# Climate and Displacement in U.S. Cities

Strong Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC)

June 9, 2020

"…We ignite not in the light,

but in lack thereof,
For it is in loss that we truly learn to love.
In this chaos, we will discover clarity.
In suffering, we must find solidarity…."

# Climate and Displacement Research

- Framing (SPARCC)

- What have we learned? (Literature Review - Urban Displacement Project)

- What people are doing (Practitioner Survey - EcoAdapt)

- How to do it (Addressing climate & displacement in Atlanta - Partnership for Southern Equity)

- Questions and Discussion (All)

# Key Takeaways

▶ Climate change, displacement, and inequity are connected to people.

▶ There is an opportunity for mutual understanding and support from leaders across sectors

▶ People, community ownership, resilient affordable housing are all integral to environment and development policy

# Investment without Displacement

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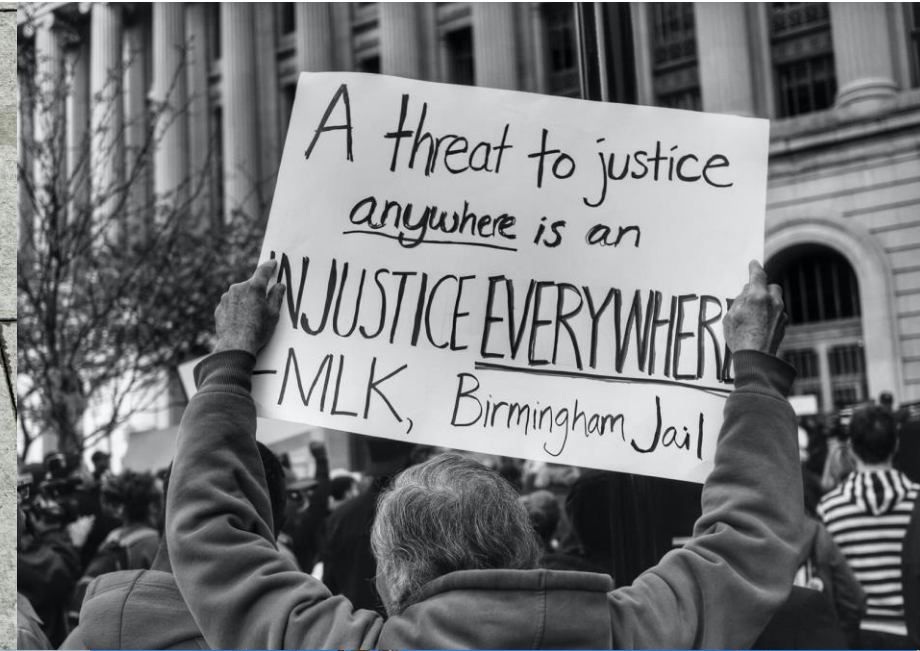


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# Climate Change & Displacement Survey



- **Identify strategies** that may reduce the impacts of climate change and displacement pressures
- **Assess needs** of practitioners seeking to address the challenges of climate change (e.g., better awareness/education, financing, other tools)
- **Document** examples from across the United States

- Affordable healthy housing
- Healthy food options
- Transportation choices
- Public health
- Social networks



Images: 5chw4r7z on Flickr

FACTORS THAT AFFECT DISPLACEMENT

INCOME STRATIFICATION & COST OF LIVING

DISINVESTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

RISING PROPERTY VALUES & ACCESS TO CRITICAL SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES & ACCESS TO LIVING WAGE PAYING JOBS

POLLUTION & PUBLIC HEALTH

STORMS, FLOODS, DROUGHT, WILDFIRE, SEA LEVEL RISE, EXTREME HEAT

**Climate change…**

One of several factors affecting displacement

Inequitable distribution of impacts across communities

- Health & safety
- Food and water contamination
- Food security
- Disruption or damage to critical services
- Stress on livelihoods (e.g., fishing and farming communities)
- Cultural and spiritual disruption
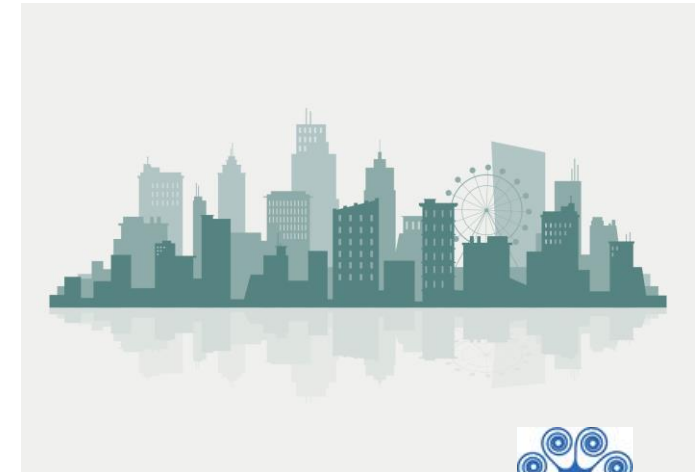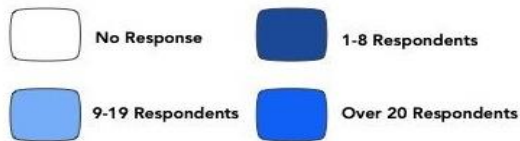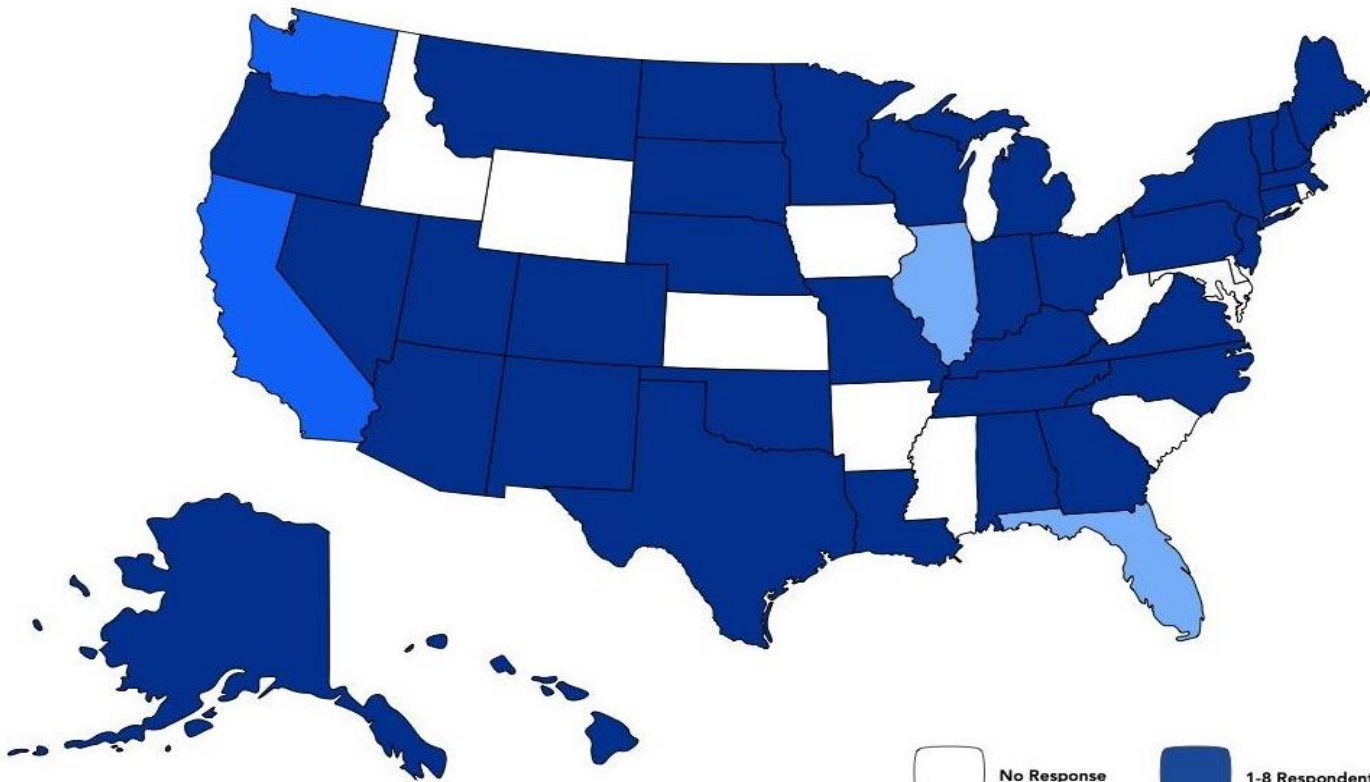
# What's in the survey?

*Demographics*
- Organization/agency type
- Sector (e.g., housing, utilities, etc.)
- Position type
- Geography
- Community size

- Level of concern about climate change
- Level of concern about key community issues (e.g., housing, cost of living, etc.)

- What **types of strategies** should be considered to support anti-displacement efforts in a changing climate?

*Displacement and Other Pressures*

- What anti-displacement activities may help increase community **resilience**?

- What anti-displacement activities may be **vulnerable** to climate change?

- What information and resources are **used** to make decisions and what is **needed** to better make climate-informed decisions?

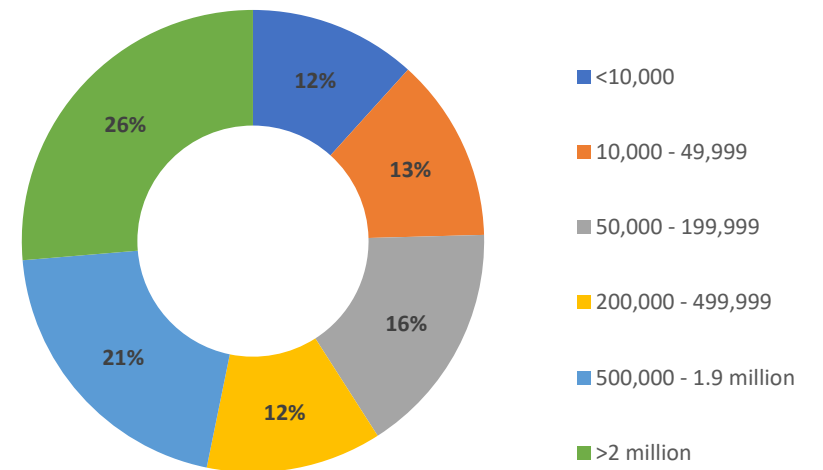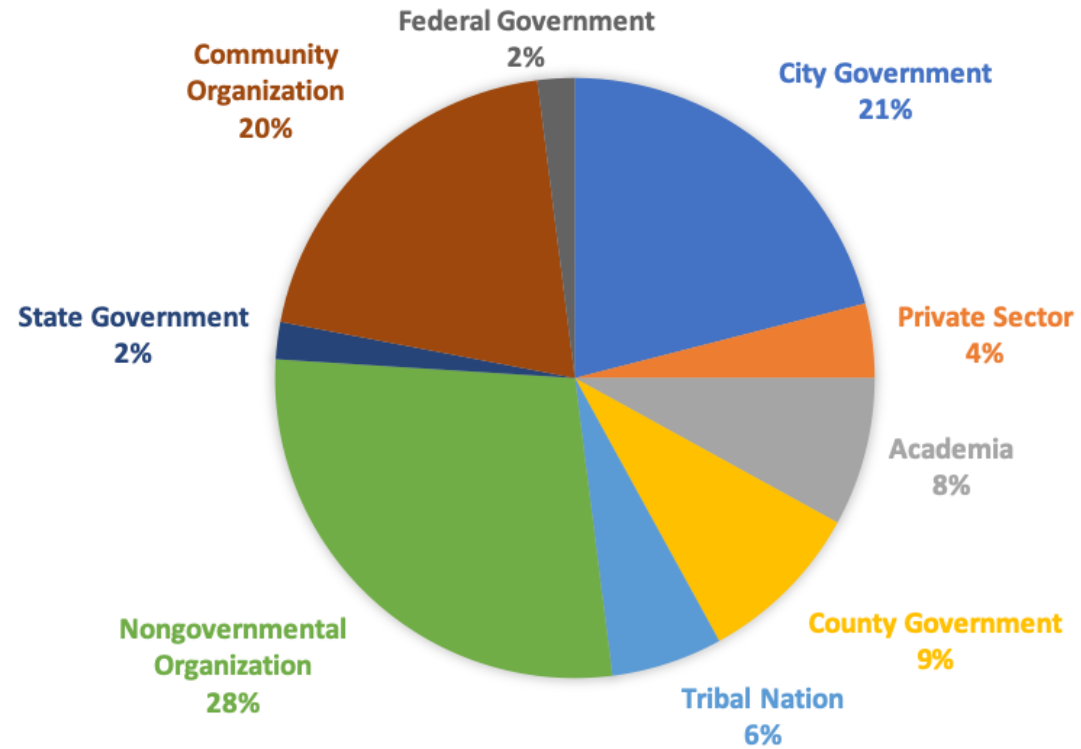- Are there specific **examples** of other climate-informed anti-displacement initiatives?

designed by freepik

States in which survey respondents work

**Legend:**
- No Response
- 1-8 Respondents
- 9-19 Respondents
- Over 20 Respondents

Federal Government 2%

Community Organization 20%

City Government 21%

State Government 2%

Private Sector 4%

Academia 8%

Nongovernmental Organization 28%

County Government 9%

Tribal Nation 6%

91%   8%   1%

Percentage of respondents who believe climate change is affecting their community

Population sizes of cities represented by respondents
- <10,000 — 12%
- 10,000 - 49,999 — 13%
- 50,000 - 199,999 — 16%
- 200,000 - 499,999 — 12%
- 500,000 - 1.9 million — 21%
- >2 million — 26%

# Have you ever considered the effects of climate change in your anti-displacement efforts?

## 64% Yes
## 36% No



**Climate action motivated by...**

| Motivation | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Concerns about climate justice and equity | 80% |
| Perceived threats to communities from climate events | 70% |
| Personal motivation/general concern | 64% |
| Observed changes in my community | 56% |
| A recent natural event (e.g., storm, flooding) | 50% |
| Community support or demand | 44% |
| Perceived economic threats from climate change | 42% |
| Access to new information | 40% |
| Available funding | 21% |
| Mandated by law/management | 11% |

# Barriers



| Barrier | Not engaged in adaptation | Engaged in adaptation |
|---|---|---|
| Limited time | 36% | 29% |
| Lack of funding | 39% | 55% |
| Insufficient staff resources/capacity | 47% | 54% |
| Lack of leadership | 22% | 38% |
| Current, more pressing issues | 53% | 35% |
| No legal mandate | 20% | 38% |
| Lack of stakeholder demand | 35% | 24% |
| Lack of specific climate information/data for my area | 10% | 14% |
| Opposition from stakeholder groups | 6% | 28% |
| Uncertainty about what will happen | 10% | 23% |
| Unclear about which options are available | 27% | 22% |
| Lack of access to information and data | 24% | 23% |
| Lack of technical expertise or assistance | 31% | 26% |

■ Not engaged in adaptation  ■ Engaged in adaptation

# Activities that may increase individual and/or community vulnerability…

**Baseline problems/community stabilization**

**Keeping frontline communities in place** next to polluting industries - impacts to air quality as days get hotter only make it worse for low-income communities. **If we are not addressing land-use issues and low-income housing in close proximity to polluting sources we're only digging our communities graves faster.**

"Persons who live in poverty or in areas of high minority concentrations may be the victims of extreme weather events followed by community reconstruction activities that **effectively force out the original poor, minority populations due to the high costs of rent and living**."

**Limitations in resources, including access to services and opportunities**

"**Limited resources (and concentrated wealth where resources are abundant)** are the biggest challenge because a lot of improvements cost significant dollars in addition to industry shifts. Anything that has to do with investment is the most vulnerable to climate change because it comes with so much baggage and politics that are difficult to deal with in a timely manner."

"Food availability programs are vulnerable to **rising food costs as climate change impacts production of food, driving up costs.**"

**Maladaptive practices that exacerbate vulnerability**

"Insurance policies that **allow rebuilding in impacted areas or that allow rebuilding without taking climate issues into consideration** leads to erosion of capital for re-occurring issues."

"Trying to help people remain in a neighborhood that is prone to flooding or other hazards is probably the most vulnerable activity. **At some point, the costs of remaining may become untenable.**"

"There may be some **complex interplays between climate mitigation and climate adaptation.** For example, relying on AC units to reduce public health impacts of extreme heat and helping elders stay in their homes will also increase the emissions for long term climate impacts."
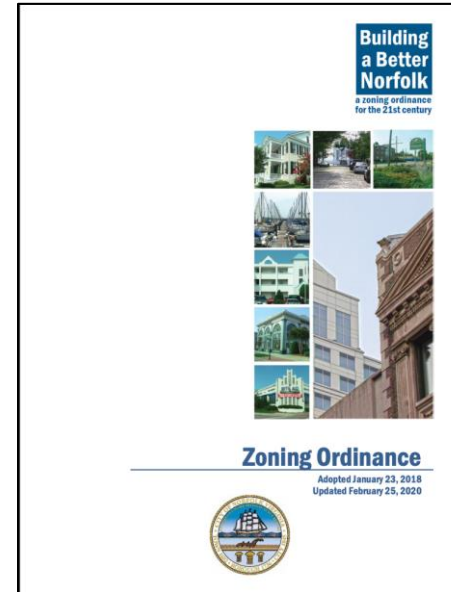
# Anti-displacement activities that may help to increase resilience...

**Infrastructure and Development**

Integrate climate change into design and retrofitting
Incorporate climate change and equity into community land-use planning
- Build in areas less vulnerable to climate change
- Create mixed housing developments
- Promote community land ownership
- Co-locate affordable housing with green space



Building a Better Norfolk
a zoning ordinance for the 21st century

Zoning Ordinance
Adopted January 23, 2018
Updated February 25, 2020

- Created "resilience quotient"
- Encourages development in low-risk areas
- Established "coastal resilience overlay"



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT



Grants Administration Manual

Measure A

**Policy**

Increase cross-sectoral planning and implementation
Increase flexibility in land-use planning and policies to accommodate relocation
Promote tenant and housing stability
Incentivize climate-informed development

**Transportation and Access to Services**

Improve and maintain access to services during extreme events

Incentivize public transit use

Climate-proof facilities

Expand access to local food sources in food-insecure neighborhoods



CENTER FOR RESILIENT CITIES
*Making cities better for everyone.*



USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map
Wisconsin
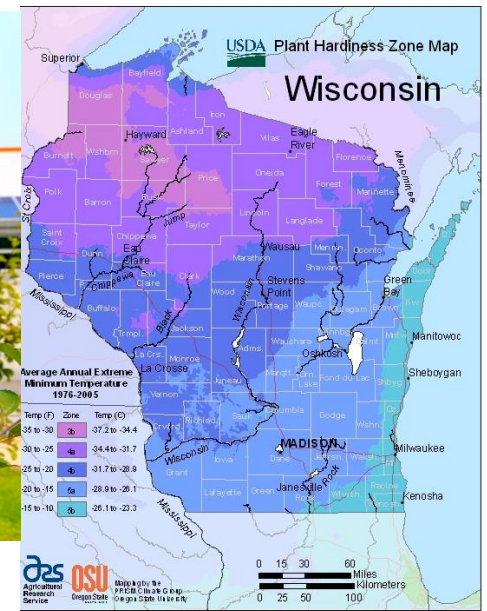


**Be a Buddy!**

When it's hot, make sure neighbors and family are in an air-conditioned place.

NYC Health

**Capacity Building**

Public education and engagement

Workforce investment

Technical and financial assistance

**Major Themes**

1. Temporary vs. permanent displacement within and outside place of residence

   "**Given the magnitude of climate change, displacement is unavoidable** and all activities should work to mitigate negative effects and increase co-benefits."

   "The issue will be **where to move [displaced individuals], how to make people whole financially, and especially how to provide** for renters and lower income and elderly homeowners."

2. Displacement out of and into areas and carrying capacity of these areas

   "There is an important issue of **where citizens will relocate**. Will that impact lower income neighborhoods? And where will rental housing be constructed to house displaced renters and low-income elderly?"

   "We are very mindful of the potential for climate refugees from other areas moving TO our reservation due to displacement in other regions of the country… **If people start to move to our reservation as a means of escaping less habitable locations, what does that mean for our culture, political interactions, enforcing our laws, and managing wildlife**?"

3. Opportunities for direct and indirect action using expressed barriers

   - Products pointing out the connections between climate change and displacement and options to address both
   - Direct funding and recommendations for funding opportunities
   - Technical expertise and assistance
   - Peer-to-peer learning networks

# Products

- Synthesis report
  - Climate Change and Displacement in U.S. Communities

- Case studies:
  - Los Angeles: Enterprise Community Partners
  - San Francisco Bay: Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative
  - California: The Greelining Institute
  - Atlanta: Partnership for Southern Equity
  - Atlanta: Southface Institute

- *Climate Change and Our Community* activity and coloring book

**Rachel@EcoAdapt.org**



APRIL 2020

Climate Change and Displacement in U.S. Communities

How Communities, Professionals, and Experts are Responding to Climate Change and Displacement

EcoAdapt // SPARCC

Cover Image: Denver, Alex Gray, CC BY 3.0
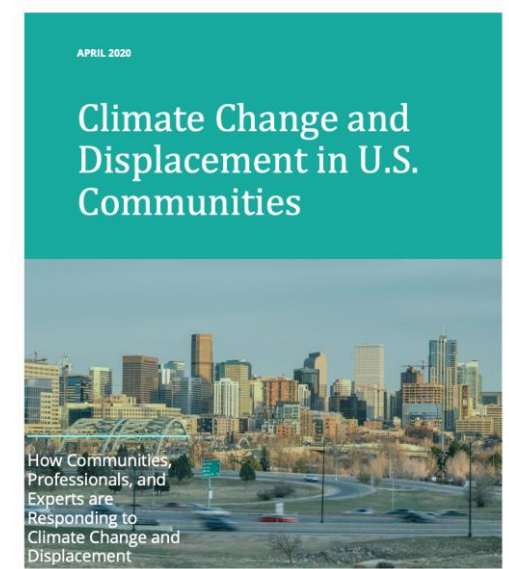
# Climate Change and Displacement in the U.S.

## SPARCC Webinar – June 9, 2020

Prepared by: Nicholas Depsky, Shazia Manji, Renee Roy Elias

UC Berkeley - Urban Displacement Project (UDP)

In collaboration with EcoAdapt as part of the SPARCC Initiative

# Presentation Outline

1. Research findings

2. Climate-related displacement examples

3. Research and policy implications

# Literature Review Scope

**Geography |** United States with some international contex

**Time Frame |** 1970 onwards, most literature from last 20 years

**Literature Sources |** Academic (primary), Grey & Media (Secondary)

## Themes of Focus

- Inequities in social vulnerability to climate risks
- Direct displacement due to climate

- Indirect displacement due to rising costs/neighborhood changes (from climate or M/A strategies)
- Disparities in ability to return to community/recover post-shocks

## Displacement Pressures

- Neighborhood Change
- Housing Affordability
- Housing Price
- Housing Mobility
- Property Values
- Property Appreciation
- Utility & Insurance Costs
- Evictions
- Displacement
- Right to Return
- Relocation
- Gentrification

## Climate Shocks & Stressors

- Sea Level Rise
- Nuisance Flooding
- Hurricanes
- Storms
- Extreme Weather
- Floods
- Extreme Heat
- Urban Heat Island
- Droughts
- Wildfires
- Landslides
- Climate Disasters

## Adaptation & Mitigation

- EE & Renewables
- Green Building Cert.
- Parks, Gardens, Greening
- Urban Growth Controls & Infill Development
- Brownfield Development
- Bike & Ped Infrastructure
- Transit-Oriented Development
- Bus & Rail Transit
- EV Charging Infrastructure

# **Key Takeaway:** Inequities in Vulnerability

Low-income and communities of color experience greater exposure and sensitivity to climate hazards and related economic stressors

➜ Proximity to hazards (e.g. floodplains)
➜ Substandard housing
➜ Insurance rate increases
➜ Drought and agricultural worker impacts
➜ Access to and costs of cooling

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URBAN**DISPLACEMENT**
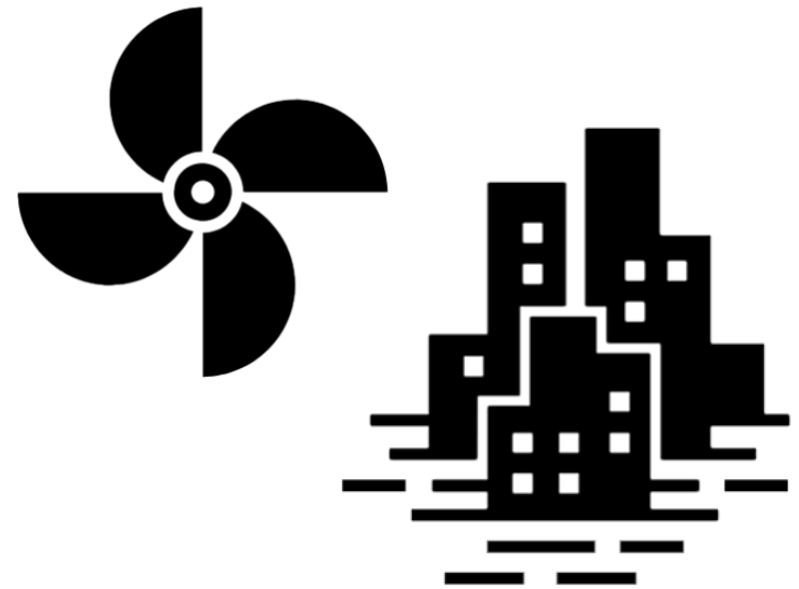
# Key Takeaway: Inequities in Recovery

Low-income and communities of color face greater challenges in re-housing and financial recovery post-disaster

- ➔ Recovery programs designed to restore wealth
- ➔ Housing stock shortages and rent hikes
- ➔ Redevelopment and neighborhood change
- ➔ POC less likely to be able to return

# **Key Takeaway:** Unintended Consequences

Climate resilience efforts and anti-displacement strategies can exacerbate displacement pressures for vulnerable communities

➔ Evidence is mixed, context-dependent
➔ Parks, TOD, EE & higher property values
➔ Affordable housing in floodplains
➔ **Coordinated resilience & anti-displacement efforts**
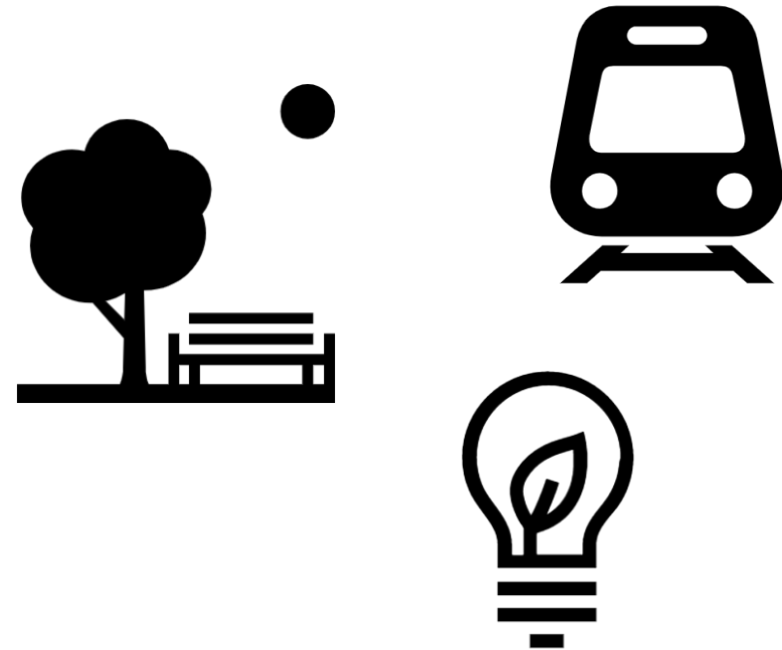
# Miami and Sea Level Rise

- Miami is highly vulnerable to SLR, nuisance flooding, storm surge (Miami Beach @ ~4ft)
- Higher elevation neighborhoods (e.g. Little Haiti, Liberty City) home to communities of color due to redlining, coastal exclusion
- Neighborhoods now appreciating in property value at 2x the city-average due to relative flood safety *(indirect SLR-displacement)*
- City response includes "climate gentrification/displacement" study, affordable housing bonds, inclusionary zoning

Projected Areas of Flooding During a Category 4 Hurricane

Graphic: Cla...
Source: City...

Miami Herald

TheInvadingSea.com / TheRealDeal.com
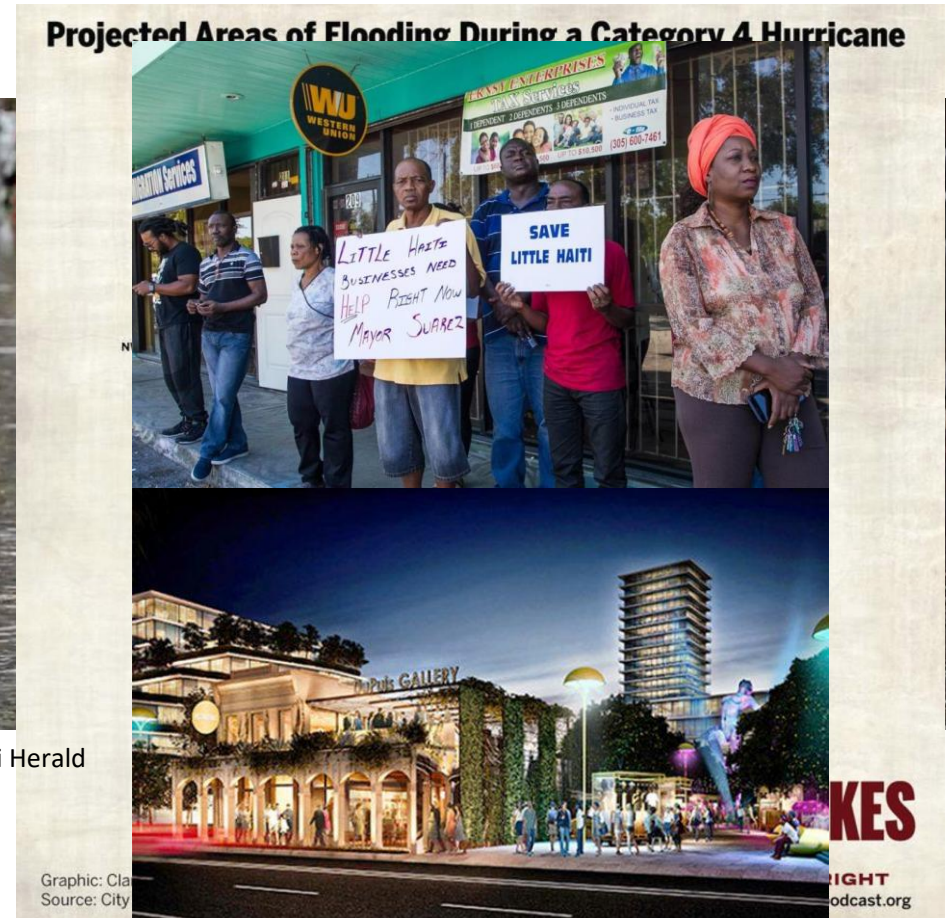
# Hurricane Harvey



Port Arthur, Texas, on September 28, 2017, in the wake of the destruction of Hurricane Harvey. David Goldman/AP

→ Low-income & non-white residents most impacted, partly due to discriminatory housing policies, poor flood protection

→ Harvey flooded or damaged 25% of public and LIHTC housing developments

→ Renters: Limited affordable housing pre-storm, increased demand post-storm

→ Owners: Mortgage loan delinquency rates, foreclosures

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URBANDISPLACEMENT

# Implications for Research & Policy

➔ Redesign of government recovery

➔ Equitable investment in mitigation

➔ Climate-informed housing policy

➔ Community-driven processes

➔ Just transition, vocational training programs

➔ More intentional monitoring and evaluation

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# Policy Spotlights

**01**    Community Land Trusts
- Help residents return, rebuild
- Ex. Caño Martín Peña in Puerto Rico

**02**    Disaster Pre-Planning (ie, Houston's Rapido model)
- Temporary-to-permanent housing
- Proactive planning and funding

**03**    Robust post-disaster renter protections
- Moratoria on foreclosures, insurance cancellations; rent increase caps

**Climate Change & Displacement**

**Kirsten Cook & Chandra Farley**

**June 9, 2020**

Partnership for Southern Equity

TOGETHER WE PROSPER

# Our Mission

The Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE) advances policies and institutional actions that promote **racial equity and shared prosperity** for all in the growth of metropolitan Atlanta and the American South.

| Just Energy | Just Growth | Just Opportunity | Just Health |
|:-----------:|:-----------:|:----------------:|:-----------:|

**ORGANIZING, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, COALITION BUILDING, RESEARCH & REPORTING, AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT**

# Atlanta Context

- Climate change and displacement is a prominent conversation in Atlanta
- The impacts we see are more infrastructure-based





Traffic nightmare as 500K people told to leave South Florida ahead of Irma

# PSE: Theory of Change Approach

Our community organization work is driven by the belief that:

1. Residents directly impacted by inequitable policies must be positioned to lead decision-making at the **beginning, middle and end of a process**.

2. Creating engagement opportunities is critical in shaping how the residents' public policies and practices will be influenced by the **wisdom provided by leaders of impacted populations**.

3. Due to vigorous engagement, new leaders, civic infrastructure and policy innovations can be realized that support better outcomes.

# Issue Area Circles: Some of our Shared Values

## Just Growth Circle

**Anticipate & Protect Against Displacement** - Partner with others to manage the impacts of increased surrounding property values on vulnerable neighbors.

**Heal Environmental Injustice** -

Prioritize investment in communities that have felt the cost and burden of poor infrastructure in the past.

## Just Energy Circle

Community partnerships are vital for the equitable progression towards self-sufficient people and neighborhoods.

Equity is the principal growth model for the American South.

# Circle Model: Building Capacity for Equitable Action during Moments of Opportunity

Equity, health, carbon footprint, resilience level

New infrastructure development

Retiring old infrastructure

**The city at any moment in time**

**Moments of Opportunity**
decisions about design, location, funding, hiring of projects
(fleeting, require collaboration to influence, unpredictable)

**Just Growth & Just Energy Circles**
Pre-building capacity: engaging, educating, organizing, acting

# Water Equity Task Force
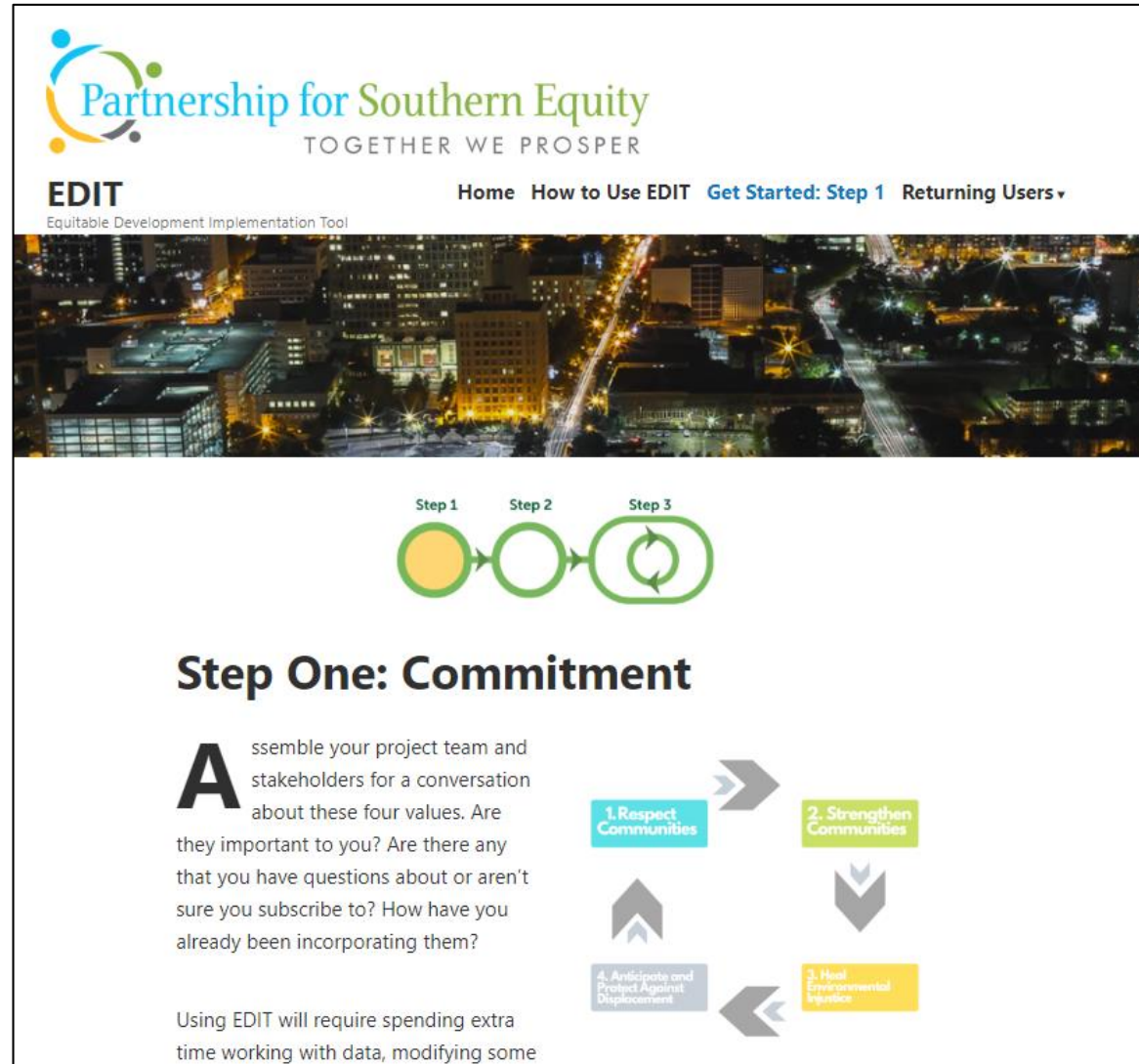




| FOCUS AREAS | CHALLENGES | PRIORITY ACTIONS |
|---|---|---|
| Shared Equitable Water Decision-Making | -History of mistrust and one-way communications<br>-Disproportionate impact of issues (flooding, infrastructure failures) | 1. Host community charrettes and expand stormwater roadshows<br>2. Support the expansion of the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network |
| Workforce Development | -High unemployment<br>-Wave of retirements | 1. Develop a hyper-local Workforce Benefits RFP as part of an Environmental Impact Bond (EIB) Pilot<br>2. Develop a strategy to find alternative workforce development funding streams |
| | -Inadequate Public Infrastructure<br>-Education and Awareness<br>-Land Use Patterns<br>-Electrical Grids<br>-Housing Stock and Maintenance Issues | - Stormwater Utility<br>- Post Development Stormwater Ordinance Overlay Districts<br>- Improving rating in FEMA Community Rating System<br>- Use findings from the |

# Collaborative Capacity-Building

Resident Leaders for Equity, TransFormation Academy, and Just Energy Academy

# Equitable Development Implementation Tool

# Equitable Development Implementation Tool



### Step Two: Assembling Background Understanding

Next you will need to gather some understanding of the make-up, history, and prior planning and design work undertaken in the community. This section of the tool will help you pull that information together.

**Environmental Injustice**

[EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#)

[FEMA Flood Map Service Center](#)

[Urban Heat Island Effect Map](#)

# Equitable Development Implementation Tool



**Step Three: Using EDIT Throughout the Project Duration**

– **Respecting Communities** –

Putting respect for communities into action takes many forms; EDIT focuses on four of them. Review these questions around any major decision-making.

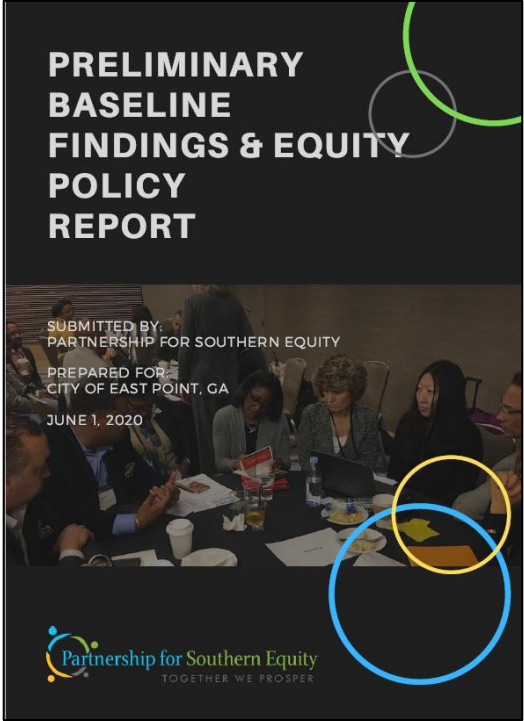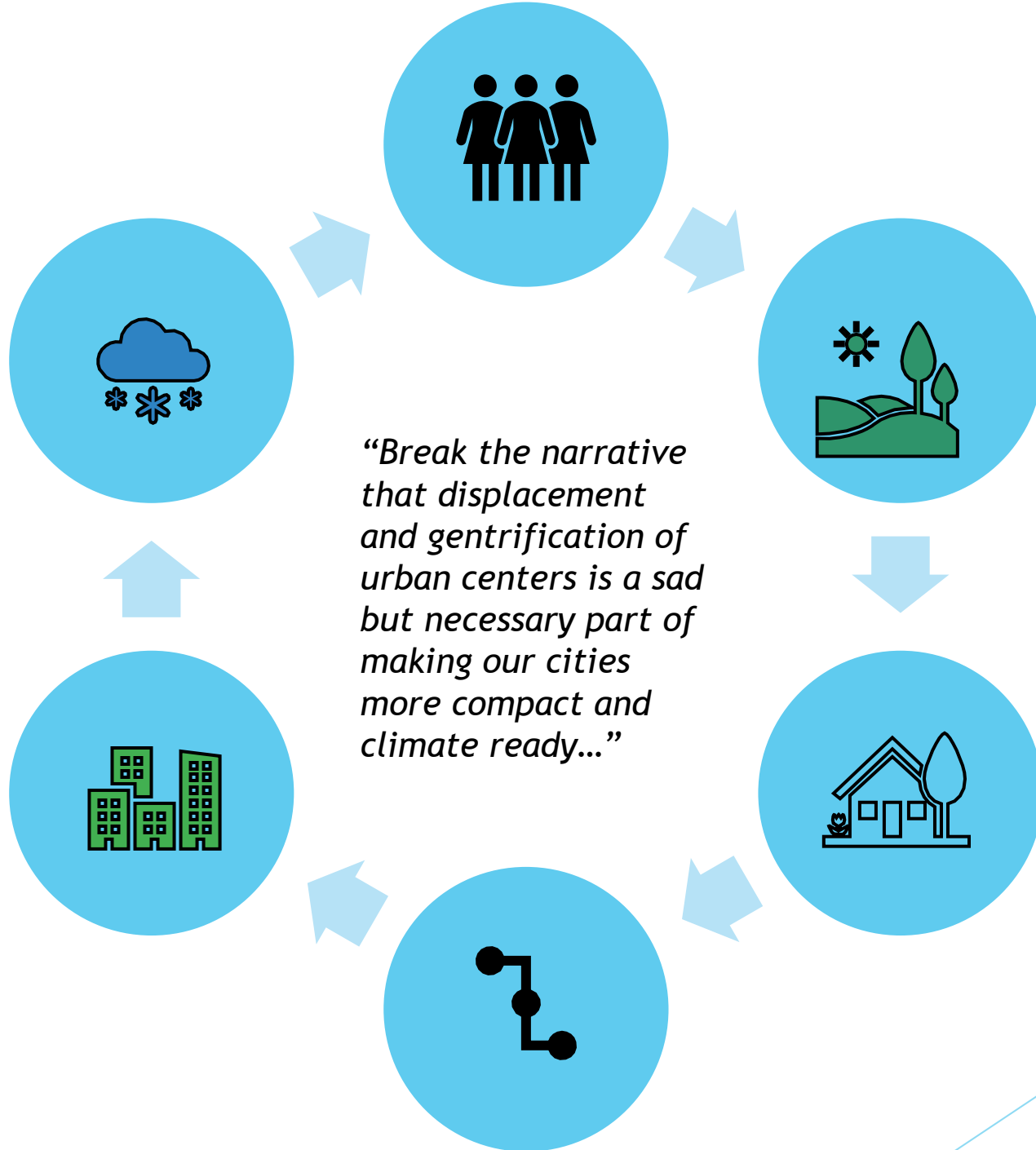| Review Before Decision-Making | Review Before Each Meeting | Review Quarterly |
| Review After Each Meeting | Strategy for Community Benefits | Strategy for Affordable Housing |

# Municipal Policy & Planning Development: City of East Point, GA

# Questions and Discussion

"Break the narrative that displacement and gentrification of urban centers is a sad but necessary part of making our cities more compact and climate ready..."

# Thank you!

- [www.sparcchub.org/](www.sparcchub.org/)

- [www.urbandisplacement.org/](www.urbandisplacement.org/)

- [www.cakex.org/](www.cakex.org/)

- [https://psequity.org/](https://psequity.org/)