

# Neha S. Bhatt

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**Neha Bhatt** is passionate about making communities stronger and has 20 years experience in the public and nonprofit sectors developing urban policy solutions, building programs and organizing community voices.

Neha has expertise in community planning and sustainability and specializes in supporting locally elected decision-makers who champion affordable housing, public transportation and walkable communities.

Contact Neha at (202) 251-9584, [bhatt\\_neha@yahoo.com](mailto:bhatt_neha@yahoo.com).

**Specialties:** Urban policy | Transportation, land use and sustainability solutions | Program building | Strategic planning | Grasstops recruitment | Community organizing |

**Education:** Master of Community Planning, University of Maryland (2007)  
Bachelor of Science in Biology, The College of New Jersey (1996)

## Experience

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### Smart Growth America

Director, Local Leaders Council (5/12 – present)

Deputy Director, Policy Development and Implementation (10/09 – present)

#### Local Leaders Council

- Created the Local Leaders Council, a national bi-partisan network of 220+ elected and appointed officials in local government who are passionate about building great cities and expanding housing, transportation and job choices through more compact, mixed-use urban design and great public transit, walking and biking facilities
- Oversee a fast expanding portfolio of member resources including dozens of model policies and toolkits, a grants database, leader profiles, 50+ on-camera interviews, and a weekly digital newsletter featuring best practices across the nation.
- Manage the Advisory Board, annual Local Leaders Policy Forum, all day to day program operations and fundraising collateral, and the first state chapter in Maryland

## **Policy**

- Launched a model policies and toolkits library designed for high level decision makers featuring public presentation templates, sample legislative language, case studies, and talking points on topics like inclusionary housing, community land trusts, compete streets, parking reform, public art, and vacant properties.
- Drafted recommendations for Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee on bringing back main streets in high density, underserved neighborhoods; organized policy work session for Governor’s Cabinet and a public symposium for 100 participants including city, neighborhood and business leaders from around the State.
- Authored “Getting Back on Track: Aligning Climate and Transportation Policy,” a national report evaluating transportation policy and spending in the 50 states

## **Transit Campaign**

- Conducted a \$1 million effort to build capacity among state and regional pro-transit organizations and develop eight regional transit ballot campaigns and funding proposals
- Authored “Funding Public Transportation” and “A Strategy Template for Transit Campaign Planning”

## **National Association of City Transportation Officials**

**Executive Director** (10/08 – 9/09)

- Organized workshops for city transportation officials on best practices in public transportation, asset management, bike and car sharing, and related topics
- Managed the Board or Directors of the newly independent nonprofit, set agendas for bi-monthly business meetings, established operating procedures, and conducted Congressional outreach to promote cities’ transportation priorities

## **City Council of the District of Columbia**

**Policy Advisor** (5/07 – 10/08)

Programmatic and legislative highlights:

- First annual city and regional Car Free Day
- New stormwater standards for developments around the Anacostia River
- Market-priced street parking pilot program and new bicycle parking standards for multi-family homes

## Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments

Urban Planning Fellow (9/05 – 5/07)

- Washington, DC Office of Planning: Designed outreach plan to engage residents in underserved neighborhoods
- Arlington County, VA Department of Community Planning: Drafted form-based code standards for anticipated streetcar corridor

## The Sierra Club

Associate Washington Representative (2/01 – 8/05)

- Managed the national Challenge to Sprawl Campaign and supported over one dozen local campaigns pursuing compact, mixed use, multi-modal urban design
- Lobbied for more public transit funding and sustainability provisions in the federal transportation bill (SAFETEA-LU Act)
- Produced reports on the environmental costs of sprawl development and on the benefits of investing in core communities
- Managed press outreach and quoted in outlets such as *National Journal*, *NY Times Magazine*, *LA Times*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, and *CBS Sunday Morning News*

## Campaigns & Research

**Campaign Manager**, Earth Justice | Defending the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)  
(8/5 - 12/5)

**Outreach Director**, National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship Candlelight Vigil (7/00 - 1/00)

**Media Manager**, Million Mom March (5/00 - 7/00)

**Youth Outreach Manager**, Earth Day Network (2/00 - 5/00)

**Research Assistant**, National Public Radio (NPR) (4/99 - 2/00)

**Laboratory Assistant**, George Washington University, Photo-immunology Dept. (9/96 - 4/99)

## Publications & Presentations

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The Municipal Magazine

### **Policy Toolkits for Local Leaders (2013-2014)**

Inclusionary Housing | Vacant property maintenance | Parklets | Transfer of Development Rights | Stormwater Management | Community Land Trusts

### **Model Policies Library (2014)**

Over two-dozen vetted and summarized ordinances, implemented by real communities that enact successful policies in economic development, transportation, housing and sustainability.

**Funding Public Transportation: Local and State Strategies.** (2012) Smart Growth America

**Bringing back Downtown Hagerstown, MD.** (2011) <http://tinyurl.com/MD-Smart-Growth>

**Transit Campaign Planning Strategy Template** (2011) <http://tinyurl.com/Transit-Campaigns>

**Getting Back on Track: Aligning Climate and Transportation Policy** (2010)

<http://tinyurl.com/State-Transportation>

**Higher Density Development: Myth & Fact.** (2005) <http://tinyurl.com/Higher-Density>

**Road to Better Projects: Public Involvement and NEPA.** (2003)

<http://tinyurl.com/NEPA-and-Roads>

**Smart Choices, Less Traffic: A Critical Look at 49 Transportation Projects.** (2002)

<http://tinyurl.com/Smart-Choices-Less-Traffic>

**Genetic control of susceptibility to UV-induced immuno-suppression by interacting quantitative trait loci.** *Genes & Immunity*. April 2000, Vol 1, No 4, pp 251-259.

<http://tinyurl.com/UV-and-Immunity>

**Inbreeding in the Pine Barrens Timber Rattlesnake Population,** *College Thesis*. (1996)

"Best Poster" award, *Association of Women in Science*, Glendale, PA.

## **SELECTED PRESENTATIONS**

**"Complete Streets: Moving from policy to implementation"** (2014)

Local Leaders Workshop: Making Complete Streets Real | Mt. Rainier, MD

**"Smarter Growth in One Year: 10 Actions to get your community started"** (2014)

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference | Denver, CO

**“Move that Bus: Best practices in delivering better service”** (2013)

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference | Kansas City, MO

**“Positioning Your Campaign for Success”** (2013)

Transit Initiatives Conference | Atlanta, GA

**“Rebuilding Cities through Sustainable Development”** (2012)

Wayne Law Review Symposium | Detroit, MI

**“Managing Gentrification”** (2012) | Congressional Hunger Center | Washington, DC

**“Best Sustainability Practices by U.S. Cities”** (2012)

U.S. Department of State, International Visiting Leaders Program | Washington, DC

**“Fighting Climate Change with Smart Transportation”** (2012)

New York City Bar Association | New York City, NY

**“Leveraging the Smart Growth Brand”** (2012)

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference | San Diego, CA

**“Funding Public Transportation”** (2011) | Transit Initiatives Conference | St. Louis, MO

**“A Historical Look at the Rise of the Automobile”** (2011)

Power Shift Conference | Washington, DC

## Community Involvement

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**Washington, DC Mayor-elect’s Transition Committee** | APPOINTED (2014)

**Washington Transportation Planning Board Citizen Advisory Committee** | APPOINTED (2013-2014)

**Pedestrian Advisory Council for the District of Columbia** | CHAIR (2010 -2013)

**Citizens’ Committee for Fair Elections** | FIELD CAPTAIN (2012)

**EnvironMentors** – College access for under-privileged youth | VICE-CHAIR (2009-2011)

**GreenHOME** – Green, affordable housing construction | BOARD OF DIRECTORS (1998 – 2000)