

# Urban experimentation can help develop sustainable policies

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The article discusses the concept of urban [sustainability](#) observatories that leverage urban experimentation through ongoing data collection and analysis capabilities. The researchers also discuss challenges in building and sustaining these observatories and how university, community, and industry partnerships may establish successful observatories that serve as critical drivers of research, technology transfer, and commercialization.

**More information:** Harvey J. Miller et al, Urban Sustainability Observatories: Leveraging Urban Experimentation for Sustainability Science and Policy, *Harvard Data Science Review* (2021). [DOI: 10.1162/99608f92.2025202b](https://doi.org/10.1162/99608f92.2025202b)

Provided by Portland State University

Portland State University TREC researchers Kelly Clifton, Kristin Tufte and John MacArthur are among the co-authors of a May 2021 article published in *Harvard Data Science Review*. The paper, "Urban Sustainability Observatories: Leveraging Urban Experimentation for Sustainability Science and Policy," offers an outline of the requirements and research challenges involved in designing effective policies to meet sustainability goals for cities.

Humanity is experiencing revolutionary changes in the 21st century, including accelerating urbanization, the introduction of disruptive mobility technology services, and new sources of data generated and consumed by urban and mobility processes. However, the environmental, social, and economic sustainability implications of these new mobility services are unclear given the complex nature of urban systems and the multifaceted, contested nature of sustainability goals.

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