT President Scott Bernstein, who serves on its steering committee, has brought CNT's expertise in transportation and land use to the project, crafting much of the Project's transportation agenda. Designed to ignite innovation at every level of American society, the Project is an important part of the growing national dialogue urging the next U.S. presidential administration to take action to curb the effects of climate change.

Chicago Climate Action Plan

When the City of Chicago created a multi-stakeholder task force to address Chicago's contribution to global warming, it turned to CNT for the research and analysis for a strategy to reduce Chicago's emissions 25% below 1990 levels by 2020. Using internationally recognized methods, we conducted a comprehensive emissions inventory and forecast for Chicago and the metropolitan region, and researched, modeled, and evaluated more than 30 mitigation strategies for their specific greenhouse gas reduction potential for Chicago. The Chicago Climate Action Plan is slated to be released in 2008.

“On a per capita basis, cities can be the most efficient places to live, based on their lower greenhouse gas emissions.”

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