



Regionalism: Smart Region Initiatives Overrule City Councils

Utility companies are wedging their way into regional governance to facilitate the installation and implementation of smart city technology throughout a region. Note the article states “co-lead”, which means they are not the main driver of regionalization. □ TN Editor

Thanks to their scale and infrastructure, electric utilities can play a central role in creating smart regions, and reap the benefits.

The emergence of next-generation technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), 5G, and data science, are poised to transform today’s cities into advanced smart cities. Electric utility companies, with their critical infrastructure and essential services, are well positioned to co-lead this transformation.

While smart cities represent a major business opportunity for utility

companies, “smart regions” are a more significant opportunity.

Smart cities employ advanced digital technologies and data science to solve problems and create new outcomes for its residents, businesses and visitors. However, some challenges are too complex and beyond the scope and capability of any one city and county to solve. These include traffic and mobility, air quality management, and resilience to natural and manmade hazards. A regional approach, combined with innovative digital technologies and data science, will create large-scale impacts that were not possible before.

Utilities are ideal smart region builders. They operate in and service large geographic regions that span multiple counties and hundreds of cities. They have deep customer knowledge and established relationships with every city and county in the region. They have infrastructure, personnel and facilities throughout the region. More importantly, some of that existing infrastructure, such as distribution poles, streetlights and AMI networks, are ideal platforms to build new smart services quickly and economically.

While cities and counties think in terms of their own needs, utility companies already bring a more regional focus and execution capability. Their organizations, operational processes, policies and systems are built to support the diverse needs of the smallest cities to the largest metropolitan areas.

As the definition of the smart region evolves, business opportunities for utility companies begin to emerge. One entry point opportunity is for utility companies to be a regional “smart services provider” and offer smart city services to small and mid-sized cities. These smaller cities are at risk of being left behind because they lack the expertise, resources, skills and funding to transform.

This opportunity calls for the utility company to place IoT sensors and controllers on their poles, streetlights and towers, and offer it to cities as a managed smart city service. One example is to place streetlight controllers (and dimmers) onto existing LED streetlights, and then offering it to the city as “streetlight as a service”. Other smart city

devices, such as air quality monitors, pedestrian and vehicle counters/trackers, cameras, EV charging, and digital signage, can be offered as a service in the future.

In this role, the utility company leverages its regional scale, infrastructure assets and operation capability to fill a marketplace gap and becomes a central point for smart city services.

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Atlantic Council Takes Over '100 Resilient Cities' From Rockefeller Foundation

Since 1973, the Atlantic Council has been a hotbed of Trilateral Commission members and initiatives. Founded by David Rockefeller and

Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Commission resuscitated historic Technocracy and fed it to the United Nations as Sustainable Development. Today, both are steeped in UN initiatives and its Sustainable Development Goals. □ TN Editor

The Atlantic Council and Rockefeller Foundation announced the launch of the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center, which seeks to enhance the resilience of 1 billion people worldwide by 2030. It is the successor of 100 Resilient Cities (100RC), the Rockefeller Foundation's former resilience effort that is [to be disbanded](#), effective July 31.

In addition to a \$30 million grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the new resiliency center received a \$25 million gift from business leader and philanthropist Adrienne Arsht. At a press conference at the Atlantic Council in Washington, DC, Arsht said the new center is part of her aim of "improving the state of the world in measurable ways."

"To me, resilience is a way of thinking. It's how you behave and how you see the world," she said, adding that she hopes the initiative will become "a global center for resilient solutions for people, systems and institutions."

The center's director, former Bank of America executive Kathy Baughman McLeod, said the new initiative will be focused on "100% implementation," while 100RC was more focused on planning and building. She said it would look to use evidence-based solutions and best practices that can be copied at scale, and help encourage the partnerships and financial backing such plans require.

That work will also include areas like public policy, finance, insurance and technology. "People are suffering, economies are being set back. We intend to do something about it," Baughman McLeod said.

The news came on the day that the city of Washington, DC unveiled [its first resiliency strategy](#), built in partnership with 100RC with an emphasis on fostering inclusive growth, fighting climate change and transforming technology. In a speech, Mayor Muriel Bowser said DC is already strong, diverse and vibrant and is the "envy of many cities around the globe," but must do more.

“For our growth and prosperity to continue, however, we must ensure that we are prepared for the unexpected and be resilient in the face of change and ongoing challenges,” she said.

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Sustainable Mobility: Half Of All City Trips By Bicycle By 2030

The NGO Bycs is promoting the election of ‘Bike Mayors’ in cities around the world in order to get people out of their cars altogether in favor of bicycles. This has been a general initiative of Agenda 21 since 1992. □
TN Editor

When the first “bicycle mayor—a person who serves as a connecting point between city departments, nonprofits, and other bike advocates— was chosen in Amsterdam in 2016, the idea was to help an already bike-obsessed city become even more bikeable. But the program was never

intended only to be about Amsterdam. The nonprofit behind the idea aims to bring bike mayors to 200 cities by the end of 2019. The program is already in nearly 30 cities, from São Paulo to Istanbul.

“We really want to try and take that Dutch approach and not only use the culture here as a playground for new ideas, but then take that approach and those ideas and work around the world very quickly,” says Adam Stones, strategy and communications director for [Bycs](#), the nonprofit that created the [bicycle mayors program](#).

The “mayors” aren’t part of local government, but volunteers who are recommended by local cycling groups, and sometimes voted on by the public in an unofficial election. “How it works in Amsterdam might be different from how it works in Beirut or Bangalore, but the idea is the same: You stand in the middle of all of the stakeholders across the city,” he says.

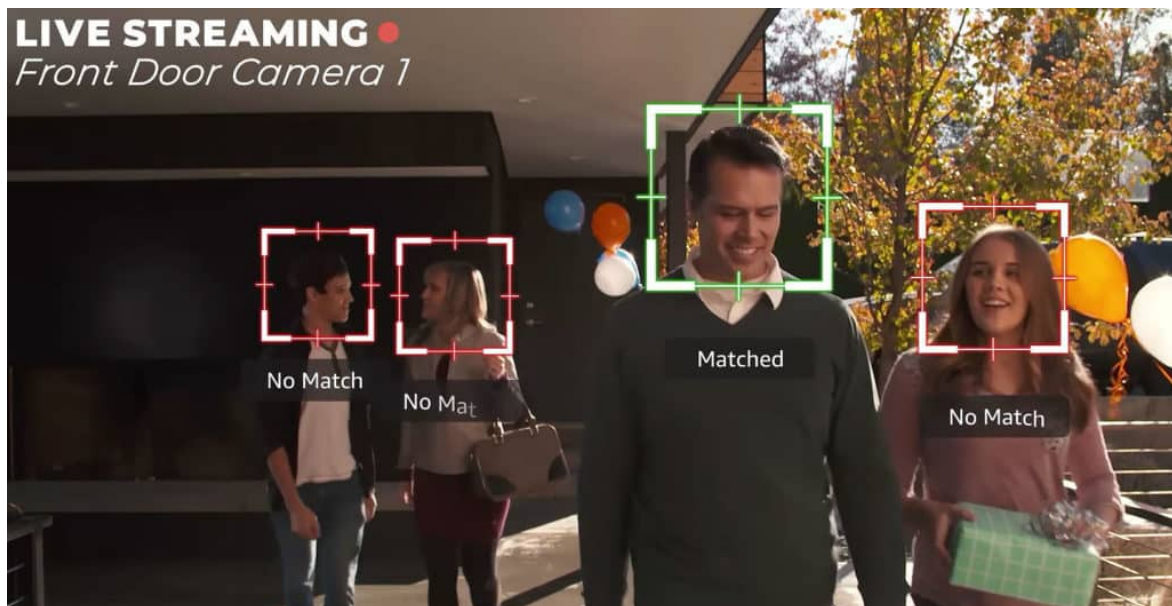
“That’s the cyclists, the advocates, the government bodies, the political leadership. And you try to listen to all of those groups and identify what the areas are where you can really accelerate some change and make some impact by bringing all of those groups together.”

Each bicycle mayor focuses on the local issues that are most relevant. In Cape Town, South Africa, the city’s bike mayor has been helping women in townships learn how to ride a bike for the first time and connecting them with other programs that offer access to bicycles.

“Suddenly, these women who can now ride a bike can for the first time access education or employment opportunities that they didn’t have a chance to before,” says Stones.

In Panama City, the bicycle mayor is helping companies launch bike-to-work programs and working with the U.S. Embassy on “PanamáSinCarro,” an attempt to reduce car use in the congested city. In Beirut, the bicycle mayor is meeting with government officials to help bring cycling into national environmental and traffic plans, and teaching kids to ride bikes to help increase the number of students who bike to school.

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Biometric Smackdown: Backlash Grows Against Facial Recognition

Stories of resistance against biometric schemes are seldom seen in established media because Big Tech lawyers head off such stories by bullying outlets with legal threats. Monsanto and Big Pharma turned this into an art form. □ TN Editor

A teenager is suing Apple for \$1 billion. The [lawsuit](#), filed Monday, hinges on the alleged use of an increasingly popular — and controversial — technology: facial recognition. The tech can identify an individual by analyzing their facial features in images, in videos, or in real time.

The plaintiff, 18-year-old college student Ousmane Bah, claims the company's [facial recognition tool led to him being arrested for Apple Store thefts](#) he didn't commit, by mistakenly linking his name with the face of the real thief. NYPD officers came to Bah's home last autumn to

arrest him at 4 in the morning, only to discover that they apparently had the wrong guy. Bah says the whole ordeal caused him serious emotional distress. Meanwhile, Apple insists its stores do not use facial recognition tech.

Whatever the truth turns out to be in this case, Bah's lawsuit is the latest sign of an escalating backlash against facial recognition. As the tech gets implemented in more and more domains, it has increasingly sparked controversy. Take, for example, the black tenants in Brooklyn who recently [objected to their landlord's plan to install the tech in their rent-stabilized building](#). Or the traveler who complained via Twitter that [JetBlue had checked her into her flight using facial recognition](#) without her consent. (The airline explained that it had used Department of Homeland Security data to do that, and apologized.)

That's in addition to the [researchers](#), [advocates](#), and [thousands of members of the public](#) who have been voicing concerns about the risk of facial recognition leading to wrongful arrests. They worry that certain groups will be disproportionately affected. Facial recognition tech is pretty good at identifying white male faces, because those are the sorts of faces it's been trained on. But too often, it [misidentifies people of color and women](#). That bias could lead to them being disproportionately held for questioning as more law enforcement agencies put the tech to use.

Now, we're reaching an inflection point where major companies — not only Apple, but also Amazon and Microsoft — are being forced to take such complaints seriously. And although they're finally trying to telegraph that they're sensitive to the concerns, it may be too late to win back trust. Public dissatisfaction has reached such a fever pitch that some, including [the city of San Francisco](#), are now considering all-out bans on facial recognition tech.

A vote to ban Amazon from selling Rekognition

Amazon is not exactly known for playing nice. It's got a reputation for [fighting proposed laws it doesn't like](#) and for [aggressively defending](#)

[its work with the police and government](#). For years, it could afford to behave that way. Yet the uproar over facial recognition is making that posture harder to sustain.

Amazon's facial recognition tool, Rekognition, has already been sold to law enforcement and [pitched to Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#). But leading AI researchers recently argued in [an open letter](#) that the tech is deeply flawed. (Case in point: In a test last year, [Rekognition matched 28 members of Congress to criminal mug shots](#).) And Amazon shareholders have been clamoring for a vote on whether the company should stop selling the tool to government agencies until it passes an independent review of its civil rights impact.

Amazon fought hard to keep the vote from happening, but the Securities and Exchange Commission [ruled](#) this month that the company has to let it go ahead. It'll take place on May 22. Although the result will be largely symbolic — shareholder resolutions aren't binding — the vote stands to bring negative attention to Amazon.

In the meantime, the company has been [trying to soften its image](#) by, for example, dialing back some of its aggressive promotional tactics. Kartik Hosanagar, a Wharton School of Business professor, [said](#) Amazon is taking “preemptive action” to make nice “before one of the [presidential] candidates makes Amazon the poster child of what they refer to as the problems with Big Tech.”

Microsoft's mixed messages on the ethical use of facial recognition

Whereas Amazon is still a young company, founded in 1994, Microsoft has reached adulthood — it's been around since 1975. That longer life span means it's had more time to make mistakes, but also more time to learn from them. Kim Hart at Axios argues that's why [Microsoft has, for the most part, managed to avoid the backlash against big tech](#). “Microsoft, which trudged through its own antitrust battle with the Justice Department in the '90s, has sidestepped the mistakes made by its younger, brasher Big Tech brethren,” she writes.

Yet Microsoft is by no means completely immune to the backlash. After it was reported this month that Microsoft researchers had produced three papers on AI and facial recognition with a military-run university in China, some US politicians lambasted the company for helping a regime that's detaining [a million Uighur Muslims in internment camps](#) and [surveilling millions more](#). Sen. Marco Rubio [called it](#) “deeply disturbing ... an act that makes them complicit in aiding the Communist Chinese government’s totalitarian censorship apparatus.”

The press also pointed out that the company has sold its facial recognition software to [a US prison](#), and that Microsoft president Brad Smith has said it would be [“cruel”](#) to altogether stop selling the software to government agencies.

Days later, the company took pains to show that it does care about the ethical use of AI. Smith announced that it had refused to sell its facial recognition software to a California law enforcement agency that wanted to install it in officers’ cars and body cams. He said Microsoft refused on human rights grounds, knowing use of the software would cause people of color and women to be disproportionately held for questioning.

The push to ban facial recognition tech outright

This month has made clear that public pressure is working when it comes to facial recognition. Behemoth companies know they can no longer ignore the criticisms — or, as they recently did, simply say they’d welcome regulation of this technology. Critics are making clear that’s not good enough — they want to see such companies “get out of the surveillance business altogether,” [as the American Civil Liberties Union told Vox](#).

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UN Biodiversity Conference To Create ‘Paris Moment’ To ‘Rescue Nature’

The upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference is to nature what the Paris Conference was to global warming. The outcome will extend the 1,100 - page Global Biodiversity Assessment from 1995 and specify all human behaviors that are necessary to ‘rescue’ nature. □ TN Editor

Diplomats from 130 nations gathered in Paris on Monday to validate a grim UN assessment of the state of Nature and lay the groundwork for a rescue plan for life on Earth.

The destruction of Nature threatens humanity “at least as much as human-induced climate change,” UN biodiversity chief Robert Watson said as the five-day meeting began.

“We have a closing window of opportunity to act and narrowing options.”

A 44-page draft “Summary for Policy Makers” obtained by AFP

catalogues the 1001 ways in which our species has plundered the planet and damaged its capacity to renew the resources upon which we depend, starting with breathable air, drinkable water and productive soil.

The impact of humanity's expanding footprint and appetites has been devastating.

Up to a million species face extinction, many within decades, according to the report, and three-quarters of Earth's land surface has been "severely altered".

A third of ocean fish stocks are in decline, and the rest, barring a few, are harvested at the very edge of sustainability.

A dramatic die-off of pollinating insects, especially bees, threatens essential crops valued at half-a-trillion dollars annually.

Twenty 10-year targets adopted in 2010 under the United Nations' biodiversity treaty — to expand protected areas, slow species and forest loss, and reduce pollution — will, with one or two exceptions, fail badly.

Based on an underlying report that draws from 400 experts and weighs in at 1,800 pages, the executive summary has to be vetted line-by-line by diplomats, with scientists at their elbow.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) document, once approved, will be released on May 6.

Historically, conservation biology has focused on the plight of pandas, polar bears and a multitude of less "charismatic" animals and plants that humanity is harvesting, eating, crowding or poisoning into oblivion.

But in the last two decades, that focus has shifted back to us.

"Up to now, we have talked about the importance of biodiversity mostly from an environmental perspective," Watson told AFP ahead of the Paris meet.

Agriculture is key

“Now we are saying that Nature is crucial for food production, for pure water, for medicines and even social cohesion.”

And to fight climate change.

Forests and oceans, for example, soak up half of the planet-warming greenhouse gases we spew into the atmosphere.

If they didn't, Earth might already be locked into an unliveable future of runaway global warming.

And yet, an area of tropical forest five times the size of England has been destroyed since 2014, mainly to service the global demand for beef, biofuels, soy beans and palm oil.

“The recent IPCC report shows to what extent climate change threatens biodiversity,” said Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and a main architect of the Paris Agreement, referring to the UN's climate science panel.

“And the upcoming IPBES report — as important for humanity — will show these two problems have overlapping solutions.”

Extinctions hard to see

That overlap, she added, begins with agriculture, which accounts for at least a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions.

Set up in 2012, the IPBES synthesises published science for policymakers in the same way the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) does on climate.

Both advisory bodies feed into UN treaties.

But the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has always been a poor stepchild compared to its climate counterpart, and the IPBES was added as an afterthought, making its authority harder to establish.

Biodiversity experts are trying to engineer a “Paris moment” for Nature akin to the 2015 Paris climate treaty.

[Read full story here...](#)

Stop biodiversity loss or we could face our own extinction, warns UN

Jonathan Watts, The Guardian, 6 Nov. 2018

The world must thrash out a new deal for nature in the next two years or humanity could be the first species to document our own extinction, warns the United Nations biodiversity chief.

Ahead of a key international conference to discuss the collapse of ecosystems, Cristiana Paşca Palmer said people in all countries need to put pressure on their governments to draw up ambitious global targets by 2020 to protect the insects, birds, plants and mammals that are vital for global food production, clean water and carbon sequestration.

“The loss of biodiversity is a silent killer,” she told the Guardian. “It’s different from climate change, where people feel the impact in everyday life. With biodiversity, it is not so clear but by the time you feel what is happening, it may be too late.”

Paşca Palmer is executive secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity – the world body responsible for maintaining the natural life support systems on which humanity depends.

Its members – 195 states and the EU – will meet in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, this month to start discussions on a new framework for managing the world’s ecosystems and wildlife. This will kick off two years of frenetic negotiations, which Paşca Palmer hopes will culminate in an ambitious new global deal at the next conference in Beijing in 2020.

Conservationists are desperate for a biodiversity accord that will carry the same weight as the Paris climate agreement. But so far, this subject has received [miserably little attention](#) even though many scientists say it poses at least an equal threat to humanity.

The last two major biodiversity agreements - in 2002 and 2010 - have failed to stem the [worst loss of life on Earth since the demise of the dinosaurs](#).

Eight years ago, under the [Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#), nations promised to at least halve the loss of natural habitats, ensure sustainable fishing in all waters, and expand nature reserves from 10% to 17% of the world's land by 2020. But many nations have fallen behind, and those that have created more protected areas have done little to police them. "Paper reserves" can now be found from Brazil to China.

The issue is also low on the political agenda. Compared to climate summits, few heads of state attend biodiversity talks. Even before Donald Trump, the US refused to ratify the treaty and only sends an observer. Along with the Vatican, it is [the only UN state not to participate](#).

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No One Left Behind In New Global Cradle-To-Cradle Biometric Database

A major global tech corporation based in Japan, NEC, says that a global biometric system will help solve health problems as per United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #3, and touts “leave no one behind.” The program will initially tested in Kenya. □ TN Editor

Last week, NEC Corporation and Nagasaki University announced that they are creating a global facial recognition program based on the U.N.’s slogan of eradicating poverty called, [“Leave No One Behind.”](#)

Seizing on the chance to turn the U.N.’s slogan into a global facial recognition marketing scheme, NEC has modified it slightly, calling it “Fahamu Mama-Mtoto (To know mother and child).”

If NEC’s plan *to know mother and child* is a success, we can all kiss [“Hakuna Matata”](#) goodbye, because we will no longer have to worry about our privacy *for the rest of our days*.

I have covered the rise of facial biometrics for years, but I have never ever come across such a bold slogan that plainly states that they want to identify everyone, including children. Although, the European Union’s (EU) [mandatory national biometric ID cards](#) and NIH’s [1 million person DNA database](#) come close.

Ed Hasbrouck at [PapersPlease.org](#) has done an excellent job of exposing Big Brother’s plan to use facial recognition to identify air travelers, but I doubt that even he could have seen this one coming

NEC’s press [release](#) is so audacious that I encourage everyone to read it. Here is an excerpt that is almost too incredible to believe.

“Nagasaki University and NEC Corporation have established a program on global health & biometric authentication with Nagasaki University’s Graduate School of Tropical Medicine and Global Health Studies. **The**

aim of this course is to research and develop human resources related to the utilization of ICT, including biometrics, to solve health problems in developing countries.”

To claim that a global facial recognition program could “solve health problems” is beyond absurd. I mean what is next, why not claim that it can solve disease and drought

NEC also claims their global facial recognition program will help “in the management of child and mother health information” by identifying everyone.

“The program will acquire fingerprint and facial images of mothers who volunteer to collaborate with the university’s Maternal and Child Health Information System. **This will enable identification by biometrics**, even when identification cards are lost or missing, and will enable the maintenance of health and medical information, such as birth data, medical history, treatment history, and immunization status.”

Corporate doublespeak has never been better; on the one hand you have NEC announcing their plan to create a global facial recognition program starting in Kenya and on the other hand, they claim that only those that “collaborate” will be entered into their database.

So which is it? Are they laying the groundwork for a global facial recognition program in Kenya or is it a voluntary “collaboration?”

“As part of the activities of this program, Nagasaki University and NEC will verify the effectiveness of a biometric system in the management of child and mother health information, which is important for understanding the health status of local residents. The program will acquire fingerprint and facial images of mothers who volunteer to collaborate with the university’s Maternal and Child Health Information System.”

Finally, we have an answer. NEC is using the Nagasaki University’s “Maternal and Child Health Information System” to help create a facial biometrics program.

NEC is a master at corporate doublespeak; one has to read between the lines of the next paragraph to truly understand their global plans.

“The philosophy of Nagasaki University is to contribute to the harmonious development of society by fostering a rich spirit and creating science that supports peace and collaboration. **Based on the university’s outstanding track record in tropical medicine and other fields, it aims to become a global health education and research center that contributes to better health throughout the world.**”

And there it is... NEC is using Nagasaki University to help create a global facial biometrics program for “better health throughout the world.”

The spread of facial biometrics is driven by government control and corporate greed. It has nothing to do with solving the world’s health problems.

Creating a global biometric database of close to [8 billion people](#) should be a huge red flag for everyone. DHS, the EU and now NEC will stop at nothing to identify everyone, including children.

[Read full story here...](#)



NYC Swan Dives Into Green New Deal With ‘Climate Mobilization Act’

With an overwhelming majority vote (45-2), the NYC City Council drank the United Nations’ Sustainable Development cool aid and committed its 8.6 million residents to the Green New Deal. □ TN Editor

The New York City Council passed wide-ranging legislation to fight climate change known as the “[Climate Mobilization Act](#),” a package of seven bills that supporters said would help build a “Green New Deal for New York City.” The legislation passed Thursday by [a 45-2 vote](#), according to CityLab and multiple other reports.

The bills’ centerpiece requires buildings over 25,000 square feet to cut climate emissions 40% by 2030 and more than 80% by 2050, which officials said is “the most ambitious energy efficiency legislation in the country.” The legislation also requires green roofs on certain large buildings and establishes requirements for smaller buildings to do the same; creates a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing

mechanism for commercial property owners; simplifies the applications and siting process for wind turbine installation across the city; requires the Office of Alternative Energy to post and maintain links on its website on green roofs; and helps the city move towards shutting down its 24 gas-fired power plants in the city and replacing them with energy storage and renewable power, with a feasibility study to follow.

“The Climate Mobilization Act is a down payment on the future of New York City — one that ensures we lead the way in the ever-growing fight against climate change,” Council Member Costa Constantinides said in a statement before the bills passed.

This legislation represents perhaps the biggest and most ambitious city-level step to fight climate change, and leaders in New York City are urging their fellow major metropolitan areas to act. “We are on the precipice of climate disaster, and New York City is acting,” City Council Speaker Corey Johnson [said in a statement](#) on Twitter after the bills passed. “I hope other cities follow suit.”

The move to force large buildings in the city to cut emissions is an especially significant one, given that most emissions come from the building and transportation sectors. With numerous skyscrapers and other large developments in the city, cutting emissions there could be a major boon for the city’s environment.

Some advocates have noted the legislation is not perfect and may bleed into other issues the city faces around housing affordability. [In a statement](#), the Energy Efficiency for All New York (EEFA NY) Coalition noted that buildings with rent-controlled housing face less strict requirements, while some affordable housing properties are completely exempt. EEFA NY warned that discrepancy will “exacerbate the housing quality deficit in the long term for communities of color and low-income New Yorkers.” The group said many affordable housing developments are among the city’s oldest buildings, which were built in less environmentally-conscious times and so do not live up to current standards. While EEFA NY said the legislation will create jobs, improve air quality and lower energy costs, it called for the New York legislature and the city to work to make it easier for affordable housing to hit

emissions goals and help them recoup the costs of doing so.

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As A Nation, Silicon Valley Would Be Run As An AI Technocracy

Since nobody would have time to run a nation in Silicon Valley, the logical solution for local Technocrats would be to create an app that would run everything for them. Indeed, an AI Technocracy would be their chosen outcome. □ TN Editor

If Silicon Valley was its own country, its per-person GDP would make it the second richest in the world, just behind oil-producing Qatar.

The Republic of Silicon Valley — more specifically the San Jose metropolitan area, which includes Palo Alto, Mountain View, Gilroy and the headquarters of some of the world's most valuable public companies — had a per-person gross domestic product of \$128,308 in 2017, the

most recent data available from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

That's about \$66 (roughly the cost of one [Chromecast Ultra](#) from Mountain View-based Google) less than Qatar's per-person GDP of \$128,374 in 2017, as measured by The World Bank and adjusted for the difference in cost of living from country to country. Next highest is Macao, a semi-autonomous region in China best known for its resorts and casinos, with a per-person GDP of \$115,123. Other rich countries, according to this measure, include Luxembourg, Singapore and Ireland.

So how do Silicon Valley and Qatar compare?

Qatar is an absolute monarchy on the Arabian Peninsula with a population of about 2.36 million whose top exports include liquified natural gas, petroleum and the [Al-Jazeera](#) news network. Qatar's total GDP of almost \$167 billion is the 54th highest in the world, lower than Iraq and higher than Hungary.

Silicon Valley has a yet-to-be-determined type of government — perhaps an AI technocracy — and a population of almost 2 million. Its top exports include Google, Apple products and Stanford graduates. Its total GDP of \$275 billion would be the 42nd highest in the world, lower than Chile and higher than Finland. The United States' total GDP remains the world's highest at \$19.48 trillion, according to The World Bank. On its own, California was the fifth largest economy at \$2.79 trillion in 2017, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, less than Germany but more than India.

But giving Silicon Valley sole credit for Apple and Google and all its other international companies isn't really fair to Qatar — or the rest of the California, said Micah Weinberg, president of the Bay Area Council Economic Institute.

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Andrew Yang: Presidential Candidate Promises 'Enlightened Technocracy'

Yang is a mix of Libertarian and Democrat who is appealing to both camps. An 'enlightened technocracy' is comparable to Dr. Parag Khanna's 'direct technocracy' as proposed in *Technocracy in America* (2015). Yang promotes Universal Basic Income, Smart Meters, Medicare for all, carbon fees and legalization of drugs. □ TN Editor

Andrew Yang, a 44-year-old affable technocrat, is leading a rather whimsical presidential run, fused with [a litany of policy proposals](#) tackling every aspect of American life. His policies include renovating abandoned malls as new public spaces, limiting smartphone use among children, reviving earmarks in the legislative process, making community college affordable and [paying Americans](#) who are moving to new areas for jobs. With his new, cutting-edge brand of politics, Yang could be the perfect antidote to our toxic status quo which feeds on cynicism, contempt, tribalism and above all dysfunction.

Yang's overarching message of positivity, compassion and concrete

policy making would be a welcome disruption to Washington's refusal to address the nation's gripping challenges regarding healthcare, education and climate change. In other words, Yang combines the best aspects of personality with policy chops, a valuable mix for a presidential contender.

Yang has weighed in on all sorts of topics one would not expect to hear from a conventional candidate, from [free marriage counseling](#) to free HBO accounts to rally the country around Game of Thrones. Then again, Mr. Yang is not conventional at all. As an entrepreneur, Yang created over 2,500 jobs in American cities suffering from the 2008 financial crisis. He then realized that the existential threat fueling poverty and wealth inequality was automation, a problem which job creation on its own could not handle. He subsequently built his political campaign on a central message: universal basic income. That means \$1,000 per month for every American adult. Period.

Universal basic income may sound unfathomable. Surely, subsidizing nearly 300 million people every month is too ambitious? Not so, Yang argues. Paying for this program would be realized through a value-added tax on companies like Amazon, which he points out has paid no federal tax even as the corporate giant, the second largest US-based employer in 2017, is at, "the forefront of automation," according to [Nick Wingfield](#) of the New York Times.

While Amazon is creating new jobs at warehouses for those displaced by robots, many suspect this trend cannot continue indefinitely as robots grow increasingly intelligent and capable of performing increasingly complex tasks. In describing the trend of job creation at Amazon, futurist Martin Ford stated, "My assumption is this technology will eventually displace a lot of people in those warehouses. I would not say that overnight huge numbers of jobs disappear. Maybe the first indication is they don't get rid of those people, but the pace of job creation slows down."

Surely companies like Amazon, Facebook and Google can find some extra cash lying around in an era of hyper-charged inequality and record profits? Alphabet, the parent company of Google, holds \$80 billion in

cash reserves, enough to buy Goldman Sachs. That figure rises to [\\$1.9 trillion](#) for all businesses. However, unlike in previous eras, corporations have very little incentive to invest their excess cash in the economy today in expanding business operations or creating new jobs. A value-added tax on Silicon Valley to fund universal basic income would simply be the government stepping in to make crucial investments in America that entities like Amazon, Google, Facebook and Uber currently seem unwilling to make.

Andrew Yang also points out that a value added tax is hardly radical, considering all other advanced economies have it in some form. [His proposal](#), “at even half the European level would generate over \$800 billion in new revenue.” If you still thought UBI was too extreme, because it has never been tried before, Yang points to Alaska, where every state resident receives \$1,000-\$2,000 per year from the state’s massive oil revenues. Furthermore, experiments with universal basic income in Finland [are looking positive](#), where recipients of free money reported increased happiness and trust in social institutions.

At its core a value added tax, “[would give the people](#) a tiny sliver of every Amazon sale, every Google search, every robot truck mile.” Yang stresses this policy makes sense since the emerging tech economy will be increasingly designed to create a tiny handful of winners and economically harm the rest of society.

Those who believe that the free market is sacrosanct may be reeling right now, seeing such a proposal as brazen socialism. Yang wholeheartedly disagrees. As an entrepreneur he deeply respects what the free market can accomplish, and unlike his rivals like Senator Bernie Sanders, he embraces the capitalist label. At the same time, he recognizes that our current system of extreme turbo charged wealth inequality is poorly equipped to address the mounting problems average Americans will face in the coming decades. Yang, in short, is a fervent, passionate advocate for what he calls, “humane capitalism.”

This “humane capitalism” goes off in many dimensions beyond universal basic income. Yang supports a “[GDP for the 21st century](#).” Mirroring the [UN Human Development Index](#), Yang’s GDP would look at critical

aspects we as humans value beyond money, including clean environment, childhood well being and mental health.

If implemented, Yang's proposals would be transformative for the broad base of our society. They would resemble a fundamental rethinking of our relationship to the US economy, which is currently at record GDP growth and record low unemployment, even as the working to middle class and young people suffer under soaring housing and healthcare costs and mounting private debt.

I mentioned Yang presented himself as an affable candidate, and I cannot overstate how much of a relief his personality contrasts with our divisive, angry political landscape. Most of us are tired of a president who is obsessed with benefiting his hardcore base of 30% of the electorate and directing their ire against the rest of the country. Yang has repeatedly stressed he wants to run a campaign of positivity, respect and outreach toward all Americans. Indeed, he has successfully [conducted outreach](#) to supporters of President Trump. He doesn't view the middle of the country as uneducated, racist rubes like many of our nation's elites do. Instead, he views them, along with most Americans, as disadvantaged by the current economy, and in need of a helping hand. I find that philosophy nothing short of inspiring.

[Read full story here...](#)



Revealed: China Is Funded And Backed By Wall Street And Western Corporations

Listen carefully to the video below. Steve Bannon pointedly reveals that the rise of China to be an existential threat to America is thanks to Wall Street and Western mega-corporation, which I have been saying for years.

This is a continuation of a long trend that the West is being destroyed from within its own ranks. Professor Antony C. Sutton first exposed this nefarious collusion with his masterpiece books like *Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler*, *Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution*, *The Best Enemy Money Can Buy*, *National Suicide*, *Trilaterals Over Washington*, etc.

Bannon's solution to 'back Trump' is misguided: **the solution is to reject Technocracy, which is embedded within these same organizations.** □ TN Editor

Perhaps out of concern that his former boss might be pushing Robert

Lighthizer and Steve Mnuchin to cave on enforcement, technology transfers and market access for the sake of securing a deal with Beijing, former White House Chief strategist Steve Bannon appeared alongside hedge fund manager Kyle Bass, Wall Street's most visible China bear, to try and explain why **Washington needs to stick to its guns and make sure Beijing is held to account for its decades of trade abuses.**

Bass, who just the other day distributed his first investor letter in three years warning about a coming blowup in Hong Kong's balance of payments, argued that the immense pressure for Trump to strike a deal isn't coming from voters, but from Wall Street and corporate America, who have abetted Beijing in its efforts to maintain the status quo on trade - selling out their country in the process.

Drawing attention to something that few political analysts have been willing to discuss since the US-China trade spat erupted early last year, Bass broke down China's lobbying strategy, which we highlighted [here](#).

For years, Beijing has sought to curry favor with individual companies and industries by granting them piecemeal concessions, mostly in the form of market access. And since the start of the trade war, Beijing hasn't been shy about calling in favors, which is why most of the American business and financial community just wants Trump to end the trade war, even if it means settling for a deal that achieves none of Washington's objectives on 'structural reform', kicks the can on enforcement to Trump's successor, and touts promises for purchases of billions of dollars of agricultural goods instead of meaningful changes.

“All the pressure on Trump to strike a trade deal is coming from Wall Street and corporate America,” Bass argued. “Look who fought CFIUS reform...some of the biggest companies in the US and Wall Street came together to fight it. Steve is right about who's fighting...it's corporate America fighting to get Trump to do a deal...and China plays that card and they play it better than anyone else...they open a market to very specific people to court influence.”

At the beginning of the interview, **Bannon warned that Americans**

are underestimating the threat posed by China, bringing up Huawei, 5G, 'One Belt, One Road' and China 2025'. As he repeatedly warned during the 2016 campaign, China represents **"the most significant existential threat we have ever faced."**

"Look at what they're doing...they have a geopolitical strategy to unite the Eurasian land mass into one single market then to force the United States out of the Western Pacific then out of the Pacific overall. The radical cadre - this is not the Chinese people - this is about a radical cadre that is taking charge of the Communist Party led by President Xi...they've been running an economic war against the industrial democracies for 20 years."

Questioned about what's so different about China's approach to how the US rose to global dominance almost a century ago, Bannon warned about Beijing's system of "predatory capitalism" and "debt traps." Meanwhile, corporate America and Wall Street has repeatedly enabled Beijing.

*And by the way, the funding — the entire operation of the Chinese Communist Party and what they're running in China is being funded by Wall Street, which Kyle can walk through, being funded by Wall Street. And corporate America - remember, PBS or NPR had this thing the other day about intrusions into stealing Intellectual Property in American companies. They talked to a Treasury official went around to 200 companies. Not one company would — had been stolen from would press charges because they didn't want to be blocked out of China. **Corporate America today is the lobbying arm of the Chinese Communist Party and Wall Street is the investor relations department.** You can see this on President Trump's — on President Trump's trade negotiation, which I say is an armistice on the economic war. When Liu He comes to the United States, where does he go first?*

Both Democrats and Republicans have failed to understand, or willingly ignored, this threat. But for the first time, the US has a president who has been willing to take on the Chinese.

“Now we have a whole of government approach to really confront China on an economic war, this has never happened...the permanent political class and their paymasters on Wall Street have owned the political dialogue.”

Asked by CNBC’s Brian Sullivan if he could really blame corporate America for working with China, citing their fiduciary obligations to shareholder, Bannon insisted that corporations also have a commitment to stakeholders like the American people.

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