Charter for National Park Cities gathers international support

A Universal Charter for National Park Cities, the first of its kind to address the growing role of cities as habitats shaping life on earth, is launched on Sunday 21 July 2019, by the National Park City Foundation, World Urban Parks and Salzburg Global Seminar. [1]

Organisations and individuals are invited to sign and support the first Universal Charter for National Park Cities which is already supported by experts and change-makers from over 20 countries, including the UK, Australia, India, Uganda, Honduras, Canada, South Africa, Albania and the USA. [2]

Supporters include scientists, artists, medical doctors, parents, social innovators, musicians, environmentalists, investors, authors, climate change activists, parents, swimmers and educators.

The historic document sets out a common vision for this new kind of national park, reflecting the importance of how cities develop and operate. The Charter defines a National Park City as “a place, a vision and a city-wide community that is acting together to make life better for people, wildlife and nature” and explains that “a defining feature is the widespread commitment to act so people, culture and nature work together to provide a better foundation for life”. The Charter specifies that a National Park City is “a shared vision and journey for a better life” and that “everyone in a National Park City is able to benefit and contribute everyday”.

With ceremonies taking place in Australasia, Europe and North America, the Universal Charter for National Park Cities is being launched the day before London becomes the world’s first National Park City. [3]

Adelaide (Australia), Glasgow (Scotland), Galway (Ireland) and Newcastle upon Tyne (England) are all in the running to be the world’s second National Park City, with influencers in other cities around the world inspired to follow suit.
Alison Barnes, Trustee of the National Park City Foundation said:

“It has been a privilege to work with colleagues from across the world on the Universal Charter. The vision for National Park Cities pioneered in London has proven resonant and inspirational. Today is an important moment of hope that we can act together to make life better for people, wildlife and nature in our cities at a global scale.”

Neil McCarthy, CEO of World Urban Parks, said:

“This is the most significant development regarding people and nature since John Muir and the creation of the national park concept. World Urban Parks has been inspired by the London NPC journey and has established an aspirational target of 25 National Park Cities worldwide by 2025 – 25 for 2025.”

Daniel Raven-Ellison, founder of the London National Park City campaign, said:

“When you look around the world there are national parks that represent every major kind of internationally recognised landscape and habitat apart from one – the world’s fastest growing habitats – cities. Inspired by rural national parks, the National Park City idea challenges us to think differently about cities and to make life better in them for people and wildlife. Crucially, everybody in a National Park City is able to both enjoy and contribute to it.”

Clare Shine of Salzburg Global Seminar said:

“Across the world, ever more people are living and working in cities, and billions are spent on urban development and infrastructure. Yet nature is being squeezed out – despite overwhelming evidence that connecting with nature can boost the physical, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing of people and their communities. Greener, healthier cities make good economic sense for a sustainable planet. The National Parks City concept is a radical, timely and locally-driven solution to this shared global challenge. Salzburg Global Seminar has backed Dan Raven-Ellison’s vision from the start. Through our Parks for the Planet Forum, we are excited to lead international collaboration to build a transformative movement for living and livable cities now and for generations to come.”
Ms Kobie Brand Global Director of Biodiversity at ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability said:

“Our future is urban. Embracing nature and inviting it into every aspect of city life, is essential for humanity’s health and well-being. Our commitment matters – from our own streets and neighbourhoods to city-level planning and design. We can achieve this vision of cities with nature through true partnering and collective action. Every voice matters, every action counts and every city can make a difference. Congratulations to the people of London for leading the way!”

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Notes to editors
[1] The Universal Charter can be viewed here: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3ybnsbmsggb5l9s/AAAEhEpK73ODI7c6ixIBgrlza?dl=0
Organisations and individuals can sign the Charter online at NationalParkCity.org from Sunday 21 July.

[2] The Universal Charter for National Park Cities results from growing interest in the National Park City concept from around the world. The National Park City Foundation, World Urban Parks and Salzburg Global Seminar formed a close partnership to create the Charter and to run an online consultation, international webinars and fora on three continents before being tested with experts from over 30 countries.

[3] Inspired by the world’s rural national parks, the grassroots campaign to make London a National Park City began six years ago. Supported by the Mayor of London and 1,000 local politicians, the London National Park City is a place, a vision and a movement to improve life in London by making the city greener, healthier and wilder, and inspiring more people to enjoy being outdoors. The London National Park City launches at a London City Hall summit hosted by Mayor of London, Sadig Khan, during the UK capital’s first National Park City Festival which will see 300 free events taking place across the city.