

## **Neha Bhatt – Teaching Fellow in Faculty of Planning**

Neha Bhatt is a keen believer in the power of thoughtful urban design to improve quality of life and access to opportunity, particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods. She has spent the last two decades playing the role of advocate, researcher, and policy advisor. As founding director of the Local Leaders Council of Smart Growth America, she specialized in supporting city decision makers across the U.S. who stand up for inclusive, livable communities. She established an annual Policy Forum for elected officials to exchange strategies in sustainable development, talk about the politics around good city planning, and spotlight model policies in housing, transportation, and economic development. She also investigated the alignment of transportation spending patterns of the fifty states with climate change goals and managed regional campaign planning efforts to increase local funding streams for green transportation.

While serving as policy advisor at the Washington, D.C. City Council, she developed legislative proposals for better bicycle facilities, parking reform, stormwater management, the city's first participation in World Car Free Day, and the nation's first fee on disposable shopping bags. At the Sierra Club, the largest environmental organization in the U.S., Neha worked as a community organizer putting infrastructure decisions in the health and environmental contexts. She produced reports highlighting urban innovations and lobbied to increase federal funds for buses and trains. Most recently, Bhatt completed her Loeb Fellowship at Harvard University, where she explored topics in policy and politics, housing challenges in Mexico, and entrepreneurial approaches to solving city problems.