Hi everyone,

This last year has been our best year yet! The great thing about being at a growing organization is you can say that every year and it’s true every year. While we ran into a handful of Covid-19 related difficulties, we made strong progress building the charter cities ecosystem.

Over the past year Covid-19 has clearly demonstrated the need for charter cities. The World Bank estimates that the pandemic and resulting economic contraction will push up to 150 million people into extreme poverty. Institutions in high income countries are struggling to respond. Two cities that handled the virus well, Singapore and Hong Kong, are self-governing, demonstrating the importance of responsive city government.

In spite of the destruction wrought by Covid-19, we have also seen strong growth in the charter cities ecosystem. Próxima and Ciudad Morazán both launched in Honduras, becoming the first projects with charter city levels of autonomy, though their current scale suggests some time before “city” becomes an appropriate description. We helped draft the internal regulations for Enyimba Economic City which have been entered into the Nigerian Gazette. We signed a memorandum of understanding with the Zambia Development Agency to improve their SEZ framework, though unfortunately follow up was underwhelming due to Covid-19.

It is important to emphasize that we are no longer in the ideation phase. Projects are negotiating concessions, raising money, and moving dirt. The Charter Cities Institute is playing a key role in the development of the charter cities space.

We have grown our team and increased our output to continue to spread the message of charter cities. We released the first of our Reference Guides, including an Introduction to Charter Cities, Model Legislation, and Model Charter. Our media footprint has expanded greatly over the past year. CCI and our team members were featured in the inaugural issue of *Works in Progress*, *The Telegraph*, and the London School of Economics International Development Blog, among many others.

We are looking forward to continuing our success over the coming year. We are hiring a Head of Operations and additional researchers. We are finalizing our Governance Handbook and Planning Guidelines, adding to our charter city roadmap. We will begin planning the inaugural Charter Cities Conference, tentatively scheduled for Q1 2022. Through all of this, we will continue to help our partner projects on the ground.

As we continue to execute on our vision of changing the world we are grateful to our supporters. Our work wouldn’t be possible without them. Thank you.

Mark Lutter
Highlights of 2020
1. Growing the Team
Last year, the team doubled in size from two to four. This year, we’ve doubled again to eight! In partnership with the Atlas Corps Fellowship, we were joined by Operations Manager Emmanuel Olawoye and Urban Planning Researcher Heba Elhanafy. We look forward to Emmanuel and Heba being able to join us from Nigeria and Egypt in the United States in 2021. We have also welcomed Skye Lawrence as our Head of Development, Michael Holstein as Head of Communications and Carl Peterson as a Legal Researcher. Former US diplomat and Libya expert Ethan Chorin also joined CCI as our first Non-Resident Fellow.
Interns

CCI had its first excellent class of interns in 2020 as well, including Krishaan Khubchand, Jidy Chitta, and Christina Davison. In November we formally launched our internship program and look forward to welcoming research, urban planning, and development interns in the spring! We received approximately 200 applications from students around the world at top schools like Oxford University, Georgetown University, Yale University, and many more.

![Krishaan Khubchand](image1)
![Jidy Chitta](image2)
![Christina Davison](image3)

Board of Directors

This year, our Board welcomed its newest member, Gyude Moore! Gyude is a senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development. He previously served as Liberia’s Minister of Public Works, Deputy Chief of Staff to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Head of the President’s Delivery Unit. Gyude is joined on the Board by Executive Director Mark Lutter and Treasurer Dan Grossman, former Chairman and current Board Member of the Atlas Network. Dan is also a Board Member at the Foundation for Economic Education and previously founded a successful chain of office supply stores in Washington, DC and New York City.

![Dan Grossman](image4)
![W. Gyude Moore](image5)
![Dr. Mark Lutter](image6)
Emerging Market Writing Fellows

In 2020 we also welcomed our first class of Emerging Market Writing Fellows, in partnership with the OnDeck Fellowship. Recipients Emmanuel Adegboyre, Isabela Gontijo Campos Christo, Francisco Contreras Moran, Ivette Cano, Ahmed Al-Dakhil, Akash Kumar, and Stacy Ndlovu come from the Americas, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, bringing needed diversity to the charter cities discourse. We look forward to sharing their work in the coming months.
2. Expanding our Media Footprint
Charter Cities Podcast

In April, we released the first episode of the Charter Cities Podcast! We’ve since gotten great feedback from our listeners and have striven to provide our audience with guests from a variety of backgrounds.

Some of our most popular episodes include investor Balaji Srinivasan on building cities in the cloud, urban planner and economist Alain Bertaud on cities as labor markets, geopolitical strategist Peter Zeihan on the political power of geography, and political scientist Nic Cheeseman on democracy in Africa.

In the coming year, we’re excited to release episodes featuring African School of Economics founder Leonard Wantchekon, journalist Sebastian Mallaby on Jim Wolfensohn’s legacy at the World Bank, and political scientist Yuen Yuen Ang on China’s rapid rise out of poverty.

12,000+ Downloads
In addition to the Charter Cities Podcast, we’ve started sharing Research Q&A videos featuring scholars and researchers from institutions around the world. Presenters include Matt Prewitt and Paul Healy of the RadicalxChange Foundation, Tom Bell of Chapman University, Richard Bolwijn of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Susanne Frick of the London School of Economics, and more.

Interviews done with:

- WIR2019 World Investment Report
- A Platform for Sustainable Growth. Launching on Roatán
- Unequal Urban Development in Indonesia
- Special Economic Zones

(notes on specific individuals and institutions)
3. Spreading the Charter Cities Vision
In 2020, interest in charter cities exploded. Our staff was featured on almost 20 podcasts, panels, and presentations. Our staff, their research, and the Institute were also featured in over a dozen high-profile outlets. The charter cities community is growing as more people engage with our team and our partners.

### Podcast and Event Appearances

Heba Elhanafy was a guest on the [Scale Up Africa Podcast](#) to share her knowledge about building sustainable communities, and joined CCI partner Iyinoluwa Aboyeji for a discussion on “The History and Future of African Charter Cities,” hosted by the Adrianople Group. Heba also presented on the wrong urban governance lessons gleaned from Dubai at a Technical University of Berlin [alumni seminar](#) and chatted with Judd Devermont of CSIS on his “Talking Urban Futures in Africa” series. Head of Research Kurtis Lockhart was invited to give a talk on political decentralization and charter cities at the University of Sao Paulo. Executive Director Mark Lutter presented on charter cities to audiences at the [Institut Ostrom Catalunya](#), [1.5.1.7 Fund](#), and the [Escola Nacional de Administração Pública](#). Heba and Mark were both featured at the [African Renaissance Conference](#), and CCI contributed to the [Black Paper](#) released by conference founder and CCI partner Mwiya Musokotwane.

[TOP LEFT] Heba’s talk in the History and the Future of Charter Cities event. (Top right) Mark Lutter presentation at the Institut Ostrom Catalunya. (Bottom left) Mark and Heba on the Cities as Platforms of transformation in at the African Renaissance Conference.
Our staff published pieces in excellent outlets over the past year. Jeffrey Mason and Mark Lutter were featured in the inaugural edition of *Works in Progress* magazine on using charter cities to build state capacity. Mark also published pieces in *The American Conservative* on using charter cities to counter China’s Belt and Road Initiative and in *City Journal* with Ivan Ko on building a charter city for Hong Kong emigrants. Jeffrey was also featured in *Quartz Africa* on how the African Continental Free Trade Agreement is a major opportunity for a forward-thinking country to pursue an e-Residency program to facilitate access to the African market. Kurtis Lockhart was featured on the London School of Economics International Development Blog with a piece on charter cities and institutional resilience.
Media Mentions

In addition to the work of our staff, CCI was also featured in an article in *The Telegraph* on private cities and on the *Oxford University Politics Blog* about the arrival of the charter cities moment. Both popular publications and academic institutions are taking notice of our work and thought leadership in the charter cities community. Charter cities are attracting greater attention, for instance, appearing in academic books like *Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World* by Andrew Phillips and J.C. Sharman from Princeton University Press.

![Outsourcing Empire Book Cover]

Events

We were looking forward to hosting the inaugural Charter Cities Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa this past spring. Unfortunately, COVID-19 forced us to cancel the conference in the interest of the health and safety of our staff, speakers, and attendees.

Planned conference speakers included National Football League player Russell Okung, former Mayor of Johannesburg Herman Mashaba, author and former Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs Bruno Maçães, University of Hong Kong Professor of Architecture Juan Du, Ingressive Capital founder Maya Horgan Famodu, and many more.

Although CCI was deeply disappointed that our 2020 Charter Cities Conference had to be cancelled, we are looking forward to putting together a new inaugural Charter Cities Conference in 2022.
4. Delivering High-Quality Research
In addition to the Charter Cities Podcast, Research Q&A videos, popular pieces, and media appearances, CCI staff and affiliated scholars have produced a number of both practical and engaging research papers over the past year.

Reference Guides

This summer, we published our Reference Guides for charter cities. These guides including a comprehensive Introduction to Charter Cities, Model Charter City Legislation, a Model City Charter, and a Risk Mitigation Guide. Together, these four documents are designed to be used by charter city developers to improve their decision-making and assist them in the creation of legal institutions to govern the charter city. The Reference Guides help create a generalizable model for charter cities that can help spur more and faster-moving charter city projects.
Feedback on The Reference Guides

@CCIdotCity is breaking down every element of #CharterCities—from governance to site selection to urban planning to financing. Read more

@CharterCities Institute @CCIdotCity · Jun 22
We are pleased to announce the launch of our Reference Guides for charter cities. These documents have been designed to be used by charter city developers to improve their decision-making and assist in the creation of governing legal institutions.

Sid Sijbrandij @sidsees
This is great advice for people looking to start a city.

@CharterCities Institute @CCIdotCity · Jun 22
We are pleased to announce the launch of our Reference Guides for charter cities. These documents have been designed to be used by charter city developers to improve their decision-making and assist in the creation of governing legal institutions.

@mattparmer
This is really important work from @CCIdotCity, puts us one step closer to plug-and-play charter city legal infrastructure.

@CharterCities Institute @CCIdotCity · Jun 22
We are pleased to announce the launch of our Reference Guides for charter cities. These documents have been designed to be used by charter city developers to improve their decision-making and assist in the creation of governing legal institutions.

@Prof Nic Cheeseeman @Fromagesnomme
Is building new cities better than adapting old ones? What would new cities look like? How should they be set up and governed? This is fascinating stuff ... if you are in to cities, this is for you ... #cities #urban #UrbanPlanning

@CharterCities Institute @CCIdotCity · Jun 22
We are pleased to announce the launch of our Reference Guides for charter cities. These documents have been designed to be used by charter city developers to improve their decision-making and assist in the creation of governing legal institutions.
“Creating a new community from scratch with a high level of autonomy implies addressing thousands of issues from the banal, like contracting for garbage collection, to the profound, like how to structure tax policy to improve resident productivity. Common sense helps, but a deep knowledge of what other governments and special economic zones have done is indispensable. The Charter Cities Institute is one of the two or three centers in the world that can provide that knowledge, filtered and contextualized by a group of impressively smart and passionate individuals. Ciudad Morazán benefited greatly from their input, and this handbook is a valuable compendium of their expertise.”

Massimo Mazzone
Council Secretary of Ciudad Morazán

“The Charter Cities Institute has been a great ally of ours. Mark and the team have introduced us to a host of very interesting institutions, individuals, and events that have all proven to be useful to us.”

Mwiya Musokotwane
Co-Founder/CEO Thebe Investments
Developer of Nkwashí
First, Paul Healy and Matt Prewitt of the RadicalxChange Foundation explained in “Building Radical Charter Cities” how RadicalxChange policies—(i) SALSA (Self-Assessed Licenses Sold via Auction—a better way to structure property rights), (ii) Quadratic Finance (a better way to fund public goods), and (iii) Quadratic Voting (a better way to vote)—could be implemented in a charter city to improve governance.

Second, Mark Levin shared “Lessons for Charter Cities From Decades as a City Manager in the US” based on his four decades of urban management experience, including 30 years as the city manager of Maryland Heights, Missouri. Mark highlights the advantages of a Council-Manager government over an elected-Mayor system, as well as how to maximize government effectiveness and assess performance.
5. Advancing Projects on the Ground
Partner projects are pressing ahead on multiple continents. The charter cities moment has arrived, and charter city developments are securing financing, moving dirt, and securing special jurisdictions.

Enyimba Economic City

Enyimba Economic City, Nigeria is a new city development planned for 1.5 million residents in Abia State, Nigeria. Enyimba Economic City will create an estimated 600,000 jobs when fully developed, with a focus on manufacturing, trade, and logistics. Enyimba Economic City enjoys the strong support of state and federal government of Nigeria, including President Muhammadu Buhari and Abia State Governor Okezie Ikpeazu.

CCI worked with the Enyimba Economic City team to draft regulations for the city under Nigeria’s special economic zone regulations. The draft regulations have been entered into the Nigerian Gazette. The Enyimba Economic City team is also in the processing of raising funds to start construction from various development finance institutions.

“As General Counsel I worked closely with the CCI team to finalize our proposed Enyimba Economic City’s regulations submitted for regulatory approval. The CCI team’s thorough and professional input resulted in significant improvements, many of which remain in the government approved Enyimba Economic City Regulations 2020, that are now officially gazetted into law with great potential to foster a flourishing city, create jobs, and contribute to economic development.”

Chibuzo Ekwekwuo
General Counsel of Enyimba Economic City
Ciudad Morazán, Honduras, is a new city development and Zona de empleo y desarrollo económico (Zone for Employment and Economic Development) or ZEDE. ZEDEs devolve significant authority to a local jurisdiction, including regulatory, administrative, fiscal, and judicial authority. Ciudad Morazán is the second-ever ZEDE, the first being Próspera on the island of Roatán.

Planned for 8,000 people, Ciudad Morazán will initially focus on light manufacturing and providing housing for the local population. CCI has been advising the Ciudad Morazán on the project’s proposed governing framework, as well as in key policy areas. Ciudad Morazán’s first regulations have been published and construction will commence in 2021.
**Talent City**, Nigeria is a charter city development led by entrepreneur Iyinoluwa Aboyeji, focused on creating a new Nigerian tech hub. Talent City will feature a regulatory framework designed to attract tech companies and entrepreneurs from not just Lagos, but all of Africa.

Iyinoluwa was recently featured on the cover of *Forbes Africa*, which detailed his Future Africa venture fund focused on creating opportunities for startups across Africa.

“CCI has been helpful in my plans for developing Talent City, from governance to helping to understand how to negotiate with governments”

Iyinoluwa “E” Aboyeji
Founder and General Partner at Future Africa
Developer of Talent City
Nkwashi is a new city development located outside of Lusaka, Zambia. The city project, led by Mwiya Musokotwane, is planned for 100,000 residents with a new university as its economic anchor. Construction on both housing and the university is underway and the first residents will be moving in within the next few months.

In September, Nkwashi partnered with Atlasmara and Lafarge to give away three homes in Nkwashi for free! In addition to the house giveaway, Nkwashi has partnered with tech startup DoubleGDP to build a platform that enables easy interfacing between city residents and the city administration. To help support the growth of Nkwashi’s education economy, Mwiya has launched Explorer Academy, an online education platform with programs in software development and digital design. After training students, Explorer Academy will partner graduates with major companies and startups in remote work positions. Mark Lutter serves on the Board of Explorer Academy.
Memorandum of Understanding with the Zambia Development Agency

The Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) is responsible for investment promotion and administration of Zambia’s Multi-Facility Economic Zones. In February, CCI signed a memorandum of understanding to work with the ZDA to help improve the Zambian business environment by taking initial steps towards creating the legal framework for charter cities. We look forward to more actively working with the ZDA after the COVID-19 pandemic passes.
What’s Coming in 2021?
Governance Handbook

We look forward to releasing the previously mentioned Governance Handbook in Spring 2021 after a thorough period of external review by experts in academia, government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and elsewhere. The Governance Handbook represents a major step forward in creating an easily accessible and replicable set of best practices to be consulted by charter city developers.

Planning Guidelines

In addition to the Reference Guides and Governance Handbook, CCI is also developing Planning Guidelines for charter city developers. Too often, new city developments fail to appreciate the emergent order that takes place in cities and over-plan accordingly. The Planning Guidelines, which will include a 3-D model of a city planned under the Guidelines and a financial model for a charter city built out over several decades, will help charter city developers plan their projects without ignoring the market and social forces that shape urban environments. The Planning Guidelines will be published in Spring 2021.

Partner Projects are Moving Forward

Our partner projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America are all expected to hit key milestones in 2021. From securing infrastructure finance and special jurisdictions to moving dirt and attracting investment; projects like Enyimba Economic City, Nkwashi, and Ciudad Morazán are all coming closer to fruition. We also expect several potential partner projects to publicly announce their plans over the next year, growing the global community of charter cities.
To Our Friends and Supporters

The Charter Cities Institute staff extends their deepest gratitude to our readers, listeners, and donors for their continued assistance in building the charter cities ecosystem. We sincerely appreciate the abundant interest you have shown in our partner projects, our media, and our research over the past year. We hope that you will continue to enjoy the Charter Cities Podcast, our research publications, and updates about our partner projects into the new year. To continue helping build the ecosystem for charter cities in 2021, please visit: chartercitiesinstitute.org/donate.
To learn more about the Charter Cities Institute, visit: chartercitiesinstitute.org

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