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To Save the Planet, the Green New Deal Needs to Improve Urban Land Use.

The Fourth National Climate Assessment, released in November 2018, pulls no punches. United States communities are already experiencing tangible harms from climate change, and without substantial changes in human behavior, the situation will get worse. Environmental legislation may get more attention in the current Congress: Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) and other prominent progressives have called for a Green New Deal (GND). Early outlines for such a plan include a broad package of policies, such as transitioning to all renewable energy sources, restoring forests and wetlands, and upgrading infrastructure to be more resilient. However, the current plan does not address a major underlying cause of environmental harm—decades of poor urban land use decisions. Specifically, better urban land use would reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) from cars and limit the human and financial costs caused by developing environmentally risky land.

In developing an effective plan to address our climate challenges, proponents of the Green New Deal should consider the following tenets to improve urban land use.

Continue reading.

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