

# Community-Supported Equitable Development in Southeast Seattle



Photo courtesy of Zac Davis



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## SOUTHEAST SEATTLE EMERGING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT COALITIONS COMMUNITY REPORT

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## SOUTHEAST SEATTLE EMERGING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT COALITIONS CONVENING REPORT

### Acknowledgements

#### **Special Thanks to the Convening Steering Committee Members:**

*Aileen Balahadia, MCC*  
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*Cherry Cayabyab, DON*  
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Finally, we thank the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and Community Cornerstones for their support in the development of this report.

### Emerging Coalitions Survey Respondents and Convening Participants:

**Seattle Multi-cultural Center (MCC):** A collaborative multi-cultural coalition of historically underrepresented communities in southeast Seattle.

**South Communities Organizing for Social regional Equity (SCORE):** South CORE envisions sustainable multi-racial neighborhoods in the Rainier Valley and South King County where all community members are socially included, economically self-sufficient, politically engaged, and are at the forefront of shaping the future of our city, county and region. Our mission is to be an organized voice for community-controlled and inspired development.

**Rainier Valley Corps:** A new project with the mission of cultivating leaders of color to strengthen the capacity of ethnic-led nonprofits and create space for collaboration between diverse communities to effect systemic change.

**Southeast Seattle Education Coalition:** Rallying communities of color and allies to support schools, students, and families in SE Seattle.

**On Board Othello:** On Board Othello is a coalition of SE Seattle community leaders and partners working together to implement a shared vision of community economic development.

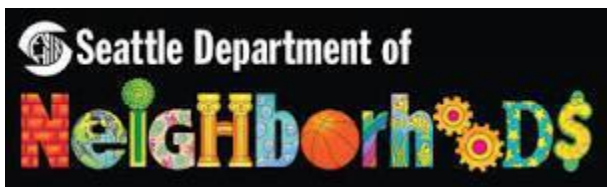
**The Coalition of Immigrants, Refugees and People of Color (CIRCC):** A multicultural, multigenerational organization dedicated to empower immigrants, refugees and people of color through civic engagement.

**Southeast Seattle Business Associations:** Columbia City Business Association, Martin Luther King Business Association, Rainier Beach Merchants Association, and Beacon Hill Merchants Association.

## **Partners**



Community Cornerstone Implements the vision of Southeast Seattle Community for their future as detailed in the neighborhood plans. \$3 Million from a HUD Community Challenge Planning Grant and 5.9 Million in local public and private sources funded a new model for equitable development that supports the existing economically and culturally diverse residents and businesses.



Seattle Department of Neighborhoods provides programs and services that engage people in civic participation, foster stronger communities, make government more accessible, and preserve and enhance the character of Seattle's neighborhoods.



Puget Sound Sage works to promote good jobs, quality employment opportunities, a cleaner environment and affordable housing for low/moderate income families in the Seattle metropolitan area. Our mission is to ensure that all families benefit from economic growth, and that local and regional policy decisions meet the social and environmental needs of our communities. Sage integrates organizing and policy analysis and provides timely, critical research on issues of the regional economy, jobs, housing and the environment. Find more information at our website [www.pugetsoundsage.org](http://www.pugetsoundsage.org), and our blog, [soundprogress.wordpress.com](http://soundprogress.wordpress.com).

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## Executive Summary

On October 9<sup>th</sup>, approximately fifty people participated from six multi-cultural coalitions, two foundations and four business associations and eight city staff from five departments were convened to share equitable development plans and accomplishments, deepen collaborative relationships and explore opportunities to coordinate ongoing efforts after the federal funding for the federal Community Cornerstones project ends in mid-2015.

Community Cornerstones stakeholders' sought to assess the project's impact through 1) a survey of coalitions and business associations and 2) a convening of these same groups. The University of Washington presented the most current population and income data available about Southeast Seattle, information for use by attending coalitions as they pursue their missions, serve residents and seek funding. Participants then gave feedback to the survey results and additional input on the survey questions.

Through synthesis of the surveys and convening notes from community coalition participants, several overarching themes emerged:

- Growth must be place-based and culturally relevant.
- Cultural anchors and community-supported economic development must be prioritized.
- Government entities need to understand community vision in order to facilitate positive growth and increase capacity to align programs and funding that make those visions happen.
- Community leaders need to be part of decision-making processes.
- Multi-racial, multi-cultural equitable development coalitions have emerged and are currently working directly with the city as a resource. These community organizations must be adequately resourced to take ownership of their vision and actively participate in shaping development.
- Community organizations expressed a desire for regional cohesion, and that organizations be adequately networked, working across cultures and sectors to become more effective, powerful and farsighted. Only then will meaningful change stem displacement and grow significant economic opportunity in the Rainier Valley.

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The survey received responses from the aforementioned coalitions and business associations in Southeast Seattle. The survey asked two key questions:

- 1) what success means for their coalition and**
- 2) their top priorities for their communities.**

This report provides a synthesis of the results from the survey and the convening. We also provide some analysis of the findings. Finally, we identify the following key recommendations that emerged from the evaluation for deepening the impact of community-supported efforts on equitable development in Southeast Seattle.

### **Community-Supported Economic Activity and Job Creation**

- Economic Development Resources
- Priority Hiring
- Adequately-Resourced Community-Driven Economic Development Plans Around Transit

### **Access to Resources and Capacity-Building**

- Capacity-building investments
- Partnership with the Regional Equity Network
- Coalition Communications Infrastructure
- Biannual Convening of Southeast Seattle Organizations
- Community Leadership Institutes

### **Meaningful Community Decision-Making Power and Thriving in Place**

- Create Community-Based Participatory Research Projects that Draw From and Increase Local Expertise
- Adequately Resourced, Community-Driven Economic and Affordable Housing Development Plans Around Transit
- Fund Community Development by Local Non-Profits
- Increase Affordable Housing Resources
- Tying Affordability to Re- and Upzones and Community Benefits Agreements

### **Infrastructure Equity**

- Increase Resources for Education and Priority Hire for Educational Professionals
- Equitable Investment in Public Safety Planning

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## Background

Southeast Seattle has over forty distinct ethnic groups, and it has often been dubbed the most diverse zip code in the nation. This is not by accident. Through the late 1960s, Seattle was a segregated city, and the Rainier Valley was one of the only neighborhoods where people of color were allowed to live. The University of Washington possesses evidence of the racially restrictive neighborhood covenants and deed clauses that were attached to most homes in Seattle during that time. Also, blatant exclusion of people of color from most jobs, most neighborhoods and schools, stores, and other institutions was rampant in Seattle for much of its history. Racial discrimination in Seattle targeted African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Mexican Americans, and Jews were targeted for ethnic discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

It is not a coincidence then that Southeast Seattle is the lowest-income and possesses the highest poverty rate in the city. Here, affordable housing and quality jobs are increasingly hard to find for low-income people and families, who are disproportionately people of color, immigrants, and refugees as a result of the history of segregation. However, the face of Southeast Seattle, and the country, is changing. As of 2012, a majority of the nation's infants are people of color, which now puts the white population of the country in the minority.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, Seattle is the fastest growing city in the country - average rents have increased even more dramatically in the past year and the trend does not show signs of slowing. Demographic changes in Southeast Seattle and South King County indicate that people of color have been displaced from their communities as the cost of living in Seattle has become unsustainable for them. As a result, low-income communities and communities of color are relocating to resource-poor suburbs while a largely white and wealthier population remains in Seattle. This segregative effect in major metropolitan areas are deepening racial disparities in this city – disparities we have long sought to change.

However, smart planning, policy and investments in the community can mitigate or even reverse this trend. The opposite of gentrification-fueled displacement is “prospering in place” – where low-income people and families can afford to stay where they are, access the region's economic opportunities and deepen cultural roots in their existing communities.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/census-minority-babies-are-now-majority-in-united-states/2012/05/16/gIQA1WY8UU\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/census-minority-babies-are-now-majority-in-united-states/2012/05/16/gIQA1WY8UU_story.html)

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## Current Context for Equitable Development

Community organizations and the City of Seattle have understood this need and have been working together to strategize ways to prosper in place for many years.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of light rail service was a catalyst for many planning and public investment efforts to achieve equitable development. The most recent examples are the formation of the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund, the process to develop the 2005 Southeast Action Agenda, and the Southeast Seattle Neighborhood Plan Updates. The latter directly led to the City securing \$3 million in federal funds to create Community Cornerstones, a joint equitable development effort between the City and emerging equity coalitions. The program is implementing community priorities from the Neighborhood Plans including 1) land acquisitions for affordable housing, 2) culturally competent, support for local immigrant, refugee and minority-owned businesses, and assistance for a community-led planning process for a shared multi-cultural community center (MCC).

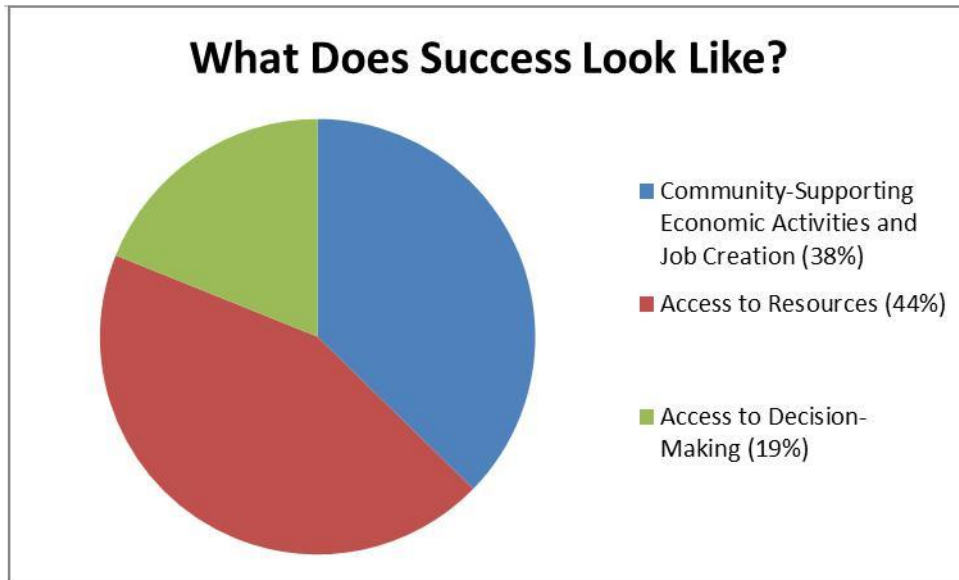
Immigrant and refugee communities generated the idea for a shared MCC during the 2008-2010 Neighborhood Plan updates. Community Cornerstones is now funding the project planning process. Through the City's Public Outreach and Engagement Liaisons (POELs) program the City hosted community gatherings, from which a steering committee of community identified leaders joined together for the purpose of collectively assessing the feasibility and plan for a shared MCC. The City provided participants with technical assistance opportunities to build organizational capacity. The process deepened intra-community relationships and identified multiple opportunities to advance the concept of "prospering in place" exemplified by a shared MCC.

As a result of the capacity built through this process, many of the organizations involved now lead and/or participate in multiple coalitions for equitable development, including the South Communities Organizing for Racial/Regional Equity, staffed by Puget Sound Sage. Other identified multi-sector/multi-racial coalitions include: Rainier Valley Corps (RV Corps), Southeast Seattle Education Coalition (SESEC), Rainier Beach Moving Forward (RBMF), and On Board Othello (OBO), and emerging alignments between these coalitions and the Southeast business associations of Hillman City, Martin Luther King, Columbia City, Beacon Hill, and Rainier Beach.

As the planning project is completed, it is important to understand the emerging picture of community-supported efforts (in addition to Community Cornerstones) that are advancing equitable development outcomes in the Rainier Valley and look for opportunities to coordinate and support each other's work.

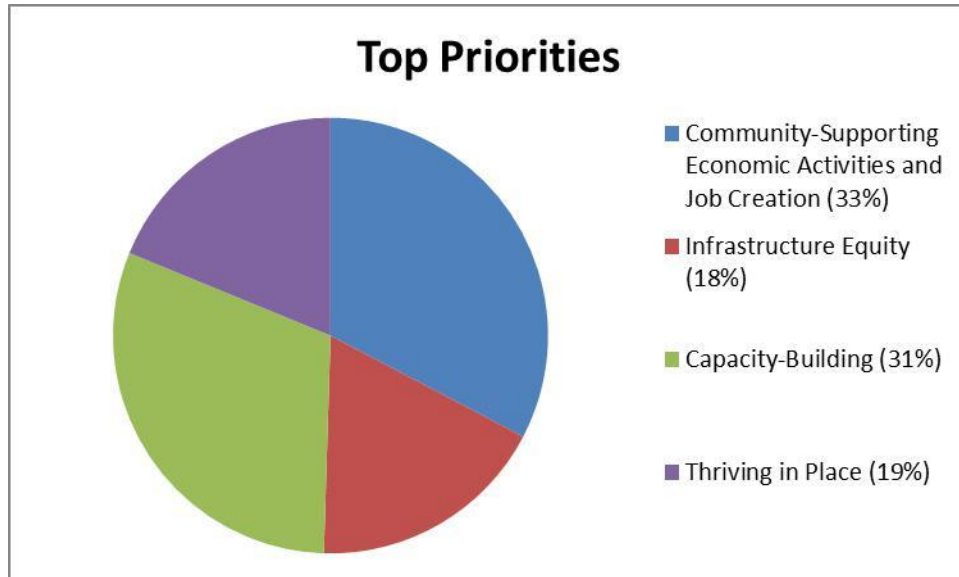
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<sup>1</sup> See Puget Sound Sage Report, "Transit Oriented Development that is Healthy, Green and Just," 2012



### 1. Community Vision: What Does Success Look Like?

When asked “what would success look like to you,” surveyed participants offered responses that we organized into three overarching themes (see chart above and table on page 5). We interpreted the responses and suggested outcomes that could get communities closer to success. **Note: the data for this analysis was drawn only from the survey, not the convening, creating some overlap with top priorities, below.**



### 2. Community Goals: What Are Your Top Priorities?

When asked “what are your priorities,” surveyed coalitions’ responses fell under four categories (see chart above and table below). We interpreted the responses to these questions as what outcomes were most urgent, implying short-term goals. The responses used for this analysis were drawn from both the survey and the convening. The categories are described below and defined in the “key findings” section on the next page.



## Key Findings

<p><b>Community Vision: <u>Successes</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Access to Resources</b> (44% of responses) Financial resources and infrastructure in place that can sustain multi-cultural neighborhoods and create opportunity, such as quality education/schools, as well as strong, resourced and collaborative organizations.</li> <li><b>2. Community Supporting Economic Activity and Job Creation</b> (38% of responses): Economic activity and opportunity that is highly targeted to existing residents and businesses.</li> <li><b>3. Access to Decision-Making Power</b> (19% of responses):  Community leaders and members have access to political and economic decision-making process</li> </ol>	<p><b>Community Goals: <u>Top Priorities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Community Supporting Economic Activity and Job Creation</b> (33% of responses): same as prior section, economic activity and opportunity that is highly targeted to existing residents and businesses.</li> <li><b>2. Capacity Building</b> (31% of responses): businesses, community organizations and local neighborhood associations need members and trained, empowered leaders to advance the desired outcomes of each community.</li> <li><b>3. Thriving in Place</b> (19% of responses): strategies and outcomes that would allow existing communities to thrive in place and not be forced to leave as costs rise in their neighborhoods.</li> <li><b>4. Infrastructure Equity</b> (18% of responses): this term is often invoked as a desired outcome in the context of broad inequality across sectors of development, but for the sake of this exercise we have broken it down to two sub-categories: public safety and equitable public services.</li> </ol>
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In the rest of this summary report, we highlight specific responses and make recommendations for next steps under the following, synthesized categories:

- Community-Supported Economic Activity and Job Creation
- Access to Resources and Capacity-Building
- Access to Decision-Making Power and Thriving in Place
- Infrastructure Equity

Note that we combined categories from the “successes” and “priorities” table under the same header when the recommendations that arise from each category are interrelated. Within each of the above categories, we then identify opportunities for additional research, available City resources, one-off projects and policies that could help achieve community priorities.

It is important to note that the desire for additional resources and capacity-building were **direct recommendations** by convening participants.

## Community-Supported Economic Activity and Job Creation

Thirty-eight (38%) of all responses to the question “what does success look like for your organization,” and 33% of all responses to the question “what is a top priority for your organization,” fell under the umbrella of **Community-Supporting Economic Activity and Job Creation**. In general, these outcomes are economic activities and opportunities that target and primarily benefit existing residents and businesses. These outcomes require a re-orientation of typical neighborhood-based business and jobs development to reflect unique cultural needs and address specific barriers to prosperity faced by low-income households and communities of color. For example, it’s not enough to attract investment that results in jobs – those jobs need to provide a living wage and be accessed by local residents to help build long-term economic sustainability.

### Key Community-Supported Economic Activity and Job Creation Responses

*“Economically self-sufficient. . .”*

*“Verifiable Increase in Local Job Growth”*

*“It will reflect its welcoming immigrant history, will generate innovative and equitable opportunities for current residents and businesses, and will attract new residents and businesses.”*

*“Our goal this year is to finalize our online business district map and launch our first retail/service event. Our intent is to bring the community together while building the business district to prosperity.”*

*“...to become a one-stop shopping location for our immediate residential neighborhoods; and to become a regional destination for arts, entertainment and dining. It will benefit those residents of Southeast Seattle that choose to visit and enjoy the Columbia City business district.”*

Interestingly, although Community-Supported Economic Activity and Job Creation was the top priority for respondents’ communities, Access to Resources (next section) was the top response when we asked respondents to name “what success looks like.” This could indicate that economic development and jobs is an immediate need, whereas long-term success of a community in Southeast Seattle is dependent upon access to quality education and resourced community organizations.

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**Recommendations:****Economic Development Resources**

The Seattle Office of Economic Development has several programs and resources that are already available to communities in Southeast Seattle that could be tailored even more to achieve the goals of emerging coalitions. These include New Market Tax Credits, community development funds, low-interest loans, and even grants, such as the “Only in Seattle Initiative,” which fosters neighborhood business districts that allow small businesses to grow and flourish, reflect the unique character of the neighborhood, empower business owners to organize around a common vision and attract investment.<sup>3</sup> OED is investing in neighborhood business districts in the Rainier Valley through its Only in Seattle Initiative, including On Board Othello, Columbia City, Martin Luther King Jr, Rainier Beach, Hillman City, Beacon Hill, and Mt. Baker, providing funding, technical assistance, and facilitating peer connections.

Larger, precisely-targeted incentives, grants and loans are needed to develop locally-serving businesses and attract family-sustaining jobs to Southeast Seattle. Financing options available for new businesses are not enough to incentivize growth in higher-needs areas around light rail stations. New Market Tax Credits and other loans should be expanded to incentivize sustainable, healthy, living wage jobs near transit. Additionally, greater efforts are needed to overcome barriers to credit for Islamic community-serving businesses, and facilitate understanding in mainstream lending of specific cultural business practices. For example, loans in compliance with Sharia law could help facilitate borrowing within Muslim communities, who make up a large population of Southeast Seattle and are at risk of displacement.

**Priority Hiring**

Priority hiring requires or encourages employment of people from geographic areas where a large percentage of people face compounded challenges to stable, living-wage employment. When family-supporting, career-oriented jobs are created locally, priority hiring ensures that they will benefit the surrounding community. Priority hiring can be implemented through policy or through agreements with developers and other entities (public and private) that create jobs. These programs increase access to economic opportunity, and provide “ladders” for those historically facing barriers to jobs to certain industries, such as construction. As a result of an extensive organizing effort by the environmental justice organization Got Green (a participant in the October 9th convening), the City of Seattle passed a priority hire ordinance that will require public works contractors to offer prevailing wage jobs to people from economically distressed zones.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle and King County could also follow suit, creating regional opportunity for Southeast Seattle residents.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web\\_informational/p2196607.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web_informational/p2196607.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.seattle.gov/council/issues/priorityhire/default.html>

**Adequately-Resourced Community-Driven Economic Development Plans Around Transit**  
Further explained below, in “Thriving in Place” section.

## Access to Resources and Capacity-Building

When asked “what does success look like,” 44% of all responses (the top response) from the survey fell under the umbrella of **Access to Resources**, which calls for the development of community infrastructure that can sustain multi-cultural neighborhoods, such as strong leaders and resourced organizations and coalitions. For long-term success of their efforts, effective coalitions require adequate resources, appropriate staffing, and committed organizations that can work together to achieve a shared vision. Many coalitions start with these in place but do not have the resources to sustain themselves and may not have a full understanding of the relationship challenges inherent in maintaining a coalition.

### Key “Access to Resources” Responses

*“Access to shared resources and partnership that comes from a strong coalition of immigrant and refugee communities.”*

*“Having a strong, culturally diverse, inclusive, and supportive membership that acts as a networking organization and helps to support local schools and community efforts.”*

*“An observable, effective coalition.”*

*“We will have a sustainable, multi-racial neighborhoods in the Rainier Valley and South King County where all community members are socially included.”*

*“Provide a forum for residents from Southeast Seattle to discuss the issues that impact them.”*

When asked “what is your top priority,” 31% of all responses fell under the umbrella of **Capacity-Building**. In the context of building community capacity to lead and influence equitable development work, it employs a variety of strategies to strengthen individual, organizational, coalition and funder ability to achieve success. Strategies can include sharing staff among organizations, recruitment of new members for business associations, community organizations and neighborhood associations, well-trained leaders to advance the desired outcomes of the communities they represent, or collaborative fundraising efforts.

### Key Capacity-Building Responses

*“Capacity building for schools and partners”*

*"It's so clear how important it is for funders to support groups, like those in the MCC, for their work and ability to reach the most vulnerable populations in our communities. But this type of funding is not easily found"*

*"Community Leadership Institutes" [defined as specialized, high quality training on how to advance community and equity priorities.]"*

*"Community engagement [includes grassroots organizing and membership building].*

*Large number of residents involved in community-building [to get buy-in and support of a large base of residents/stakeholders]"*

### **Recommendations:**

**Capacity-building investments** were cited as a priority among participants. Coalitions must be appropriately staffed and able to weather the challenges inherent in building lasting coalitions. Community organizations must be connected with additional resources to build their capacity as well, especially newer organizations that formed to serve newly arrived immigrant and refugee populations. These organizations cannot compete for resources against the more established nonprofits.

### **Communities of Opportunity**

Communities of Opportunity, a joint investment by The Seattle Foundation and King County, aims to confront the startling inequity in South King County, particularly around health, housing, and economic opportunity.

Communities of Opportunity will be used to catalyze investment in the Rainier Valley through furthering the work of community lead coalitions – Multicultural Community Center, On Board Othello, South Communities Organizing for Racial/Regional Equity, Rainier Beach Moving Forward, and the Regional Equity Network - plus, leveraging a Byrne Justice Grant to support youth development, a food innovation district to foster entrepreneurial innovation and health, and by steering land use and transportation planning centered on equitable development.

This cross-sector collaboration will leverage the combined capacity of participating partners and the community to influence policy for the fair distribution of opportunity in our neighborhood.

### **Partnership with the Regional Equity Network**

Southeast Seattle organizations cited regional cohesion and networked organizations as a priority, as well as the financial capacity and power to advocate for policy change. The recently-formed Regional Equity Network (REN) brings together organizations across the region to achieve racial equity outcomes by influencing decision-making and planning at the regional level. Among other things, REN is a platform for communities to set strategies and engage in solutions for a regional agenda for environmental, economic and social justice. It offers local

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organizations and community leaders a platform to bring grassroots planning and advocacy to regional policy and programs. In turn, those policies and programs can ensure resources make it back to Southeast Seattle. Many Southeast organizations are already members of REN.

### **Coalition Communications Infrastructure**

Organizations also cited communications infrastructure as crucial to regional cohesion and adequately networked organizations. Increased coordination and communication amongst coalitions was a major theme of the October 9<sup>th</sup> convening. Online communications infrastructure could be hosted by either the Regional Equity Network (see above) or, another community-driven organization dedicated to regional cohesion, like South Communities Organized for Racial/Regional Equity (South CORE).

### **Biannual Convening of Southeast Seattle Organizations**

The Community Cornerstones project revealed a need for ways to exchange ideas, strengthen relationships, and coordinate projects and campaigns to sustain the current multicultural movement towards equitable development in Southeast Seattle. One way to accomplish this is would be a biannual convening of participating organizations and coalitions, sponsored by the City but hosted by Southeast Seattle leaders.

### **Community Leadership Institutes**

Community Leadership Institutes (CLI) use culturally-relevant curricula to empower existing and future leaders of marginalized communities to participate in decision-making processes with policymakers. Graduates of Community Leadership Institutes are equipped to sit on non-profit boards, city commissions, and hold other leadership positions crucial to determining the success of development, and supporting community agenda. Currently, Rainier Valley Corps and South CORE/Puget Sound Sage are developing and implementing CLI programs. CLIs that advance Community Cornerstone objectives could be resourced with a combination of government and foundation funding.

## **Meaningful Community Decision-Making Power and Thriving in Place**

When asked “what does success look like,” 19% of all responses from the survey fell under the umbrella of authentic Community Decision-Making Power, which implies community leaders and members leading, strongly influencing and having meaningful access to political and economic decision-making processes as well as knowledge to influence them.

**Key Access to Decision-Making Power Responses**

*“Share political will, access to shared resources”*

*“All community members are socially included, economically self-sufficient, politically engaged, and are at the forefront of shaping the future of our city, county and region.”*

*“Understanding how the political process works from the Federal, state and local governments”*

*“Develop legislation or ordinances to respond to the needs of communities”*

When asked “what are your top priorities,” 19% of all responses from survey and convening notes fell under the umbrella of **Thriving in Place**, because many of the organizations expressed concern about the effects of gentrification and displacement. Priorities reflected strategies and outcomes that would allow existing communities to thrive in place and not be forced to leave.

**Key Thriving in Place Responses**

*“New development benefiting current businesses, helping current business grow and remain at Othello”*

*“Equitable transit oriented development at Rainier Beach station”*

*“Affordable housing policy”*

*“The importance of supporting, creating and maintaining cultural anchors in neighborhoods like the Rainier Valley threatened by gentrification pressures”*

*“Retain our small town friendliness in the face of substantial growth”*

To ensure economic growth and capital investment are aligned with community priorities and values, community voices need to be part of the decision-making process and working alongside city planners and developers. In other words, helping existing communities thrive in place requires a higher degree of local involvement in land use decision and plan implementation. It is not enough to involve community in a neighborhood planning process, they must also have influence in decisions that shape growth and change. For example, On Board Othello community voices became part of the decision-making process through local capacity-building. This was possible in large part because Homesight secured a Community Cornerstones contract to hire Aileen Balahadia and Peter Tran to create a process and structure that gave the community agency at the table to shape the On Board Othello priorities.

**Recommendations:****Create Community-Based Participatory Research Projects that Draw From and Increase Local Expertise**

Central to understanding a community vision for thriving in place is understanding existing conditions, assets and opportunities. Because gentrification and displacement are so difficult to measure and understand, Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) can be enormously helpful to both planners and community leaders in gaining a deeper understanding from impacted communities. CBPR goes beyond typical analysis of government data or top-down research design by actively involving community in guiding the research process. A CBPR is defined as “an interdisciplinary research methodology in which scientific professionals and members of a specific community work together as equal partners in the development, implementation, and dissemination of research that is relevant to the community.”<sup>5</sup> The type of information collected and synthesized from a CBPR can be useful in many ways, such as helping shape a culturally-relevant economic development plan for a region, identifying unique threats and challenges a specific community may face or better understanding the overall prevalence and impacts of displacement.

The key component to a successful CBPR is genuine community involvement at every stage of the development of research and interpretation of the results of a CBPR. Puget Sound Sage and Got Green, are two organizations currently in the process of developing a CBPR project to better understand the impacts of climate change and how build resilience to that change through public policy. Puget Sound Sage and South CORE are developing an anti-displacement CBPR, as well.

**Adequately Resourced, Community-Driven Economic and Affordable Housing Development Plans Around Transit**

Several community-driven plans for equitable development around high-capacity transit (such as light rail)\_have catalyzed in the last few years, much of it sponsored by the City of Seattle. As plans emerge, local coalitions need adequate resources to take the planning to a development stage. We have highlighted three below.

- [Graham Station Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Plan](#)  
Encourage Seattle leaders on the Sound Transit board, to develop the Graham Street Station, and specifically instruct Sound Transit to update its cost estimates for the planning, design, and construction of a Graham Street Station. Link community organizations with advocacy groups like Transportation Choices Coalition (TCC) and OneAmerica that have strategic

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<sup>5</sup> <http://aaspire.org/?p=about&c=cbpr>



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relationships and leverage with Sound Transit, Puget Sound Regional Council and King County.

- Rainier Beach Station Food Innovation District

This project, designed to attract businesses to the Rainier Beach Light Rail Station, was born out of the 2012 Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan and led by Rainier Beach Moving Forward, Seattle Tilth and Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands. Construction is expected in the next 5 years; however, additional public investment and incentives should be increased to attract the investment needed to support good-paying jobs in the area now. Growth is occurring at a rapid rate, and it is crucial that residents near the station are directly benefit from this opportunity.

- Washington Housing Equity Alliance Elizabeth Thomas Homes, Inc

The Washington Housing Equity Alliance (WHEA) are developing 75 units of affordable housing serving families between 50% - 60% AMI, at the intersection of Henderson Street and Renton Avenue just two blocks from the Rainier Beach Light Rail station. The project includes five floors of housing over commercial space that will be made up of property office, children's play area, commercial kitchen, Maker Space, restaurant/food cart and retail space. The project includes one, two and three-bedroom units to accommodate families.

- Othello Neighborhood Plan

On Board Othello, community-led and dedicated to fostering commercial growth in the Othello/Graham MLK corridor, is in the process of developing a strategic Community Economic Development Action Plan. On Board Othello should receive adequate public resources to strengthen the relationships, tools it has developed to weather gentrification and foster equitable economic development.

### **Fund Community Development by Local Non-Profits**

Development led by local non-profit agencies has several advantages, including permanent affordability, better alignment with community priorities and accountability and ability to prioritize equity outcomes. The City should prioritize State and local funding to non-profit organizations that are doing community-based development projects within one mile of transit stops. El Centro de la Raza, Washington Housing Equity Alliance, Interim CDA and Urban Impact's current projects are excellent examples of a combination of investments from local and state dollars along with a mixture of tax credits and other financing resources to create culturally relevant, community-driven mixed-use developments with affordable housing and child care.

### **Increase Affordable Housing Resources**

Current resources for low-income housing are greatly inadequate to keep pace with market rate development in Seattle. Additional programs to supplement the Housing Trust Fund and Housing

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Levy are needed to implement community driven development plans in Southeast Seattle. Potential resources being explored by some Southeast Seattle coalitions include:

- A linkage fee policy that maximizes market-rate developer contribution to affordable housing. A recent Council resolution proposes a linkage fee policy that would greatly increase overall resources for affordable housing, encourage some on-site performance and fund preservation of market-rate, low-income housing.
- Statewide policy that could generate new funds for affordable housing around transit stations, through a mechanism called “value capture financing.” The Puget Sound Regional Council is currently developing recommendations for this concept.
- A PSRC-funded affordable housing fund for TOD to build on the success of Community Cornerstones Equitable TOD Loan Program investments in Southeast Seattle.
- Agreements between private and non-profit housing developers.

### **Tying Affordability to Re- and Upzones and Community Benefits Agreements**

A combination of thoughtful infill incentives, rezones and community benefits agreements informed by community vision plans can stem displacement and encourage growth simultaneously. There are many national examples of how this can work well to anchor a community in place. Community Benefits Ordinances are currently being considered in other cities, like San Diego, and are being explored by SCORE for implementation in Seattle.

## **Infrastructure Equity**

When asked “what are your top priorities,” 18% of all responses from survey and convening fell under the umbrella of **Infrastructure Equity**. This term is often invoked as a desired outcome in the context of broad inequality across sectors of development, but for the sake of this exercise we have broken it down to two sub-categories: public safety and equitable public services.

**Public safety** can be achieved by investment in community services, but also smart urban design, especially around transit.

**Equitable public services** include public services such as quality education and a competent, culturally literate police force, staffed by a majority of members from the community in which they serve.

**Key Infrastructure Equity Responses**

*“Promote public safety.”*

*“Culturally-competent services.”*

*“Program for kids of color as educators.”*

**Recommendations****Increase Resources for Education and Priority Hire for Educational Professionals**

With the state legislature undertaking the implementation of the McCleary decision<sup>6</sup> the time is ripe to discuss how low-income communities and communities of color will benefit from new funding resources in education. This is outside of the scope of this report, however, and further research that focuses solely on funding of education in Southeast Seattle is needed.

**Equitable Investment in Public Safety Planning**

Investment by the city in a culturally literate police force, safety in urban design and community engagement in decision-making process of how the funds are spent.

As we consider community-supported development and ways to plan our city to keep people in place, we have to consider public safety and access to equitable services in our urban planning. Public safety planning in multi-racial and low-income communities requires an extensive amount of further research to increase social services and community-supported policing. Urban planning must address needs for culturally competent services and growing concerns around public safety measures that harm, rather than benefit, a community.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/publications/brief/overview-mccleary-decision-public-education-funding-and-reform>

## Conclusion

Southeast Seattle is home to many multi-cultural coalitions and business district associations that have similar challenges and hopes for the future. Many of them came together and have a strong desire to continue to work together toward greater coordination supporting one another's agendas. The surveys, convening notes and initial research gleaned from this process demonstrates how focused investments in community leadership and place-based strategies can strengthen partnerships between community multicultural coalitions and advance shared priorities of community organizations in Southeast Seattle. Organizations already conducting adequate research and organizing around anti-displacement should receive adequate investments to continue anti-displacement work in Seattle, including the coalitions mentioned in this report.

In addition to our near term recommendation for a Biannual Convening of multicultural organizations and investment in communications infrastructure for Southeast Seattle's emerging coalitions, we recommend further research that expands on the cursory recommendations highlighted in this report. This research and accompanying community process would culminate in a "Phase Two" Brownpaper, developed for organizations as a policy, planning, and implementation resource for equitable development in their communities.