OUR PEOPLE, OUR PLANET, OUR POWER.

**Community Led
Research in South Seattle**

March 2016
Got Green
Puget Sound Sage

Executive Summary

Over nine months, Puget Sound Sage and Got Green set out to learn how our communities were experiencing climate change. Led by the Climate Justice committee, we interviewed 175 people living in South Seattle/King County and 30 organizations with the goal of determining our collective priorities and lift up the message that poor people and people of color are often hit first and worst by the impacts of climate change. *Our People, Our Planet, Our Power—Community Led Research in South Seattle* has shaped our conversations with community, the public sector, and organizational partners as well as the development of the policy recommendations put forth in this report.

Highlights of the Climate Justice Project

Affordable Housing Crisis Tops List of Community Concerns	Over one third of survey respondents identified lack of affordable housing as the most important issue impacting their neighborhood. Housing was also elevated as an issue of concern throughout the organizational interviews. Any local efforts to build climate resilience will be undermined if low-income people and people of color continue to be displaced to under-resourced suburban cities.
Strong Support for Strategies to Reduce Emissions	We asked survey respondents to tell us if they supported or opposed 14 different strategies, ranging from creating green jobs to improving sidewalks, to reducing carbon pollution. All but one option received 90% support or more, indicating a strong willingness by respondents to make public investments to stop climate change.
Food Insecurity Top Climate Impact	When asked specifically, "What potential impacts of climate change most concern you?" The potential for rising food costs as a result of climate change was the climate impact communities are most concerned about. Access to healthy, affordable food is a pre-existing vulnerability in our communities.

Our People, Our Planet, Our Power is a compilation of our findings, stories from community leaders, recommendations that came from the community roundtable discussions and Climate Justice steering committee, and a glossary of climate justice terms. This Climate Justice Project has set the foundation for our organizations to develop grassroots campaigns that grow an intersectional climate justice movement which keeps our communities rooted in place and ushers in a new economy for people and the planet.

About Us

Got Green is a people of color-led environmental justice organization in South Seattle working to ensure the benefits of the green economy—green jobs, access to healthy food, green healthy homes, and public transit—reach low-income communities and communities of color. GOTGREENSEATTLE.ORG

Puget Sound Sage improves the lives of all families by building power for shared prosperity in our regional economy. We combine research, innovative policy and organizing to advance racial equity, stronger democracy, good jobs, affordable housing, accessible transit and a healthy environment. PUGETSOUNDSAGE.ORG

INTRODUCTION
OUR MOVEMENT, OUR MOMENT

To be resilient in the face of climate change, we must know our history and learn the lessons of the past. While resilience is a response to a looming threat, we also see it as an incredible opportunity to (re)imagine a more just future for all. Deepening local democracy and sustainably centering the communities most impacted by climate change in mitigation and adaptation planning are key to realizing this future.

In Seattle, we are part of a long and global legacy of people of color fighting for environmental justice. We know that the communities most impacted by climate change are also those most harmed by histories of racism, colonialism, enslavement, and genocide. Extreme weather events like Hurricane Katrina and the 2011 famine in Somalia devastate already vulnerable communities; people of color and people from low-income communities pay the price of climate change through their health, financial security, loss of home, and psychological well-being. For people of color, immigrant, refugee and low-income communities, this reality is a constant threat, and, typically, escaping these threats is almost impossible, or else it leads displacement, isolation and marginalization.[1]

Scientific observations show that average global temperatures have been consistently on the rise in the last three decades.[2] The vast majority of scientists agree that human behavior is responsible for increased CO_2 in the atmosphere and thus the rapid warming of the planet.[3] Warmer temperatures have increased the rate of melting in the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, impacting weather patterns and creating more extreme seasonal patterns and storms. These events are creating ecological instability around the world. Closer to home, we have witnessed the worst heat waves, droughts, and wild fires in Eastern Washington of our lifetimes.

Communities around the world are calling for climate justice, highlighting the inequities produced by the current capitalist economic system and the importance of putting people most impacted by climate change into decision-making spaces. Foreseeing the impacts of climate change on people at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, a movement for a Just Transition is being led by frontline communities of color and workers. The Just Transition movement asserts that the impacts of climate change are inextricably linked to poverty from a local to a global scale. Authentic solutions will respond to environmental challenges by simultaneously addressing economic stagnation, racism, and a lack of people of color in the historically white-led mainstream environmental movement.

As part of this global movement, we see addressing climate change in South Seattle as an opportunity to build community power behind equitable solutions that strengthen the resilience of communities of color and low-income families. As our city transitions to carbon neutrality, we are focused on putting our communities in a position to lead and benefit. This ensures that they will thrive in place and create a more just future for everyone, everywhere.

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CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

"The earth does not belong to us. We belong to the earth. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. We did not weave the web of life, we are merely strands in it. Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves." CHIEF SEALTH

While climate change affects everyone, our communities will bear the disproportionate burden of climate impacts. Existing social, economic, and health disparities mean that people of color and low-income communities are both more likely to be affected by and have a harder time adapting to new climate realities.[4]

Scholars refer to this injustice as the "climate gap". Although climate crises make headlines every year, the unequal impacts of climate change often remain hidden. Environmental racism and structural inequality means that our communities are already more likely to live in areas with high exposure to air pollution, toxic waste sites, the urban heat island effect, and other environmental hazards.[5] Climate change exacerbates these problems and their impact on human health and well-being.

Beyond greater exposure to hazards, people of color and low-income communities are also less likely to have the resources they need to adapt to as climate change continues to alter our world. Increasing costs for basic necessities like food and utilities will disproportionately affect people of color and low-income people, who already pay more for these goods and services.[7]

Looking ahead, these economic challenges are only expected to increase with climate change. Economic sectors like agriculture and tourism, which in many places predominantly employ people of color and low-income people, will be hard-hit by climate change.[8] And while there has been much talk about green jobs, there are few accessible pathways to them.

"WHEN YOUR REALITY IS PART OF AN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY, YOUR NEEDS ARE VERY IMMEDIATE—A RIGHT-HERE, RIGHT-NOW EXPERIENCE...

Environmental climate change projections didn't really show any evidence that things were going to be easier for communities of color—resources will continue to be consolidated in the hands of the few. And I don't know that people have a lot of time while they are putting food on the table to prepare for what is going to come down the pipes."

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

OUR PURPOSE

To build a climate justice movement in Seattle and the surrounding region, we must first identify the barriers to community engagement, leadership and policy solutions. *How do we organize to achieve real power? How do we lift our voices in the current climate change debate? What does leadership by people of color mean for the broader environmental movement? What policy solutions put communities of color at the center, rather than the margins, of climate resilience?* This report and the community-based research behind it begins to answer these questions.

To begin with, movement building for climate resilience is about story-telling. Unfortunately, very little work has been done to ground climate realities in the experiences of people of color and low-income communities. Because the mainstream environmental movement has framed climate change as a distant, faceless threat, preparing for climate change quickly becomes a low priority when our communities are struggling to meet basic needs. Often told as either a science issue, emphasizing data over knowledge and experience, or about vanishing symbols, such as polar bears and melting ice sheets, climate change stories do not reflect people of color as stakeholders or agents of change. This creates a dissonance with everyday concerns that undermine our participation.

Just as important, leadership from communities of color has been absent in environmental institutions with resources and real power. In the University of Michigan's Green 2.0 report, Professor Dorceta E. Taylor identifies a "green ceiling" that limits both people of color and the environmental movement more broadly. The term "green ceiling" refers to a lack of opportunity for people of color employed in green fields, including foundations, nonprofits, and government agencies—currently only 16% of all people in the field. She writes that although "…[p]eople of color support environmental protection at a higher rate than whites[,]… environmental organizations are not adequately reaching out to organizations representing people of color organizations."[8] When marginalized people do not have a seat at the table, the cycle of institutionalized environmental racism is perpetuated.

Following these first two challenges, if communities of color are not engaged in climate resilience and are not represented in leading change, policy solutions will ultimately not reflect our interests. Many leaders of color deeply understand that the fossil fuel economy, the foundation of European capitalism, must change, especially because it is the root of economic inequality and poverty in our communities. Drawing on this, we know that real solutions must address both climate and economic impacts. Centering our voices in decision-making ensures that policy solutions to slow climate change do not put a disproportionate burden on our communities.

We intend for this report to help re-center people of color and low-income communities in the local movement for climate resilience. In the first section, we describe a unique approach to uncovering knowledge and insight from our communities through community based participatory research (CBPR). Through CBPR, we engaged hundreds of community members and leaders to more deeply understand their perceptions of climate change, priorities for resilience and how to grow a climate justice movement. In the second section, we describe movement building and policy solutions identified by participants in our project that link the immediate concerns of our communities to a broader climate resilience agenda in Seattle, our region and the globe.

MOVEMENT-BUILDING THROUGH RESEARCH

We believe that policy making and the research behind it must center communities of color and the people most harmed by climate change. Our project models how to create an inclusive research process that builds power for the community while providing the information or stories eventually used to advance public policy. Called Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), this process is a way for policy makers and advocates to effectively and authentically involve impacted stakeholders.

What is Community Based Participatory Research?

Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) creates a collaborative partnership in which partners engage equitably, share decision-making power, and share resources. It is a strengths-based approach that focuses on the assets and resources that exist within communities to identify and uplift community priorities. As a research mechanism, it challenges traditional academic approaches that have taken data from community without returning benefits. Instead, CBPR is designed to provide research that is useful for the community from which the data and findings originate. While CBPR can take many forms and lead to many different outcomes, our approach focuses on identifying community priorities and transforming those priorities into campaigns.

Got Green has used CBPR as a primary method to define organizational priorities and develop campaigns from the ground up for the last five years. This approach was first used with the Women in the Green Economy Project (2010) and then the Young Leaders in the Green Economy (2013), which led to the Access to Healthy Foods and Green Pathways Out of Poverty campaigns, respectively. **We had two main goals in our CBPR:**

01

Develop a culturally relevant analysis of climate change. With CBPR, we wanted to understand how residents of Southeast Seattle think and feel about climate change, policies meant to stem climate change, and climate change preparedness.

02

Develop local community leadership in the movement for Climate Justice.

GRASSROOTS STEERING COMMITTEE

In order to bring the science to the sidewalk and talk to our communities about climate change, we needed experts from the community to help us figure out the right questions to ask. We pulled together a grassroots Steering Committee consisting of young people, cultural workers, activists and organizers in the labor movement, black leaders, and students from South Seattle. The steering committee members were all people of color, ages 23-45. The members dedicated an average of 15 hours a month. **The role of the Steering Committee was to:**

01

Design a survey to identify the perspectives of people of color living in the South Seattle area on climate change

02

Lead survey collection and recruitment of survey respondents

03

Lead follow-up roundtables for peer discussions and relationship building

04

Report out the findings and receive feedback on the direction of future campaign work

Got Green and Puget Sound Sage facilitated this research process, supporting community members in defining the problem, gathering information, and interpreting results. As is typical in community organizing, many of our members were balancing multiple priorities, including full-time jobs, families, and school. To support the participation of our committee and to build community, we provided meals and transportation, building lasting relationships in the process.

The Climate Justice Steering Committee met for the first time in February 2015. Over the next three months, the committee pulled together research and grappled with the issues that climate change amplifies in our communities. The committee met twice a month and members worked independently outside of the standing meetings. In the process, the committee drew on their strong community ties, racial and environmental justice knowledge, and movement building experience. Finding consensus on how to ask our communities about climate change in an intentional, relevant way took several additional meetings.

The Climate Justice steering committee continues to meet as a grassroots leadership committee of Got Green and will utilize these project findings to develop a community-led campaign. They will continue engaging with the community through quarterly roundtables and educational discussions.

RESEARCH TOOLS

Within 6 months, the Steering Committee developed two tools: a Community Survey and an Organizational Leader Interview. On May 16, 2015, we launched recruitment and training of over 70 volunteers to complete the surveys with community members. We focused on meeting people where they were at, conducting face to face interviews at parks, community centers, bus stops, and other community gathering places. Together, we interviewed 175 respondents with different race and ethnic identities, age ranges, religious-affiliations, and first-languages. Respondents primarily live in the historically multi-ethnic neighborhoods in South Seattle and South King County.

In addition to these surveys, we interviewed 30 representatives from organizations that work in service or solidarity with communities of color in Seattle. We talked to representatives from organizations doing many different forms of justice work, including organizing tenants, supporting survivors of domestic violence, and environmental work such as running urban gardening programs. These interviews gave us insight into the complexity of climate risks and impacts for communities of color and low-income communities. They also served a dual purpose of gathering more perspectives on climate change and reinforcing old partnerships while forging new connections. In this way, the research process directly supported coalition building for a broad-based climate change movement led by people of color and low-income communities.
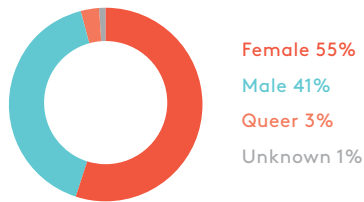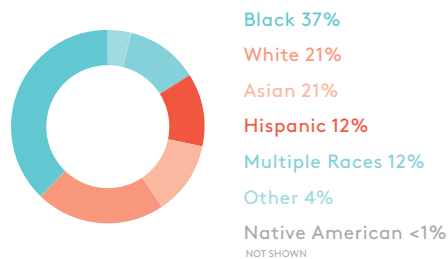
PARTICIPANTS AT-A-GLANCE

Figure 1. Gender

Female 55%

Male 41%

Queer 3%

Unknown 1%

Figure 2. Race/Ethnicity

Black 37%

White 21%

Asian 21%

Hispanic 12%

Multiple Races 12%

Other 4%

Native American <1%
NOT SHOWN

Figure 3. Age Range

Age	Percent
18–24	18%
25–34	31%
35–44	25%
45–54	11%
55–64	10%
Over 65	5%
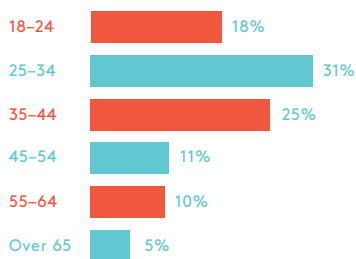
Figure 4. Housing Situation

Renting 63%

Owner 18%

Staying with Family or Friends 13%

Homeless 6%

Figure 5. Residence

3 North Seattle

8 Downtown/Central District

14 Pioneer Square and SODO

2 West Seattle

39 Beacon Hill

57 Rainier Valley

24 Kent, Burien, and Renton

Figure 6. Top Languages Spoken at Home

110 ENGLISH

20 SPANISH

3 SWAHILI

5 CHINESE

3 VIETNAMESE

8 SOMALI

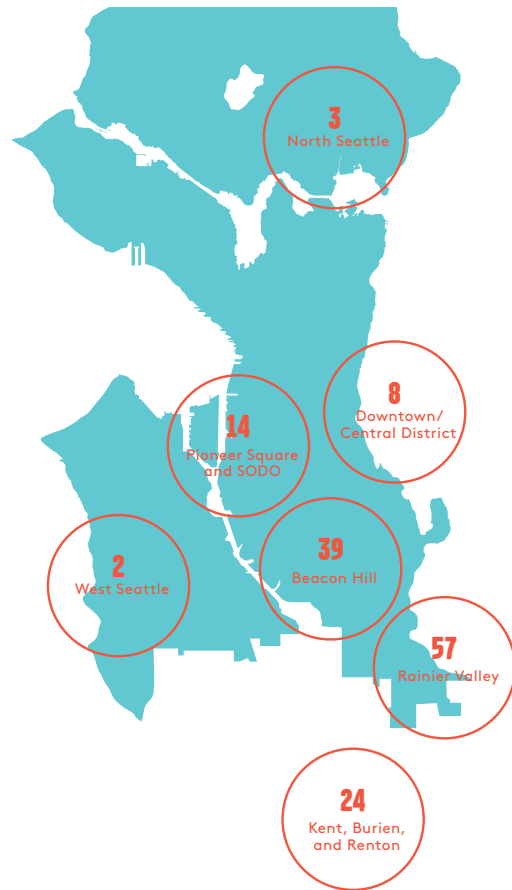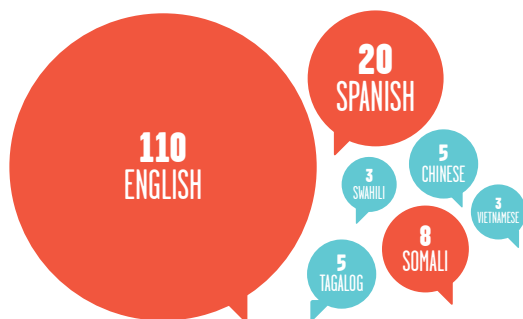**5** TAGALOG

COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLES

Following the survey collection, the Climate Justice Steering Committee organized three roundtables to provide more information about climate change impacts and to gather responses from community members through deeper dialogue with one another. One roundtable was held on July 13; it was a summer barbecue and preliminary report back discussing the top three priorities identified in the survey. A second was held on August 29, on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. The event was a movie showing of "Trouble the Water," followed by discussion about climate preparedness, building resilient communities, and growing a vision for environmental justice in Seattle. A third roundtable was held on November 12 and was a town hall forum on gentrification and climate, specifically about how climate change and natural disasters act as powerful gentrifying forces in communities of color.

Through these roundtables, attendees made connections about how climate change would impact our area, particularly South Seattle. Key themes included:

- The threat of sea level rise and the displacement which occurred following disasters hit home for many people.

- When we discussed Hurricane Katrina, participants identified that the poorest neighborhoods lacked the resources to evacuate (not having cars or access to adequate public transportation), nor was there support from the broader government to rebuild their communities.

- Many in the audience were having conversations for the first time about climate preparedness and did not know what the City had to offer.

- Others recognized that the first responders and the first places they would go to in an emergency (as well as celebration) were their own community and personal networks.

- At almost every break out discussion, attendees talked about how their neighborhoods look different now than when they were growing up. A widely shared story was how people of color households and businesses were forced out because of rent hikes. Attendees then talked about not having a support network or community around them in their new neighborhoods.

Our work with the grassroots steering committee also allowed us to develop a relationship with the Office of Sustainability and Environment, who provided funding support for the community roundtables and engagement; allowing us to expand our work and creating a means for OSE to deepen their community engagement. Additional feedback and observations from the report back discussions were incorporated in the findings of this report.

CLIMATE SURVEY STORY
RASHAD BARBER

I joined the project to make sure that my community's voice was represented at the table of policy makers when making decisions around climate justice. We learned that nationally 68% of the Black population lives within 30 miles of a coal plant, are generally more likely to live in polluted areas and have shorter life spans than whites. I myself grew up near a coal plant. The current ecological crisis we now face, affecting countless vulnerable people, stems from the established system which thrives off racist narratives that has promoted an idea that some social groups are disposable. Because Black folks along with other low income communities are more likely to be exposed to polluted areas, they will be more likely to suffer adverse health effects. Climate justice will only be achieved when frontline communities are leading the transition away from fossil fuels to renewable forms of energy. As we prepare for climate change impacts, we will work to build community resiliency and ensure that the most marginalized are not left out but leading this fight.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
THE CLIMATE GAP

Climate change is a known threat multiplier, and the disproportionate impacts to low income communities and communities of color at local, national, and international levels have been widely documented. The Climate Justice Alliance points out that dirty energy in the U.S. has a huge impact on low-income communities and people of color.[9] Looking globally, the World Bank calls climate change a threat to poverty eradication.[10]

But what does this disproportionate impact mean for communities here in Seattle? And how do our communities see themselves within the larger conversation about climate change? Our findings illuminate our communities' perspectives and put that knowledge in the context of the climate threats we face in the Pacific Northwest.

We asked our survey respondents, in open-ended format, who they believe to be most impacted by climate change. Our findings indicate that while people of color and low income residents overwhelmingly support environmental interventions, they don't immediately see themselves as disproportionately affected by climate change. Only 24% of our survey respondents thought low-income people or people of color would be most impacted.

These findings emphasize how important it is to talk about climate change in terms of the issues our communities already face and the importance of addressing existing disparities, which create and exacerbate climate vulnerability.

That the most climate-vulnerable communities do not see themselves within these environmental issues reflects, in part, that the climate movement has failed to adequately acknowledge the impacts climate change will have on our communities as well as a failure to distribute this message fully. But this is more than a messaging problem. It is a movement building problem. This finding reveals how critical deep organizing and education will be to engage and mobilize communities of color in the movement for climate resilience. It underscores the need for building local leadership by people of color to identify and develop community expertise. By transforming the way we talk about climate change and engaging meaningfully with the grassroots, we believe we can continue to build knowledge and leadership in our communities—changing the climate movement as we know it.

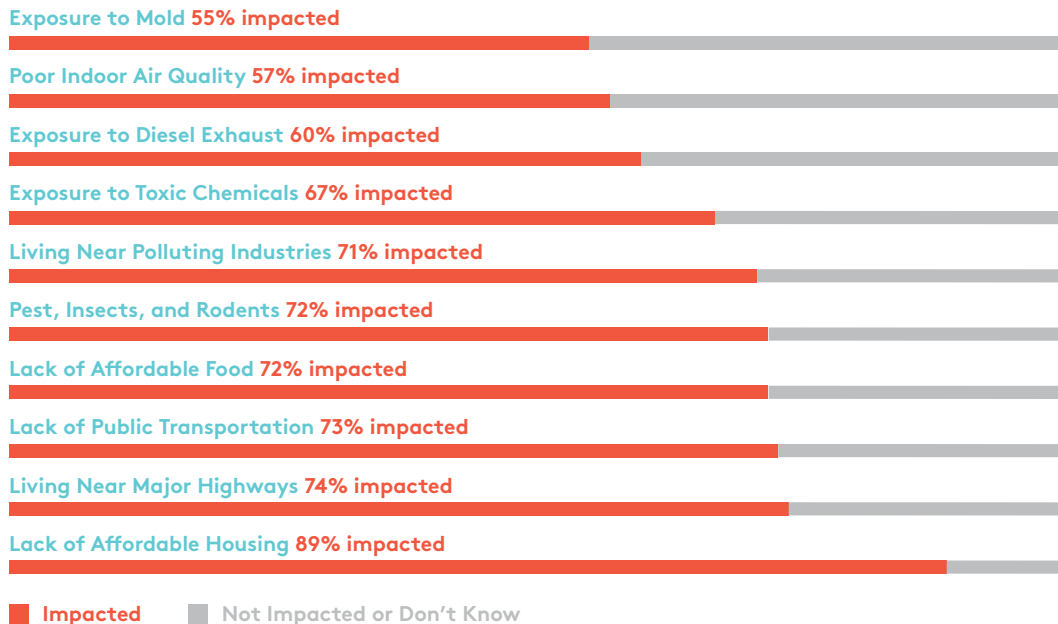## Grounding Climate Change In Community Concerns

First, to understand how to talk about climate change, we needed to ground ourselves in community priorities. Beginning with community ensures that our priorities and the way we talk about those priorities are truly grassroots. Second, in order to understand the local impacts of climate change, we wanted to combine climate science with community experience and expertise. To do this, we asked community members to identify and then prioritize issues currently impacting their neighborhoods. We know that climate change will worsen existing vulnerabilities, so our approach begins with the community understanding of those vulnerabilities. By learning about the challenges community members are already facing, we can comprehensively understand how our communities will be affected by major climate events, as well as the increased temperatures and sea level rise we will face in Seattle. Beyond preparing for a disaster, we can identify opportunities for "bouncing forward,": opportunities that allow us to address the inequity that creates the climate gap.[11]

To understand those underlying inequities, the lived experience and impact of the built and natural environment on our communities, we asked people to identify the issues that impact their neighborhoods. The table below shows that community members are over-burned with health hazards, with each issue affecting at least half of the community members surveyed. Of these issues, survey respondents identified lack of affordable housing and lack of affordable food as the two issues they are most concerned about.

When communities experience this number of multiple and overlapping hazards, it increases their vulnerability to climate change impacts. For example, climate change will increase the number of extreme heat days we have in our region. Heat waves can concentrate pollution and worsen existing respiratory problems, including asthma. A resident who is impacted by both exposure to diesel exhaust and poor indoor air quality is still vulnerable, even if they remain indoors during a heat wave. As our City plans for climate adaptation, we must consider the potential of these vulnerabilities to impact our communities and incorporate them into climate adaptation planning.

Table 1. Do these issues impact you in your neighborhood?

Exposure to Mold 55% impacted

Poor Indoor Air Quality 57% impacted

Exposure to Diesel Exhaust 60% impacted

Exposure to Toxic Chemicals 67% impacted

Living Near Polluting Industries 71% impacted

Pest, Insects, and Rodents 72% impacted

Lack of Affordable Food 72% impacted

Lack of Public Transportation 73% impacted

Living Near Major Highways 74% impacted

Lack of Affordable Housing 89% impacted

■ Impacted　　　■ Not Impacted or Don't Know

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS TOPS LIST OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Over one third of survey respondents identified lack of affordable housing as the most important issue impacting their neighborhood. Housing was also elevated as an issue of concern throughout the organizational interviews. In particular, our organizational leaders were concerned about the ability of their constituents to continue living in the city with the spikes in housing costs. Interviewees made the case that any local efforts to build climate resilience for our communities will be undermined if low-income people and people of color continue to be displaced to suburban cities, particularly if those suburbs are under-resourced and unable to conduct rigorous climate resiliency planning.

"Black spaces and Black bodies are vanishing from the U.S. urban landscape and there is an intentional and systemic erosion and destruction of our communities."

DR. GARY KINTE PERRY, A SEATTLE UNIVERSITY SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR

Displacement Risk on the Rise

The concern community members articulate about the availability of affordable housing aligns with what we know about the housing crisis that Seattle is facing. For example, the average rent for a one bedroom in Rainier Valley increased by 8.4% over the course of one year.[12] Home prices have skyrocketed as demand has outpaced supply. These increases are rapidly pushing low-income people out of the city. Recent census data shows that almost all of the new growth in apartment renters came from people earning over $100,000 a year, with renters in this bracket now accounting for 1 in every 5 renters. [13]

While everyone is dealing with high housing prices, people of color and low-income people are bearing the brunt of it. A recent mapping study, done as part of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, analyzed where displacement risk is highest for people of color and people with low incomes in the city. It found that the areas with the highest risk are in Rainier Valley, and displacement risk is particularly high along the light rail corridors. People of color make up 77% of all Rainier Valley residents, while in the rest of Seattle people of color make up only 26% of all residents. Analysis of the 2010 census showed that, for the first time, more people of color were living in Seattle's south suburbs than in the city limits. [14] The continued gentrification and displacement in Seattle drives families further away from the places they work, play, and live. The displacement of low-income households to the suburbs may also pose a risk to the City's efforts to lower carbon emissions.

In Seattle, our largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is from transportation. Of all emissions, 40% of are from road transportation; 22% of which is from passenger transportation.[15] In King County and Washington State, transportation emissions make up 48% and 45% of GHG emissions, respectively. Because so much of

our emissions come from this sector, it is a crucial part of our city's emissions reduction strategies and targets.

The City of Seattle has set the goal of reducing emissions from passenger vehicle transportation to 82% of 2008 levels by 2030 and reaching a 20% reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) from the 2008 baseline by the same year. Current projections assume that with concentrated action over the next 15 years, we will reduce vehicle emissions by 79% and VMT by 43%. [16] However, these reductions are only possible with effective land use and transportation design, coupled with affordable housing. Just as our survey respondents identified lack of affordable housing as their biggest neighborhood concern, we know that displacement threatens to undercut the success of reductions in our greenhouse gas emissions.

Increasingly, evidence shows us that when low-income people can thrive in place with access to transit, both vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced. Low income households near transit drive 50% less than low-income households in non-TOD communities, thereby increasing transit ridership. [17] Further, because low-income households tend to own older, polluting vehicles, reducing driving from these households significantly impacts greenhouse gas emissions reduction. [18]

The same trends are evident locally: low-earning Rainier Valley residents use transit more frequently to get to work (23%) than their higher-earning neighbors (14%). They also use transit more frequently than low-earning residents throughout King County (13%) or high-earning workers (10%). This stark difference demonstrates that Transit Oriented Development (TOD) gets the best transit ridership from ensuring low-earning workers can stay in transit rich neighborhoods like Rainier Valley. Further, the City has set a goal to increase transit boardings by 37% by 2040. [19] Ensuring low-income transit riders are not displaced to neighborhoods with low transit service must be a critical part of this approach.

Then there is the inverse. When residents move into transit oriented development from areas with low transit access, they reduce their vehicle miles travelled by 42% as well as

Map 1. Displacement Risk Index
Source: Seattle Comprehensive Plan
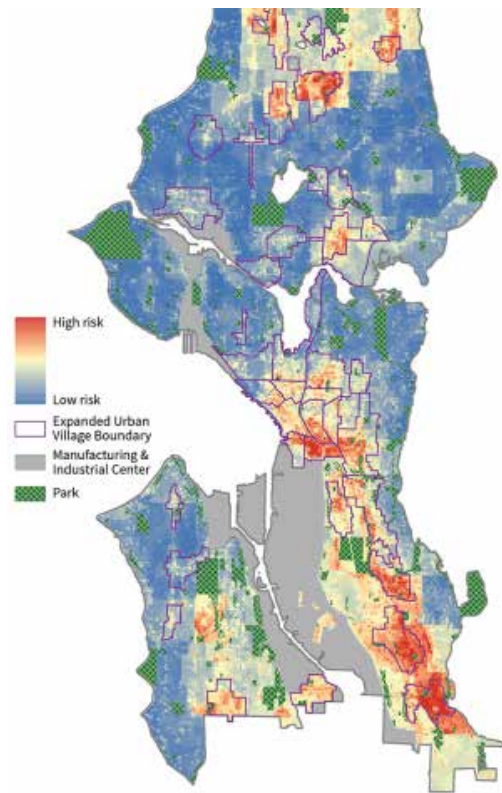
reduce commute time and cost and improve access to jobs. [20] Taking a comprehensive look at the emissions reduction benefits and the benefit to community members, we believe creating and maintaining quality affordable housing and equitable transit-oriented communities is critical to mitigating our greenhouse gas emissions.

Beyond major reductions in GHG emissions, sustainable communities foster the social, cultural, and economic opportunities that we need to thrive in a climate-changing world. When people live close to their jobs, they have shorter commutes and the option to take public transit —saving time and money. This is particularly important for low-income workers, who are already disproportionately burdened with the high cost of auto transportation. Moreover, workers who live near their jobs spend less time commuting and more at home, which supports healthier, happier and more connected families. [21]

Ensuring that residents can thrive in place strengthens existing social networks, which people rely on for everything from daily support with childcare to emotional and financial support during crisis. These strong relationships have an immediate impact on happiness and well-being, as well as significant long-term health impacts. People are significantly more likely to stay healthy and live longer when they have strong social connections.[22] Moreover, we know that communities with strong social ties fare better in the event of extreme weather events like heat waves, which will become more frequent as the climate changes.[23]

Overall, the data from our surveys and the data on emissions reduction echoed what we heard in our Steering Committee meetings: We need to make sure that carbon reduction strategies include strong measures to ensure that existing low income communities and communities of color can thrive in place and reap multiple benefits, rather than be displaced.

CLIMATE SURVEY STORY
ROKEA JONES

I was at the Columbia City Farmers Market and they were doing a survey there and I decided to participate. And I enjoyed my survey experience because it asked a vast amount of questions which normally would be a deterrent but I felt that they were questions that were very vital to my concerns and my community. So they were asking about housing, they're asking about health issues which is important to me have recently come up. Because I want to stay in the Central District where I live now but it's so expensive. I'm trying to figure out how to pay my rent now and when my lease is up I don't know the odds are that I would be able to stay in my community. Just seeing how Seattle has changed I've lived here all my life and I noticed that Seattle has rained significantly less when I was a child and those are the kind of things that concern me, because I love Seattle. This is where I expected to raise my family.
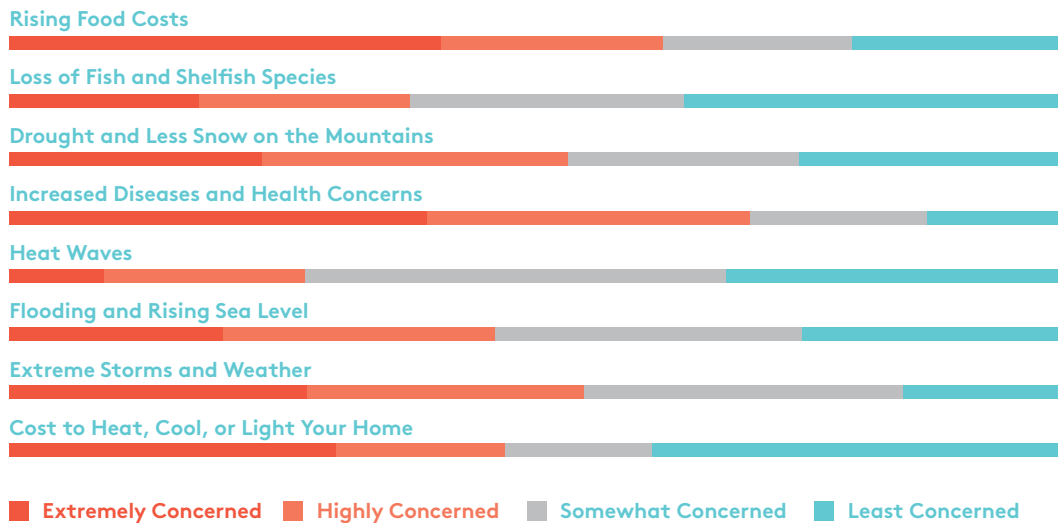
CONCERNS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

After getting grounded in the concerns respondents had about their communities, we prompted respondents to share their concerns about climate change. When asked specifically, "What potential impacts of climate change most concern you?" a majority of our survey respondents said that rising food costs, and increased disease and health concerns are the climate impacts that concern them the most.

Table 2. Climate Impacts of Most Concern to Respondents

Rising Food Costs

Loss of Fish and Shelfish Species

Drought and Less Snow on the Mountains

Increased Diseases and Health Concerns

Heat Waves

Flooding and Rising Sea Level

Extreme Storms and Weather

Cost to Heat, Cool, or Light Your Home

■ Extremely Concerned   ■ Highly Concerned   ■ Somewhat Concerned   ■ Least Concerned

Rising Food Costs

Our survey respondents identified rising food costs as the most significant issue. On top of expensive costs of living such as housing, transportation, and childcare, the rising price of food is another burden for communities of color and low-income people in South Seattle. The potential for climate change to increase food prices was identified as one of the biggest concerns for our community respondents.

Access to healthy, affordable food is a pre-existing vulnerability in our communities. In King County, 13.4% of households are food insecure. [24] In Seattle, roughly 15% of households utilize Basic Food; that's more than double the number of households in 2002 and a 5% increase since 2009.[25] Our communities are already struggling to put food on the table and the potential for increases in food prices threatens to exacerbate this vulnerability. The intergovernmental panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that changes in temperature and rainfall patterns could lead to food price increases between 3% and 84% by 2050.[26]

It is important to note that the cost we pay at the supermarket is at the end of the supply chain. Elsewhere the same conditions that drive cost increases are driving political instability, famine, climate migration and displacement.

Increased Diseases and Health Concerns

Respondents also identified increased health concerns as a top priority. Disparities in health outcomes already exist in our communities both by geography and social demographics. In King County, asthma prevalence among Asian, Black and multiracial youth is higher than white and Hispanic youth. [27] Life expectancy for residents in Southeast Seattle is lower than the King County average.[28] Puget Sound Clean Air Agency identifies 16 highly impacted communities in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap Counties based on 7 criteria including race, income, and exposure to diesel pollution, industrial density, and health sensitivity. Their analysis places the Greater Duwamish area, International District, and Southeast Seattle in the top 16 impacted communities in the four county regions. [29] Climate-related changes in weather threaten to exacerbate these pre-existing vulnerabilities. Climate change will impact

air quality through production of pollen, mold spores, and increased ozone concentration. Heat waves can trigger asthma and cardiovascular illnesses. Further, workers who work outdoors may be particularly vulnerable due to increased exposure to the elements.

Related Vulnerability: Heat Waves and Urban Heat Island Effect

Seattle ranks among the top ten cities in the US with measurable heat island impacts, with a 4.1 degree urban/rural temperature difference. Due to a legacy of institutionalized racism and classism leading to a higher prevalence of pre-existing health conditions, poorer quality health care, lower building quality and fewer resources to respond, Seattle's low-income neighborhoods and communities of color are disproportionately vulnerable to heat waves, which will become more frequent as the climate changes. Further, because of our historically cool weather, much of our housing stock does not have air conditioning—creating more risk for low-income people who don't have access to effective cooling systems.

One of the best known natural mitigation strategies for urban heat islands is more trees, yet Seattle currently has an existing tree cover disparity, with high-income neighborhoods having 29% tree cover compared to 18% in low-income neighborhoods. Areas of the city that have been redeveloped lost 35% of their tree cover from 2003–2007.[30] With increased development planned for the Rainier Valley and, in particular, the culturally rich and racially diverse Rainier Beach neighborhood, these communities will be at great risk for continued tree cover loss and increased temperatures.

Data from heat waves in other parts of the country have shown that heat is the number one weather related killer in the United States.[31] Heat waves occur when there are several days of high temperatures that prevent the body from fully recovering from heat fatigue, even during cooler conditions at night. Without having experienced a major heat wave in Seattle, it makes sense that our respondents didn't see it as a major concern.

Cost of Utilities

The cost of heating, cooling and lighting was the third most concerning issue; it was also the most polarizing issue, with 39% of respondents ranking it as low priority. This polarization may show the positive impact the City's Utility Discount Program is having on the cost burden for low-income consumers, or that many respondents feel the cost of utilities is a relatively small price to pay compared to the high cost of housing.

The more frequent and extreme weather events that come with climate change, like wildfires and drought, could also mean increased costs for electricity users. The 2015 Goodell Creek Fire forced Seattle City Light to shut down power generation at three hydropower dams on the Skagit River. Seattle City Light was forced to shut down transmission and purchase power from elsewhere on the grid, which cost the utility more than $100,000 a day. Seattle City Light sells surplus electricity, generating millions of dollars of revenue. However, the low snowpack from last winter decreased hyrdopower generation.[32]

As Seattle City Light spokesman Scott Thomsen explains, climate change "is reducing our capacity to generate electricity that we sell, either to our own customers or to other utilities."[33] This has a very real impact for consumers, who will carry the costs of extreme weather events and changes in weather patterns. National data shows low-income households already spend 12% of their income on utilities compared to the average household that spends 3% of their income on utilities.[34] For many, that means a choice between paying the power bill and putting food on the table.

Unseen Vulnerability: Flood Risk

Seattle is susceptible to three types of flooding: riverine flooding, coastal flooding, and urban flooding. With each type of flooding threatening different areas of the city. Seattle Public Utilities predicts that certain parts of the city will be underwater at high tide by 2100,

including the vast majority of the waterfront and the racially diverse neighborhoods of South Park and Georgetown.

Flooding in South Park is of particular for concern for our organizations because the neighborhood is home to a majority people of color, with more than a third of residents identifying as Latino.[35] South Park flanks the polluted Duwamish River, Seattle's only river and an EPA superfund site. The Duwamish is a tidal river, and so when high tide and heavy rainfall occur at the same time the neighborhood drainage system is overwhelmed, resulting in flooding. This condition is expected to worsen in the coming years with sea-level rise.

Map 2. Rising Sea Levels and Changing Flood Risks in Seattle

Source: Seattle Public Utilities
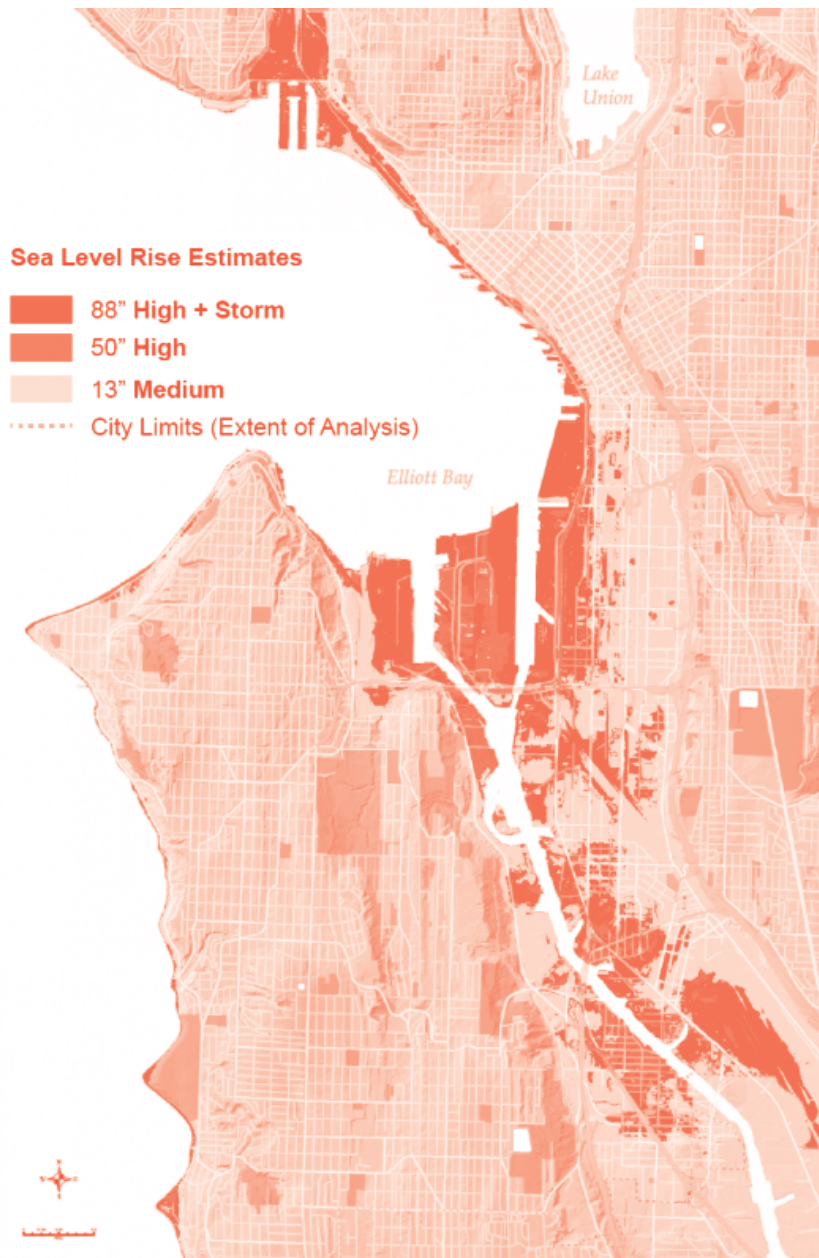
RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In addition to asking how our communities perceive and experience climate change, we sought their input on how Seattle should respond to climate change. We presented respondents with a list of 14 options, asking them to indicate their support our opposition to each option.

Carbon-Reduction Strategies

While our survey respondents did not see themselves as being immediately impacted by climate change, they were overwhelmingly supportive of carbon-reduction strategies. All of the proposed solutions were perceived favorably, with support from at least 75% of survey respondents. This "all of the above" perspective suggests to us that community members recognize the importance of a comprehensive suite of solutions to address climate change.

The top solutions represented a mix of carbon reduction strategies:

1. Creating communities with reduced dependence on cars (improved sidewalks; building affordable housing near transit; reduced public transit fares; and supporting opportunities to live near work)
2. Incentivizing clean or efficient energy (environment-friendly construction; encouraging clean energy; improving energy efficiency; and making polluters pay)
3. Increasing equitable access to the green economy (creating green jobs).

Sustainable Communities

The policy options that received the most support from our survey respondents focused on integrating climate action with community improvements. Focusing on dense, affordable, livable communities where people can easily access jobs and transit is an important approach for our communities.

Clean Energy & Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency in homes and environmentally-friendly construction has multiple positive benefits. Energy efficient homes mean lower utility costs for residents, as well as a reduction in the ambient heat caused by development and growing density in South Seattle neighborhoods (which in turn lessens the severity of heat waves). Moreover, stressing energy-efficiency in new construction and retrofitting for existing buildings creates green job opportunities.

Accessing the Green Economy

   Community members were the most supportive of using a transition away from fossil fuels as an entry way into a green economy. Recent research suggests that a lack of jobs in the green sector may not be the problem so much as creating access points for people of color and people from low-income backgrounds.[36]

   Supporting our findings, a national study conducted in 2010 showed that Hispanic and African American communities overwhelmingly supported efforts to shift away from a carbon-dependent economy through funding renewable energy, tax rebates and subsidies for energy efficient technology, and regulating CO_2 emissions.[37] The broad support for these three carbon-reduction strategies shows that community members see transitioning away from fossil fuels as an opportunity to combat climate change while thriving in-place. This data also dispels the myth that people of color don't care about environmental and climate issues, offering instead that our communities are incredibly invested in solutions that address the climate crisis and improve community conditions.

This CBPR project has helped ground us in community needs, voices, and leadership. Our research has shown us both the tremendous strength of our communities but also where we have work to do. Using this research as a place of grounding, we look forward to advancing a climate justice agenda in Seattle.

CLIMATE SURVEY STORY
EMILY CHAN

I grew up in the Beacon Hill neighborhood and have lived there my entire life. I joined the climate justice steering committee to learn about and become more involved with the impacts of climate change on my community. Climate justice means empowering communities everywhere to determine and shape their own outcomes, particularly with adapting to and working towards solutions to challenges posed by a changing climate. I learned that contrary to the dominant perception, communities of color and people of low incomes are aware of and concerned about environmental challenges by viewing the actions that harm the environment as also harming their communities. I had the opportunity to talk to many people in various settings while conducting the survey, and the survey results highlight the unique perspectives that they bring to the table in addressing environmental problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS
A COLLECTIVE PATH FORWARD

"We stand here to speak in solidarity with people who can't be here. We are here for the 1,800-plus people who died in Hurricane Katrina and their families, the four people who died in flooding in South Carolina, and the 76,000 coal miners who have died of black lung disease since 1976. We are here for all of the other people who are impacted by the causes and effects of climate change. And we are here for the communities who stayed home to continue to work on solutions while we are here carrying forth their stories with honor and reverence."

JACQUELINE PATTERSON, DIRECTOR OF THE NAACP ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE PROGRAM[38]

Closing the climate gap begins with policies that center the knowledge, experiences, and voices of the communities most impacted by climate change. The findings from our CBPR project emphasize how important it is to meet communities where they are at—talking about climate change in the context of issues our communities already face, like food insecurity and health disparities, and elevating solutions from within. With deeper understanding and deeper relationships, we turn now to building the power to make change.

The recommendations in the following pages represent actions and policy that will both maximize resilience for our communities and build stronger participation in the fight against climate change.

RECOMMENDATION 1
PREVENT DISPLACEMENT OF OUR COMMUNITIES AWAY FROM THE URBAN CORE

When asked about their physical environments, participants in our CBPR identified displacement from their communities as the primary, external threat. And not just displacement of households, but erosion of cultural anchors like community centers, culturally relevant businesses, faith institutions and service providers. When communities lose these anchors, or have to leave them behind as they disperse to the suburbs, we lose critical social cohesion to deal with all threats, including climate change.

It became clear from our community dialogue that we cannot discuss climate change and resilience without addressing stability for people, families and communities of color. A Seattle movement for climate justice, and broader effort of fighting climate change, has to align with local efforts for anti-gentrification and anti-displacement policies. It's not an either or proposition—we must keep historical cultural centers and communities rooted in place, while also becoming self-sustaining and improving our environmental and economic conditions.

1a/Community Control of Development: Land Trusts, Affordable Housing and Neighborhood Preservation

At the core of our conversations lay one main issue: control of growth by communities at risk of displacement. Participants were wary or even alarmed at development in their neighborhoods but most were not anti-growth. Instead, participants wanted to benefit from growth and jobs by having a say in how growth changed their community.

For decades, communities of color in the U.S. have waged a historic struggle to control and influence development in their neighborhoods, especially after harmful policies in the 50s and 60s that tore down hundreds of thousands of homes for freeways and urban renewal. One well-known success story of community control is the Dudley Street Initiative in Boston. Over many years, the community-governed Dudley Street Initiative had purchased large swaths of land through a land trust, resulting in permanently affordable housing, community infrastructure and land for urban farming that has helped existing residents stay and prosper amid gentrification pressures.[39]

Another example of community control of growth is the Tenderloin neighborhood in San Francisco. More than 25% of the land in this neighborhood is permanently reserved for affordable housing or owned by nonprofits, resulting in a buffer against gentrification.[40] As the author of one article states: "In the Tenderloin, community control of land makes it possible for community leaders to risk improving the neighborhood without worrying that new investment will push out all the low-income people."[41]

Sage, Got Green and many other organizations have long been working on solutions to displacement in Seattle, and local public officials are advancing a host of affordable housing solutions this year.[42] However, new solutions arose from our CBPR that have not been adequately explored or need deeper commitment from local officials:

— The City should establish strong goals for community control of land, such as community land trusts, non-profit affordable housing development, and local ownership of cultural anchors and businesses, in areas with high risk of displacement. Research could show what proportion of community-ownership is needed to buffer gentrification pressures.

— The State of Washington has recently required Sound Transit to utilize 80% of surplus land for affordable housing. For both existing land in Southeast Seattle and for sites along light rail expansion, Sound Transit should prioritize land sale to community-based organizations that can create cultural anchors as well as affordable housing.

— Local agencies should focus resources on historically people of color neighborhoods, such as Central District, Beacon Hill, International District, South Park, Rainier Beach and Rainier Valley, with adequate funding and resources for community-controlled projects. Examples include the Rainier Beach Food Innovation District, Africa Town Tech Hub, and Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority's commercial affordability project.

— Anti-displacement actions could include community-led acquisition of land through occupation or seizure. We witnessed this in Seattle during the 1970's with community-led occupations resulting in present day cultural and community centers - El Centro, Northwest African American Museum, and Daybreak Star.

1b / Community Benefits Policy

Large-scale development and public infrastructure projects hold the promise of long-term jobs and benefits from investment in our communities, but too often result in displacement, decreased social cohesion, and even destruction of local neighborhood economies.

However, calls for thoughtful planning and real community input in development or project decisions by local governments are often dismissed or given marginal attention when they effect low-income communities or people of color. Examples include redevelopment of Yesler Terrace, for which local demands to create enforceable community benefits were deflected by both the Seattle Housing Authority and the City of Seattle. While the project has affordable housing and some SHA facilities, the benefits fall far short in proportion to the scale of private benefit and the complete transformation of the Yesler Terrace community.

Community benefits agreements have proven effective, enforceable tools for communities to share in the benefits of large-scale projects.[43] But no local governments in the region have adopted policy that would expand their use; instead, leaving local impact mitigation to one-off land use permits or goals embedded in master institutional plans. We call on cities and counties to adopt race and social justice criteria for assessing the disparate impacts of public and private projects and for triggering use of community benefits agreements. At the very least, community benefits should be required whenever private developers or institutions benefit from flexible land use planning or sale of public property. This process must begin with defining impacted communities and clarifying that community benefits put equity concerns at the center of decision-making, including issues of displacement, economic inequality, health disparities and climate resilience.

1c / Study Climate Impacts of Displacement

In order to prioritize anti-displacement policy and programs, the City of Seattle should study the effects of displacing low-income families and people of color out of the urban core. Many of our CBPR participants shared stories of family members and friends moving to the south suburbs of Seattle, where they could no longer access reliable public transportation to get to jobs, school or community services. Analysis of Census data by Sage has shown that displacement of low-income, transit reliant households out of Seattle may undermine or even counter the gains of proposed high-density development around transit stations in the Rainier Valley.[44] As the City adopts a new Comprehensive Plan, plans to rezone for greater density, and invests in development around high-capacity transit corridors, it is critical that public decisions are informed by knowledge of how displacement of low-income households is affecting the City's carbon reduction goals.

RECOMMENDATION 2
ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES IN CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Participants in the CBPR were very supportive of a transition away from fossil fuels as a strategy for both stopping climate change and building resilient communities. But, at the same time, our CBPR revealed that community members did not view themselves as the most impacted by climate change. This raises the question for social change organizations—how do we organize in communities of color to build a movement to fight climate change?

Many solutions emerged from our dialogue with community members throughout the CBPR project, but also from street activism over the last year that shows the passion and power our community has for ending domination of the fossil fuel economy.

— "Without active engagement with communities of color, the environmental movement as it stands will become irrelevant. The time is now to strategize on how we can support youth from communities of color and low income communities to become the leaders that will take us into a new era."

LYLIANNA ALLALA, ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS OF COLOR AND GOT GREEN BOARD MEMBER

2a / Education and Organizing in Ways that are Meaningful

At Got Green, we believe that communities of color should see themselves in the issues and any solutions to climate change—otherwise, solutions seem irrelevant and will likely continue to be harmful. Our vision for organizing in our communities is twofold: 1) we want people of color to see themselves in the climate justice movement and 2) secondly, we need to define this movement for ourselves.

The Climate Justice Steering committee will publish an ongoing Community "Zine" series from the perspective of people of color and low income backgrounds. The Zine series will serve as a resource for people of color who want to learn about climate change because it will center our stories when talking about climate change. It will also be used as an outreach tool to connect with community members who could be developed as future leaders. The Community Zine will challenge the mainstream narrative about who is impacted by the environment, what language are we using to talk about the people impacted, and who is an "environmentalist."

We will continue to pass on the rich history of environmental justice in the Pacific Northwest by hosting educational Toxic Tours and teaching Environmental Justice curriculum, a role we inherited from Community Coalition of Environmental Justice (CCEJ). Additionally, Got Green will continue hosting people's movement assemblies, a practice that comes from the Global South and the World Social Forum, as a means to collectively envision what a Just Transition—a new economy and world —looks like for us. The Just Transition Assembly is an ongoing process we are having with partners in our national alliance, Grassroots Global Justice, to connect different struggles and lift up the solutions coming from frontline communities themselves.

2b / Creating Access to Green Careers for Young People of Color

The Young Leaders in the Green Economy committee is working on a campaign to increase green internships and pathways for young leaders to good jobs. This campaign surfaced after the committee identified that many young people in our communities were completing multiple unpaid internships without leadership pathways to jobs in the environmental field. After interviewing young people, employers, and city officials, the Young Leaders committee wrote a report called *Breaking the Green Ceiling: Investing in Young Leaders of Color*, a three-point frame work for campaign.

——— Jobs should be good for the environment and our communities because we don't want to choose between well-paying jobs but are harming the environment.

——— Jobs should have racial justice analysis in the recruitment and retention because it's important to recruit young leaders of color into good jobs with systems of support in place to retain them.

——— Employers should develop systems that help young leaders move into career pathways.

2c / Organizing to Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground

Got Green learned this past year that not one single policy has kept more fossil fuels in the ground more effectively than actual people putting their bodies on the line through direct action. In her book *This Changes Everything*, Naomi Klein refers to the global mass movement of frontline communities that are directly confronting the fossil fuel industry as "blockadia." Just as our predecessors, Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ), blocked incinerators from being built in South Seattle, Got Green joined the Shell No! actions to block Arctic drilling explorations and oil trains, and joined the Lummi Nation in solidarity to protect their ancestral lands from a proposed coal port. The overall message of "Coal, oil, gas, none shall pass," hit home: we pledged to stop and physically block oil and coal trains from running through our neighborhoods because they pose a huge threat to the health and homes of people of color.

These direct actions and organizing with a clear message linking the carbon-based economy to direct harm to our community helped galvanize and mobilize many Got Green members and young people of color. By directly challenging local governments, like the Port of Seattle, and fossil fuel corporations locating their activities in our communities, people of color can have an impact on public policy that is real and immediate. As part of our climate resilience agenda, we will continue to engage in direct action and demand local governments to do their part in "keeping it in the ground." Specifically, we will call for a moratorium of fossil fuel exploration and extraction. Portland passed a resolution last year saying no to new fossil fuel infrastructure and we will demand the same of Seattle and other local governments in the region.

RECOMMENDATION 3
PUT RACIAL EQUITY AT THE CENTER OF CLIMATE ADAPTATION DECISION-MAKING

In order to prepare our communities for the impacts of climate change, we must address the structural inequities which create and exacerbate climate vulnerability. But real resilience is possible only if climate-vulnerable communities are at the center of decision-making. This will require innovative approaches to adaptation planning and, more broadly, local and state governance. The good news is that local governments like Seattle and King County have begun to work with communities of color to think differently. However, we are only at the beginning of a transformation, and the recommendations below reflect where and how far we have to go.

— "Right now we know that the environment movement is at a huge deficit when it comes to communities of color. We are not represented in the places where they're making policies that impact our environment."

DIMITRI GROCE, PUGET SOUND SAGE CLIMATE JUSTICE FELLOW

3a / Include Public Health in Climate Adaptation.

We heard clearly from our communities they are concerned about the way climate change may impact health and wellness. As a response, we believe future efforts to plan the way our region will adapt to climate change must include an analysis of health impacts, particularly on low-income communities and communities of color, and strategies to mitigate these impacts.

We also believe the conversation on public health and climate change presents a unique opportunity to alter the public discourse on climate change: centering people and making evident the ways climate impacts will be felt.

Puget Sound Sage and Got Green have an existing partnership with the Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment to build a community voice into climate adaptation and we are beginning a partnership with King County Public Health to begin to address the interconnectivity of public health and climate adaptation. Community-government partnerships like these exemplify equitable engagement and strategies that center equity rather than including it as an afterthought.

3b / Create a City-Wide Climate and Environmental Justice Board

The City of Seattle has been a leader in both climate change mitigation and environmental equity initiatives. The City recently adopted an ambitious Climate Action Plan in 2013, which aims to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and Mayor Ed Murray launched an Equity & Environment Initiative (EEI) in 2015 to deepen the City's commitment to race and social justice in it environmental efforts.[45]

However, we believe we need a permanent, lasting platform to ensure the voices of residents highly impacted by environmental and climate burdens can have a say in shaping the way we adapt and plan. We propose that the City create an environmental justice board that will assess and advise on both the potential benefits and negative impacts of departmental action on communities of color and low-income communities across the city.

Further, an Environmental Justice Board would provide an opportunity for residents from highly impacted communities to have ownership and be recognized as stakeholders and experts in Seattle's environmental community.

3c / Climate Adaptation Fund and Participatory Budgeting

We believe true climate resilience can only be achieved when community has ownership of any major climate adaptation effort. Achieving ownership requires transformation of who makes decisions and who decisions are made for. We believe the City should develop a Climate Adaptation Fund to advance projects that build community resilience and prepare our communities for the climate change impacts we will see in Seattle. However, rather than project decisions being made within the walls of City Hall we propose that the City adopt "participatory budgeting" to administer this fund. Participatory budgeting is a democratic process with which community members actively decide how public funds should be spent. First developed in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989, participatory budgeting is rooted in movements for social justice and democracy and has spread to more than 3,000 communities around the world (PBP 2015).[46] Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods and the Seattle Youth Commission have already begun a pilot participatory budgeting project, with young adults in the city deciding how to spend $500,000 in funding.

3d / All Carbon Reduction Policies Must Center Racial Justice

At the core of climate change policy is overall carbon emissions reduction. In the last few years, there has been renewed focus at the state level for implementing a carbon reduction policy. Given the scale of outcomes and resulting changes in our economy, there is no greater test for centering racial equity in environmental progress than carbon reduction policy.

82% of our CBPR participants support carbon regulation, again showing strong support for transitioning away from a fossil fuel economy. But participants were also clear – our communities could not bear disproportionate costs of regulating carbon and should be the first to benefit from resources created to address climate change impacts. At the same time as our CBPR project, Sage, Got Green, and dozens of organizations representing communities of color around Washington have formed the Front and Centered coalition to advance racial equity in State climate policy. Front and Centered has provided a clear and simple set of principles that we can use as criteria for assessing any carbon reduction policy or strategy. [50] They are:

— Equity must be at the center of policies that address climate change.

— People of color and communities with lower incomes must receive net-environmental and economic benefits.

— Ensure accountability and transparency through public, accessible, and culturally appropriate participation and strong enforcement

Using these principles, supported by many organizations and in alignment with our CBPR results, we can organize and advocate for support of carbon reduction policies. We can also determine whether proposals from outside our communities should be supported or not.

Real People, Real Money, Real Power: Participatory Budgeting in NYC

PB NYC is now the fastest-growing and largest participatory budgeting project in the US. In the 2014-2015 budget cycle, over 51,000 New Yorkers decided how more than 30 million dollars should be spent in their communities. Locally-developed capital projects across 24 city council districts have been created that meet the neighborhood's top concerns: safety, sustainability, education, and public space.[47]

While some of these projects resembled more typical city investment, such as parks improvements and computers for under-funded classrooms, many were outside of the box: such as a solar greenhouse and a bus with a fully equipped kitchen that drives to different neighborhoods and teaches kids how to cook healthy meals.[48]

In addition to embracing new ideas, PB NYC succeeded in engaging people who are often sidelined in the political process. Research on the 2014-2015 PB cycle revealed that of the 51, 362 voters: "nearly 60% identified as people of color; approximately 1 in 10 was under 18 years of age; nearly 30% had an annual income below $25,000; more than 1 in 4 were born outside of the US; approximately 1 in 5 ballots were cast in a language other than English."

More than a third of budget delegates reported increased involvement with community organizations following their participation in participatory budgeting.[49] Beyond getting people to vote, PBNYC deepened existing social ties in the community while fostering new relationships and opportunities for connection.

"WHAT CONCERNS ME IS THAT THE DISASTER RESOURCES ARE NOT GOING TO BE DISTRIBUTED EQUITABLY...

People living paycheck to paycheck will not be fine in a two-week disaster situation—and this is the bulk of people who live in the South End."

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

BUILD LOCAL ECONOMIES FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Our CBPR participants were bursting with ideas for how to build resilient communities by transitioning away from a fossil fuel economy. Our communities' vision for a world in which we have achieved climate justice is exciting and moving. Although our CBPR participants understood our entire planet is in harm's way, they were clear that resilience starts locally with stronger social networks, less reliance on fossil fuels, access to environmental jobs, and models of self-reliance that moves us beyond the fossil fuel economy.

4a / Locally-Centered Preparation and First Response as Resilience Strategy

Half of the organizations interviewed identified climate preparedness for their communities as a priority. Roundtable participants and interviewees both identified community centers, such as the Filipino Community of Seattle, Eritrean Community in Seattle and Vicinity, and El Centro de la Raza as places and organizations that already provide critical, culturally relevant services, especially for people of color, disabled persons, and low-income families. Many saw community centers and hubs as natural places to go for extreme weather or emergencies, when community members without access to air conditioning or transportation need shelter, food or other aid. Participants pointed to the examples of Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Katrina where first responders, and in some cases the only responders, for communities of color were community members.

With dozens of immigrant and refugee communities calling Seattle home, there is great potential for these institutions to prepare for and be first responders to climate change events. Our CBPR participants called for local governments to identify and resource community institutions for community-centered resiliency and first response capacity. This includes training, planning, and investment in facilities. Bolstering capacity for the dozens of culturally relevant centers in Seattle also increases social cohesion needed in times of crises.

However, these very institutions are also threatened with displacement as rents rise and community members are displaced into the suburbs. With lower density land use, less transit service, and dispersed services, suburban communities offer less resiliency for low-income people.

We urge City and County climate preparedness action planning departments to work closely with and to resource community centers and organizations already serving vulnerable populations. This includes training and hiring community members to lead climate preparedness efforts. We also urge public investment to preserve existing community centers and cultural hubs as anchors that counter displacement pressures and create the foundation for culturally relevant, local economies.

4b / Locally Determined Economies

Self-reliance has long been a strategy for communities of color to survive in racialized economies that exclude and marginalize. It was not surprising that our CBPR participants painted a picture for transitioning away from fossil fuels that increased self-reliance and let us build local economies that maximize our prosperity. Ideas included:

— Access to healthy foods through locally-owned production and urban farming.

— People of color owned businesses that thrive by providing culturally relevant services and products.

— Worker cooperatives that serve community needs, create jobs, and boost local economic activity. Owning our own labor and controlling our resources is another way for communities to build power locally. If they do not hire us, we will hire ourselves!

— Increased public transit services and location of affordable housing and community-serving businesses near transit stations

An example of the synergy created by cooperatives and locally owned production is Cooperative Jackson in Jackson, Missouri. Cooperative Jackson is its own economic ecosystem – including a farm, restaurant, recycling and compost center, cultural center, and community land trust – and has allowed the black community to own their own labor while improving the conditions of their community.[51]

Locally, the Rainier Beach Action Coalition (RBAC) has envisioned a similar initiative focused on food. The Rainier Beach Food Innovation District will be a publicly-supported project centered at the Rainier Beach light rail station, combining training facilities, food research facilities, commercial kitchens, food-oriented retail, and other commercial food operations.[52] The Innovation District would help create a self-sustaining local food system, which not only creates food access for the surrounding community, but training, employment, and small business, and cooperative opportunities in the process. The project will anchor transit oriented development in Rainier Beach that will help our communities remain primarily transit users, with access to regional job markets as the light rail expands.

Source: City of Seattle
Draft Urban Design and Development Concepts for Station Area

4C / Bringing Home the Green with Targeted Local Hire

CBPR participants recognized that transitioning to a renewable energy economy would result in new jobs that could benefit our communities. Employment in green industries represents a path to bring money into and circulate within our local economies.

However, communities of color face considerable barriers to employment that lock us out of good jobs in existing industries, let alone renewable energy jobs. One promising solution to overcoming these barriers is "targeted local hiring," also known in Seattle as "priority hiring." In 2014, the City of Seattle adopted a Priority Hire Ordinance that requires public works construction contractors to hire from "economically disadvantaged communities" if the project is worth $5 million or more. Projects include traditional road, sewer and bridge infrastructure, but also include green projects like transit and energy efficient public facilities. For workers employed through priority hire, the policy opens up a pathway into living wage, union jobs which are good for the community and environment.

We recommend all local governments, like the Port of Seattle and King County, adopt a similar policy, especially for public spending on renewable energy. In addition, any project funded through resources created by carbon pricing policy should use priority hire to ensure vulnerable communities are offered employment opportunities first and ensure that they are high-quality jobs.

4d / Prioritizing Equitable Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency in homes and environmentally-friendly construction have multiple positive benefits. Energy efficient investments can mean lower utility costs for residents and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Continued action should be taken to ensure energy efficiency upgrades reach low-income homeowners as well as low-income renters. There should be a renewed focus on overcoming the split incentive, where building owners don't make investments in energy efficiency because the bills are covered by renters but renters don't make investments in facilities they do not own.

It is essential that we continue to invest in programs like the Utility Discount Program that provides discounts on Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities programs for qualified low-income customers. This is a key strategy in addressing the existing vulnerabilities in our communities as we continue to shift to a low carbon economy.

Energy efficiency upgrades also provide an opportunity to integrate equitable hiring practices and expand the number of people from disadvantaged neighborhoods accessing living wages jobs.

CLIMATE SURVEY STORY
SARRA TEKOLA

I am a Climate Justice steering committee member and one of the leaders of the Divest Fossil Fuels movement. I'm also a daughter of an environmental refugee. A generation ago, my father was forced to leave Ethiopia because of the political instability caused by the famine that killed millions. This famine was the result of desertification caused by climate change and environmental neglect from the Selassie government. He left at the tender age of 18, and for ten years traveled as a refugee without a country; the rest of my father's family suffered the same fate. Now I have aunts, uncles, and a cousin in Germany, Canada, Italy and England. When I talk about climate justice I think about the millions of climate refugees. I think about the refugees who were pushed out of their homes. They are the ones who contributed the least to damages that cause climate change yet they are the ones being impacted worse by climate change. This is an injustice and this is how the struggle for climate justice has become so important to me.

CONCLUSION
OUR PEOPLE, OUR PLANET, OUR POWER

The process our organizations engaged in over the course of the last year reflects our vision for the new climate movement as much as our policy recommendations. We believe that using a community driven process to identify priorities and ground analysis is the key to developing equitable climate policy. The actions taken from here, by community based organizations, government, or other actors must continue in this method of cooperation.

Through fundamentally changing the way decisions are made and putting equity at the center of our analysis we can create the best path towards a climate resilient future.

New models of community control are the solution our movement needs. Through implementing community-based participatory research, participatory budgeting and board governance we can begin to uplift approaches that go beyond engagement and move into community powered efforts. Using these tools, community becomes the decision maker, rather than a sounding board. Empowering community to decide leads to better outcomes and deeper community investment in planning and adaptation efforts.

The vulnerabilities in our communities are the result of decades of systemic exclusion from power and resources. To build resilient communities, we must address the root cause of vulnerability and build meaningful political power.

CLIMATE JUSTICE GLOSSARY

Cap and Trade A market-based approach to regulating carbon emissions, this system essentially allows corporations to buy and sell the rights to pollute. The "cap" limits the total amount of emissions, and is lowered over time. The "trade" allows emitters to trade for pollution credits if they are unable to or are unwilling to reduce emissions. While cap and trade is speculated to lead to an overall reduction in global emissions, it does little or nothing to address the fact that communities living on the fenceline near plants, ports, and other emitters will still bear the burden of pollution.

Community Land Trust (CLT) A nonprofit organization governed by community members that stewards land for long-term public benefit – not unlike environmental conservation groups. CLTs protect land from private speculation, as the land is never resold.

Climate Change Changes in weather and climate, include shifting weather patterns and more extreme floods, droughts and heat waves. Also known as global warming, climate change is the result of humans loading the Earth's atmosphere with gasses like carbon dioxide (CO_2) and methane (C_4) which intensify the greenhouse gas effect. Rising global temperatures are melting glaciers and making the oceans more acidic, which further impact human livelihoods and well-being. While many of the polluters responsible for climate change are located in the Global North, people and nations in the Global South will bear the brunt of climate change's impacts. Global North nations (known as "Annex I countries" in UN climate change speak) which include the USA and Western European countries, have historically emitted more than the rest of the world combined, even though China, India and others have been growing recently. Historically the Global North nations have counted for around 70% of carbon emissions, even though they have represented only 20% of the world's population.[57]

Climate Gap While climate change impacts everyone, not everyone will be impacted equally. Existing social, economic, and health disparities mean that people of color and low-income communities are both more likely to be affected by and have a harder time adapting to new climate realities. For instance, people of color in Los Angeles are up to twice as likely to die from a heat wave[55], and the cost of life-saving air conditioning may be challenging or unattainable for low-income people.[56]

Climate Justice A movement which makes the connection between our environmental and our economic crises. Climate justice focuses on the root causes of both– out-of-control global capitalism, deeply embedded structural racism, and other inequities– and calls for solutions which center the priorities and the voices of the most impacted communities.

Climate Resilience Climate resilience is often defined as the ability for communities and ecosystems to "bounce back" from extreme events and withstand the long-term impacts of climate change. This often looks like programs and practices that serve to maintain the status quo. In contrast, we think of climate resilience as "bouncing forward" to tackle the root causes of the climate crisis while creating more equitable, just, and thriving communities.

Community based participatory research (CBPR) A research method that centers community voices and priorities in the research process. CBPR changes the process from doing research on a community to doing research with a community.

Co-Pollutants Pollutants released alongside greenhouse gas emissions that are harmful to health and have local impacts.

Diesel Exhaust Pollution from ships, trucks, and trains that burn diesel fuel. In addition to greenhouse gases, diesel exhaust contains fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide. These co-pollutants are linked to higher rates of cancer, asthma, birth complications, and premature deaths in communities exposed to them. Over 13 million Americans live in these "diesel death zones," while another 45 million live along highway corridors where they are also at high risk. Numerous studies show that people of color and low-income people are more likely to be exposed to and suffer health impacts from diesel exhaust.

Disparity The likelihood that someone in a group (race, class, gender, etc.) will experience a positive or negative outcome compared to someone else in another group. For example, in 2010 the incarceration rate for Black men was 4,347 (per 100,000 U.S. residents), compared to 678 for White men – a disparity rate of 6.3. To put it another way, Black men are more than 6 times as likely to be incarcerated as White men.[53]

Disproportionality The proportion of a particular group that experiences a specific outcome, status, or condition compared to that group's representation in the total population. Using the same example, in 2010 Blacks made up 40% of the prison population but only 13% of the total U.S. population [54]– a disproportionality ratio of 3.07.

Environmental Racism Coined in the 1980s, this term refers to the disproportionate exposure of people of color to polluted air, water and soil. It is a result of structural racism and economic inequality, which relegates many people of color to some of the most toxic, run-down and unsafe environments.

Environmental Justice The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) The idea that investment in and along public transit corridors should benefit the people already living there. ETOD tackles the threat of displacement head-on by addressing the structural challenges that place low-income people and communities of color at higher risk for being forced out.

Indoor Air Quality The air quality within and around buildings, which has a significant impact on human health and well-being. Smoke, mold, and poor ventilation decrease indoor air quality, leading to conditions like asthma, respiratory illnesses, heart disease, and cancer.

Gentrification The process of remaking a neighborhood so that it conforms to middle-class tastes. Gentrification is driven by significant investment in amenities like transit, parks, and commercial areas. These capital improvements drive up property values and rents, pushing residents out of their homes and community.

Greenhouse Gases Greenhouse gases act like a blanket around Earth, trapping energy and heating the atmosphere. Over the past century, human activities have released large amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The majority of greenhouse gases come from burning fossil fuels to produce energy, although deforestation, industrial processes, and some agricultural practices also play a part.

Heat Wave A prolonged period of unusually hot weather. For communities who don't have access to air conditioning, cooling centers, or other means of keeping cool, heat waves can be extremely dangerous. Elders, young children, and people who are ill are particularly at risk.

Just Transition a framework and a movement which advocates for the community-led solutions needed to ensure workers' jobs and livelihoods as economies shift in response to our climate and economic crises. With an emphasis on building resilience and sustainable, democratic local economies, the Just Transition movement is transforming communities around the world.

Seattle Comprehensive Plan Seattle's roadmap for development in the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan is a framework for most of Seattle's big-picture decisions on how to grow while preserving and improving our neighborhoods. The plan guides City decisions about how to create new jobs, houses, public transportation, and where to make capital investments like libraries, sidewalks, and utilities.

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