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**Putting Neighborhoods on the Path to Healthy, Green,
Affordable Housing -
Reduce Health Disparities, Lower Greenhouse Gases and Local Air Pollution,
Decrease Utility Costs, Stabilize Neighborhoods, Create Green Jobs**

Most of today's housing will still be lived-in 50 years from now. Making existing housing healthy, green and affordable addresses multiple urban problems:

- Substandard housing is a significant factor in health disparities – lead poisoning, asthma and chemical exposures.
- Energy use in housing accounts for more than 24% of CO₂ emissions in Northeast Ohio, comparable to transportation and industry. To meet steep CO₂ targets for 2050, the carbon footprint of existing housing must be reduced by at least 50%.
- Residential electrical energy use also contributes to local air pollution from fossil-fueled generating plants. Ozone and particulate pollution increases the disease burden of cities.
- Skyrocketing utility costs (natural gas, electricity, water and sewer) threaten housing affordability and contribute to foreclosures and abandonment.
- Rehabilitating distressed housing helps stabilize imperiled neighborhoods.
- When brought to scale, making houses healthy, green and affordable creates jobs in renovation, fabrication of components for retrofitting, and manufacture of insulation materials.

In low-income neighborhoods, we can take advantage of a variety of opportunity points on the path to high performance housing:

- 70-90% energy reduction along with reduced housing-related health hazards can be achieved for some housing right away through super-insulation. Ideal candidates for deep cuts in energy use are deteriorated homes that need complete gut rehabs. Funding programs for weatherization and home energy efficiency improvements should encourage the use of funds for deep energy reductions. Current weatherization programs usually fund energy improvements of 25-40%. To reach overall carbon goals such as 80% reduction by 2050 we will need to implement at least 75% energy use reduction in some existing housing.
- Any time a home has repairs, renovation, component replacement, weatherization, lead hazard control, etc. there may be options to improve building performance and position the home for further improvement. For example when a house is getting a new roof or siding there is an opportunity for major insulation upgrade.
- Reusing an existing house is greener than building a new one. Improving existing, transit-supported neighborhoods is greener than developing new, "green" suburban/exurban development.
- When houses must be razed, deconstruct instead of demolish, to recover useable materials and divert them from landfill; utilize vacant lots as a community resource, e.g., gardens, urban agriculture, green space, habitat, playgrounds.