



Red, White, and Green: Three Companies Making Clean Living in Urban America a Thing of the Present

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From the beginning of time, cities have been the central gathering places for human life. They are where the great thinkers and innovative ideas of the world emerged. Here in the United States, the beginnings of our independence happened in places like Boston with the Boston Tea Party, Philadelphia with the Constitutional Convention, and New York, the center of commerce and financial power.

Fast forward to 2019, and inspiring and groundbreaking ideas are still sprouting in cities. But now, the quality of ideas is also being accompanied by a quantity of people as we witness a growth in urban life never before seen. For the first time in history, more people are living in

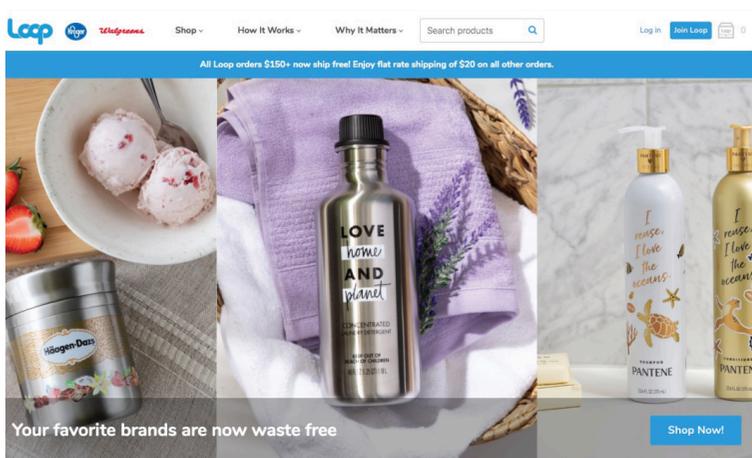
cities than in rural areas. The United Nations projects that by 2050, the urban share of global population will surpass 66 percent.

This growing urbanization means that cities are now the principal drivers of economic growth in the United States. With 65 percent of the US population now living in cities and generating 75 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, it is no wonder that "urbancentric" companies focused on lowering our ecological footprint are on the rise.

Below are three companies that we at USGRDCO think are worth celebrating this 4th of July:

LOOP

*Waste reduction
simplified*

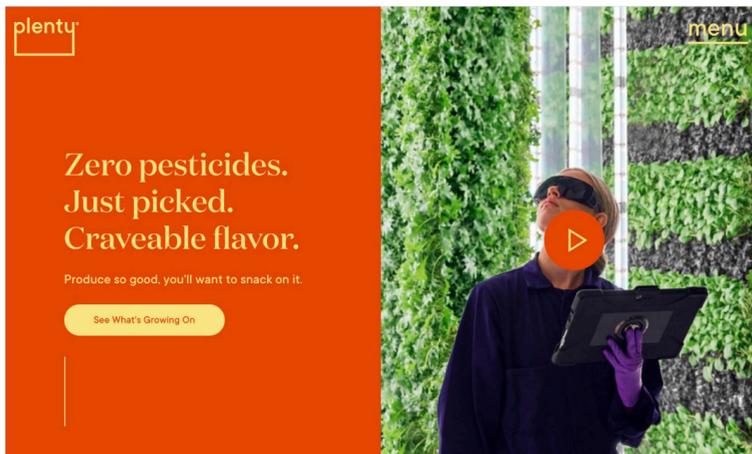


In 2015, the **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) reviewed the negative environmental impacts that excessive amounts of waste have on America. According to the EPA, "Food and packaging account for almost 45% of the materials landfilled in the United States."¹ There is plenty of information to make a case for why we as consumers should be actively seeking alternatives to plastic packaging and reducing the amount of food we waste. A minority of individuals might be driven to alter their consuming patterns and go the extra mile to start shopping in bulk, package-free stores. But the inconvenience of adjusting our daily habits and lifestyles is often an excuse that keeps us from acting on what we perceive as "drastic" change.

How can we predict how something like potential inconvenience could stand in the way of a mass habitual change? That's where **Loop** exhibits its true ingenuity and foresight. As creatures of habit, we have not only grown accustomed to how we buy but also what we buy. The Loop platform exclusively offers in a waste-free, newly designed package the leading brands that are often staples in the American shopping cart. And instead of demanding that consumers find the "store nearest you," Loop has its own delivery system, thereby minimizing any potential excuse for not wanting to be troubled in an effort to "go green."

PLENTY

*Farm to table
reimagined*



Although there is a rise in the population density of major American cities, there is also an increase in public awareness of our ecological footprint. The attempt to balance city life with the modern priority of rectifying years of environmental neglect and abuse could at first seem paradoxical, but, in fact, the two desires coexist.

Today's consumers want it all. We want convenience and comfort, and at the same time, we want to be able to make choices that leave us feeling good, not guilty. While farm-to-table restaurants have been a popular trend for many years, **Plenty** is reinventing the trend by introducing the idea of forest to table — urban forest, that is. The most obvious handicap cities face when it comes to farming is lack of physical space. Plenty does away with the pollution caused by the transport of produce from farms to cities and offers city dwellers produce that is grown and harvested in the city itself.

Plenty proves the validity of one of the fundamental tenets of permaculture farming: "The problem is the solution." The lack of available outdoor space for growing sent Plenty indoors to take full advantage of the benefits of a controlled indoor growing environment. While traditional farms depend on freezing produce in order to provide beloved fruits and vegetables off season, Plenty's farmers grow everything indoors. They control the outside elements and offer consumers fresh favorites all year round.

VOLTA CHARGING

*Charging
infrastructure
free of charge*



The Paris Agreement on Climate Change requires a net zero emissions economy by the second half of the century. Since transport emissions account for 25 percent of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, accomplishing the daunting feat of the Paris Agreement must include a major transformation of the transportation sector. California has always led the way when it comes to making electric vehicles (EVs) appealing and providing charging stations for them. So it comes as no surprise that one of the most promising EV charging companies operating in the United States today, **Volta Charging**, was born in San Francisco.

Volta Charging has a simple yet highly intelligent approach. It capitalizes on the fact that outdoor advertising remains one of the few non-Internet-based opportunities for retailers to get their message in front of customers. It thus offers drivers the option to charge their EVs for free, and the company pays for it by selling strategically placed advertising space on the chargers themselves.

The chargers are located in high-traffic retail and residential areas that are appealing to advertisers and EV drivers alike. The company has raised more than \$60 million from investors since it started in 2010. With the market for electric cars predicted to increase exponentially over the next few years, Volta Charging's reliance on ads has positioned itself perfectly for continued growth and scalability. Its charges that financial gain and social impact can go hand in hand. The more chargers that become readily available, the more likely consumers will be to purchase EVs. And the more EVs that grow in demand, the more the demand for charging stations will grow.



Solutions for Minimizing the Ecological Bigfootprint

The fundamental dilemma of city living is that in an attempt to live a more convenient and comfortable life, we inadvertently sacrifice the prosperity of the world around us. We are attracted to and crave the connectedness and cultural diversity that cities offer, and at the same time, we have come to realize that if we want to continue living a life of convenience, we need to start living a life of collective awareness.

The ecological footprint of cities is defined as the total amount of productive land needed to maintain current activities and the removal of waste. The environmental impacts of modern cities go beyond their surrounding regions. Since cities are where the majority chooses to live, finding solutions for the negative impact cities have on the environment is crucial.

But fear not. Where cities trigger environmental problems, they also offer solutions. Although cities are hot spots of production, consumption, and waste generation, they also possess the creative resources and intellect to increase the energy efficiency and sustainability of society as a whole. Companies such as Loop, Plenty, and Volta Charging are already finding solutions for some of the problems we as a society must tackle together. We hope you will be inspired this 4th of July to check out companies like these. We hope you can find ways to take part in ensuring America's commitment to a clean future.

¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency. Reducing wasted food & packaging: A guide for food services and restaurants. EPA.gov. https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/reducing_wasted_food_pkg_tool.pdf