Healthy Regions Planning Exchange

March 4-6, 2020
Ashé Power House Theatre
1731 Baronne St. New Orleans, LA 70113
Wednesday Evening, March 4

The Parlor at the Pontchartrain Hotel
2031 St Charles Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana

6:00 pm Opening Reception and Dinner (drinks and appetizers at 6pm, dinner at 7pm)
Welcome

- Kate Slevin, Regional Plan Association
- Cashauna Hill, Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center

Mingo Game and Prizes
(Exchange participants and invited guests)

Thursday, March 5

Ashé Power House Threater
1731 Baronne St., New Orleans, Louisiana 70113

9:00 am Breakfast

9:30 am Welcome and Introductions

10:15 am Ice Breaker: The Story of Your Name

10:45 am Peer to Peer Consults #1: Presentations of Change you Hope to Achieve

12:15 pm Lunch and time to view exhibits

1:15 pm Systems Thinking Exercise: Levers Toward Change

2:15 pm Peer to Peer Consults #2: Systems Thinking and Levers Towards Health Equity

4:00 pm Racial Justice and Our Unconscious Bias

4:45 pm Identify Optional Breakfast
Conversation Topics + Announcements

5:00 pm Close of Day: Adjourn to Hotel

7:00 pm Group Dinner at Carmo
527 Julia Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
Friday, March 6

Ashé Power House Threater
1731 Baronne St., New Orleans, Louisiana 70113

8:30 am  Breakfast and Conversation
9:00 am  Warm-up Exercise: Speed Dating - What Inspires me
9:20 am  Fish Bowl: Racial Bias within Planning
10:45 am  Break
11:00 am  Peer to Peer Consults #3: Influence for Change and Who Must Be Engaged
11:45 am  Rapid Coordination
12:15 pm  Regional Working Lunch - Workplan Development and Agreements
2:30 pm  Convening Adjourns
Cohort Progress

**JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION** Beyond Black with support from the Multnomah Health Department and other partners hosted an inaugural Juneteenth Celebration this past summer to celebrate the anniversary of the liberation of black people from slavery in the United States. The celebration in Vance Park included food, live music, performances, and connected families in the neighborhood to resources. The event helped serve as a moment to reflect and build community around the goal of advancing racial justice. More than 2,000 attendees including community leaders, youth and elected officials from both the City of Gresham and Multnomah County.

**TRANSPORTATION CRASH AND SAFETY EQUITY WORKSHOP AND RECEPTION** The Multnomah Health Department is coordinating a workshop and reception inspired by our Transportation Equity webinar with Tamika Butler. The workshop will take place at the Street Trust’s 2020 Active Transportation Summit to be held March 17 & 18 & 19, 2020. The workshop will focus on the impact of implicit bias, discrimination and racism within transportation and urban planning and design. The evening reception will provide a space for participants to share stories that shows the connection between transportation, transit equity, economic development, social cohesion and community as well support the effort to diversify transportation decision-making bodies to ensure experience of riders of color and youth are marginalized and/or create a community oversight board for all transportation bodies.

Regional Governance

Metro Council is the MPO for the Portland area including Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. They work with communities, businesses and residents in the Portland metropolitan area to chart a wise course for the future, focusing on issues of land use, transportation, and open space.

Other Governmental organizations include TriMet, which is the transit provider for Portland, bringing rail and bus service to the city and its suburbs. In addition to TriMet, several Portland City agencies serve a central role in leading regional planning related work, like Multnomah County Health Department and Home Forward. Also, the Portland Bureau of Transportation plans, builds, manages and maintains an effective and safe transportation system that provides people and businesses access and mobility.

Non-Profit and Coalition actors include the ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change) Coalition, which has laid the foundation for Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) since 2009. A group of multi-sectoral partners collectively envisioned: ending health inequities in chronic diseases for African Americans/Blacks in Multnomah County. Groups like Portland African American Leadership Forum, Coalition of Communities of Color, East Multnomah County Transportation Committee also play a role in shaping more equitable outcomes within the Portland Region.
Organizations

**BEYOND BLACK CDC** challenges themselves to embrace inventive ideas, develop practical strategies to provide day-to-day services to our residents, take nimble approaches that roll with change, and use collaborative approaches that allow us to do together what we cannot do alone.

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT** works in partnership with the communities they serve to assure, promote, and protect the health of the people of Multnomah County. In short, Multnomah County Health Department’s vision is: Healthy people in healthy communities.

Regional Challenges

In order to implement a vision for deep equity in the region, it’s necessary to create a community-wide paradigm shift in how policy and planning work is done in order to meaningfully engage community, work across silos, and make the investments necessary for this type of transformative change. Systemic and institutional racism and prejudice play a big role in this challenge.

The result of this underlying challenge are persistent issues with equitable access to transportation, housing, and economic mobility.

Representatives

**RACHAEL BANKS, MPA**, is the Director of Public Health for Multnomah County, Oregon. She is the Principal Investigator for Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH). Rachael oversees strategies to protect, assure and promote the health of over 700,000 people across 6 cities, including Portland. Rachael received her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Gonzaga University and her Masters of Public Administration from Portland State University. She has a proven track record collaborating with communities to address health injustices. Mrs. Banks demonstrates her commitment to workforce equity and has been a leader in supporting and advancing employees of color.

**CHARLENE MCGEE** is the REACH Program Manager at Multnomah County Health Department. A self-proclaimed Liberian-Oregonian, her experience as a survivor of the Liberian civil war and a Black immigrant heavily influenced her career. Charlene has more than 15 years of experience at the nexus of cross-sector collaboration. These leadership opportunities allowed Charlene to work at the intersection of public health and healthcare, to confront and influence the political and socioeconomic factors that determines population health. Charlene is a proud and active alum of Oregon State University and is currently pursuing an Executive Master’s in Public Administration at Portland State University.

**ROBYN STOWERS**’s passion for equity and institutional change led to a career in local government. She uses her position to bring diverse voices into public decision-making processes and assists people in navigating complicated bureaucratic systems. She also works internally influencing equity initiatives and institutional cultural change. Robyn majored in Community Development and Spanish from Portland State University and has a master’s in Journalism from Syracuse University. In her free time, she loves spending time with her Great Dane Baloo, traveling and Latin dance.
Cohort Progress

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION MEASURE Bay Area leaders and advocates are preparing to put a massive funding measure on the ballot in either 2020 or 2022 to raise funds regionally for critical transportation investments that can help make public transportation options more accessible.

REGIONAL HOUSING MEASURE AB1487 is a regional ballot measure that could raise up to $1 billion for affordable housing. Housing advocates want to create an affordable housing fund that would serve nine Bay Area counties instead of the existing piecemeal approach. The money raised would go toward tax credits and subsidies for affordable housing projects, updating of land-use or zoning plans, tenant services and assistance for cities to buy land parcels. Still, AB1487 would be a “coordinated, regional approach” to a housing shortage that’s pushed people into suburbs and rural areas, forcing them to commute long distances to work. The by-products of land-use decisions have spread throughout the Bay Area, as traffic chokes freeways, greenhouse gas emissions increase and homeless encampments pop up in areas once insulated from in-your-face poverty.

Regional Governance

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission is the MPO for the 9 county SF Bay Area, and they coordinate transportation planning and financing.

Other Government Metropolitan Planning Organizations: In addition to MTC, the Association of Bay Area Governments (created by local governments to meet planning and research needs around land use and environmental issues), San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission (a regional authority that works to protect the region’s shore line), and Bay Area Air Quality Management District (regulates stationary sources of air pollution) all work regionally across the bay area. The Bay Area Regional Collaborative works to coordinate these various entities to try to have a better understanding between them of what the others are doing.

Non-profit actors and coalitions: SPUR is a non-governmental, non-profit that does research and policy advocacy regionally around issues of transportation, housing, and economic development. Urban Habitat is a non-profit that does regional policy and advocacy work around transportation, environmental, and housing justice. TransForm promotes walkable communities with excellent transportation choices to connect people of all incomes to opportunity, keep California affordable, and help solve our climate crisis. Also, Bay Area Rising, a network of artists, spiritual leaders, and activists dedicated to ending violence against women and girls, does a lot of organizing around community-based issues.
**Representatives**

**BOB ALLEN** (he/him/his) joined Urban Habitat in 2007. In 2009, he helped lead the successful civil rights campaign to stop the use of $70 million in federal stimulus funds for the Oakland Airport Connector project and in 2013 supported the successful free youth transit campaign in San Francisco. More recently he’s led Urban Habitat’s coalition work developing a regional transportation funding measure for the Bay Area. His background includes community planning in the United States and internationally, labor organizing, and advocacy with refugee and immigrant communities. Bob received his Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s in Public Policy from Rutgers University.

**KRISTY WANG** (she/her) leads SPUR’s work in community planning and housing, splitting her time between San Francisco and San Jose. She is the author of It Takes a Village, strategies for implementing San Jose’s urban village plans, and co-author of Room for More, SPUR’s housing agenda for San Jose, and Cracking the Code, SPUR’s recommendations on zoning and code reform in San Jose’s urban growth areas. Prior to joining SPUR, Kristy was a project manager at BRIDGE Housing Corporation, one of California’s largest affordable housing developers. She currently sits on the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation Board of Directors and teaches courses on urban development and affordable housing at Stanford University and San Francisco State University. Kristy earned master’s degrees in city planning and real estate development from MIT and a bachelor’s degree in architecture and urban studies from Yale.

**Organizations**

**SPUR** Through research, education and advocacy, SPUR works to promote good planning and good government in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**URBAN HABITAT** works to democratize power and advance equitable policies to create a just and connected Bay Area for low-income communities and communities of color. We confront structural inequities impacting historically disenfranchised communities. Through strategic partnerships, we support increasing the power and capacity in low-income communities and communities of color.

**Regional Challenges**

The failure of regional planning to address the region’s lack of affordable housing and rapidly increasing displacement of low-income, black, and brown communities which is also undermining our climate change goals. Affordable housing production and preservation needs to happen in an equitable framework that considers racial, economic, and geographic factors.

In addition, this region sees an increasingly fragmented transportation system under pressure from private mobility companies and the re-emergence of the car as the foundation of our transportation system. The region lacks transportation coordination of fares, schedules, routes, and investment as a result of poor governance and the regressive nature of funding sources for regional transportation and housing bonds.

Another issue is the land fiscalization and negative incentives due to California’s tax laws.
Cohort Progress

OUTREACH & COALITION BUILDING ACT-LA has been doing outreach to community groups, including local civic leadership, environmental and faith-based groups, as well as labor unions and neighborhood councils to collaborate on inclusive planning advocacy and equitable development policies at the city, regional and state levels. ACT-LA and our partners want to explore different policies to promote a more equitable community planning process, and also develop effective messaging to communicate and build consensus across different stakeholders. Additionally, ACT-LA is working to implement the Metro Transit Oriented Communities Policy, a policy adopted by LA’s regional transportation agency that commits the agency’s support for community stabilization, anti-displacement measures, and affordable housing production in transit corridors and cities receiving new transit investments. Our coalition is advocating for funding grants and technical assistance for local cities to do inclusive land use planning and adopt tenant and community stabilization policies.

EQUITABLE COMMUNITY PLANNING Los Angeles City Planning Department is in the process of updating its outdated zoning code, General Plan, and 35 Community Plans which guide policy and land use in Los Angeles’s neighborhoods. The City updates the Community Plans periodically to reflect changes in the areas they govern, ensuring the plans remain effective tools for guiding growth and development. Together, the 35 Community Plans make up the Land Use Element of the City of Los Angeles’s General Plan, the policy document that expresses the City’s vision of the future. Through capacity building trainings and community meetings, ACT-LA and East LA Community Corporation are working with resident leaders and local community groups to ensure that the Community Plans reflect the needs of current residents and center the discussion on racial equity and inclusivity.

Regional Governance

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the Los Angeles MPO, Council of Governments, and Regional Transportation planning agency. They develop long range regional plans mainly for transportation but also for economic development. SCAG plays a major role as a regional planning agency for 6 counties in Southern California, they are not the decision-making body that can generate sweeping policies for our region. SCAG acts as a research and planning agency, and their Governing Board can develop and adopt resolutions, but does not create and adopt binding policies.

LA Metro, the transit agency for LA County, is a key and powerful agency in the greater LA region and are leading LA’s $160 billion transit expansion efforts in LA County. The other key players in LA are the LA County Board of Supervisors who serve the 10 million+ residents of LA County, and are the direct representatives of the Unincorporated neighborhoods of LA County (meaning areas of LA that are not part of one of the 88 individual jurisdictions in LA County and have no formal local representation); the Housing + Community Investment Department of the City of LA, which is a key player in the implementation of affordable housing programs and policies; and of course, the LA City Council, who have a powerful role in all local housing, transit, and health policies for the City of LA.

ACT LA works regionally to ensure that LA becomes a transit-rich city where all people have access to quality jobs, affordable housing, necessary social services, ample transportation options, and a voice in decision-making. LA Thrives is a collaborative of organizations committed to equitable TOD that protects the social fabric of neighborhoods.
Representatives

CARMINA CALDERÓN (she/her) is a Community Organizer at the East LA Community Corporation (ELACC), a non-profit organization that advocates for housing and socio-economic justice in the Los Angeles Eastside. Carmina is the lead organizer for ELACC’s equitable development organizing work in transit-oriented areas in the neighborhood of Boyle Heights. She convenes community leaders every month to track the development of affordable housing on Metro-owned land and to help build their knowledge on other Transit Oriented Development and Equitable Planning issues. Carmina also co-chairs the Organizing Committee of the Alliance for Community Transit-LA (ACT-LA) a coalition of diverse community organizations that has helped pass policies that support more development of affordable housing near transit and won the inclusion of equity goals within Metro’s Transit Oriented Communities Program.

MARIANA HUERTA JONES is the Campaign & Communications Manager with Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles (ACT-LA). At ACT-LA, Mariana leads the coalition’s equitable community planning program and builds capacity for local groups to engage in city land use planning and advocacy processes. She also leads ACT-LA’s communications strategy. She has over 13 years experience as a community organizer, researcher, and policy advocate working on economic justice and anti-displacement campaigns. Mariana holds a Masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning from UCLA, and a BA in Feminist Studies from Stanford University.

Regional Challenges

A big challenge is LA’s geography: it is an extremely large region, so it is very challenging to coordinate transformational, equitable planning efforts at a large-scale.

While many LA elected officials talk the good talk about addressing the city’s planning challenges, they won’t take bold action and lack the political will needed to tackle our region’s housing affordability and homelessness crises. It is widely known that our elected officials are very developer friendly, and will push back on communities’ demands in favor of developer/investor desires.

Related, policies that consider our communities are often add on measures, rather than the central core of the policy. As well, the lack of accountability leads to weakened commitment to implementation of community identified priorities once policies are passed.

Organizations

ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TRANSIT (ACT-LA)
As a broad coalition of economic and environmental justice, active transportation, tenants’ rights, affordable housing, and faith-based organizations, ACT-LA envisions a Los Angeles that is a transit-rich city where all people have access to stable homes, quality jobs, ample transportation options, and a voice in decision-making. We are building a sustainable city through the reduction of toxic air pollution, the promotion of public health, and the strengthening of community culture and heritage.

EAST LA COMMUNITY CORPORATION works to advocate for economic and social justice in Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles by building grassroots leadership, developing affordable housing and neighborhood assets, and providing access to economic development opportunities for low and moderate income families.
Cohort Progress

THE WELLNESS EQUITY INITIATIVE AND LAKOTA LIFEWAYS TVCDC is planning and launching its Lifeways and Wellness Equity Division which will be an interwoven guide for staff and community to incorporate wellness into the everyday work of community building. In addition, they have created a Lakota “Lifeways” framework as opposed to “Culture” because culture has a negative connotation and the Lakota language does not have a direct translation. Lakota Lifeways is about a way of life. This initiative will launch at the end of March to help provide healing pathways and opportunities for community members.

ADDRESSING RACIALIZED TRAUMA TVCDC is partnering with Rapid City Police Department (RCPD) to address racialized trauma. They are working with Resmaa Menakem, author of My Grandmother’s Hands, to examine the damage caused by racism in America from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology. By working with the RCPD, TVCDC is setting an important example for how to motivate culture shifts in entrenched institutions.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe’s government is comprised of a twenty-member council, who are elected officials in accordance with the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

The Executive Officers of the Council are the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Primary elections are held in October and the General election in November every two years.

Council members serve a term of two years. There are nine election districts on the reservation. One representative is elected for every 1,000 tribal members.

The districts are as follows; Eagle Nest District, Pass Creek District, LaCreek District, Wounded Knee District, Porcupine District, Wakpamni District who all have two council representatives and Medicine Root District and Pine Ridge Village who have three council representatives. Julian Bear Runner President; Ricky Gray Grass: OST 5th Member; Thomas Poor Bear: Vice-President; Jennifer Spotted Bear: Secretary; Mason Big Crow: Treasurer.
Organizations

THUNDER VALLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (TVCDC) envisions a liberated Lakota nation through our Lakota language, culture and spirituality. We have developed a comprehensive, innovative, and grassroots approach to collaborating with and empowering Lakota youth and families to improve the health, culture and environment of our communities, through the healing and strengthening of cultural identity. Through our nine holistic and comprehensive initiatives, TVCDC has designed and is continually building our very own exercise of sovereignty and self-sufficiency.

Regional Challenges

A big challenge is how to create culture and mindset shift in individuals, families, and communities when there is a pervasive sense of apathy and hopelessness. These attitudes and beliefs have deep roots in the colonization, oppression and dehumanization of our people but nonetheless they exist and in order for us to effectuate our vision and mission, we need to move the dial in our communities from survival mode to actual vitality.

In addition, there is a regional need to develop economic development strategies and securing increased financial resources to execute the region’s expressed needs for more housing and infrastructure.

Representatives

LYNN CUNY As the Deputy Director at TVCDC Lynn is committed to the progress of building opportunities, the movement of systematic change and the sustainability of TVCDC community. Lynn M. Cuny obtained her Master of Arts degree in Lakota Leadership and Management. Her undergraduate degrees include Lakota Studies, Fine Art, and Early Childhood Development. Lynn has over 20 years of experience working for Native programs. Her expertise includes education, health and culture. She has been a recipient of the Healthy Native Communities Fellowship, Director of the Year, Community Outreach, Wellness Warrior, and IHS Directors Award. Lynn is a board member of Native POP, Oaye Luta Okolakiciye, and the Red Ribbon Skirt Society. Lynn is an enrolled member of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe and Oglala Lakota. Oyate Waokiyanwin emaciyapi ye, her Lakota name is “She Helps Her People”. Her passion is helping her people by following Lakota protocol and continuing teachings to the next generation.

DECORA HAWK is Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, and Hochunk from the South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin areas. DeCora attended OLC and graduated summa cum laude with a Lakota Language Certificate, AA in Tribal Law, AA in Lakota Studies, and BA in Lakota Studies with emphasis in Indian Law. She also attended the University of Oklahoma College of Law graduated with an MLS in Indigenous Peoples Law. DeCora is the Community Engagement Director for Thunder Valley CDC, an Indigenous non-profit organization on the Pine Ridge Reservation, seeking to lead systemic change through the development of a regenerative community.

TATEWIN MEANS is from the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota, Oglala Lakota, and Inhanktonwan nations in South Dakota. Ms. Means received a BS from Stanford University in Environmental Engineering, JD with a concentration in Human Rights Law from the University of Minnesota Law School and a Master of Arts in Lakota Leadership and Management from Oglala Lakota College. Tatewin served as the Attorney General for the Oglala Sioux Tribe from 2012-2017 and was also a German Marshall Fund Marshall Memorial Fellow in 2015. Tatewin is the Executive Director of Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation, an Indigenous non-profit organization on the Pine Ridge Reservation, seeking to lead systemic change through the development of a regenerative community.
Cohort Progress

**REGIONAL EQUITY AGENDA** The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Frogtown Neighborhood Association, New American Development Center, and their partners recently released the Equity in Place Policy Agenda for 2019-2020 which advances housing justice and equitable development by leading with race to grapple with how inequities of power yield inequitable outcomes. Their framework built on the pillars of power, placement, protection, preservation, and production focuses on housing access, housing stability, community ownership, and community investment.

**FROGTOWN SMALL AREA PLAN UPDATE** Frogtown is in a revisioning process with “Development without Displacement” at top of mind, thanks to discussions within the Exchange. Frogtown’s Small Area Plan (SMAPL) has been a model within the Exchange of how to engage with communities, city agencies, and developers to push for a community representative of the people there currently. Utilizing art, like murals on the thoroughfares in Frogtown, has helped them activate and educate.

**EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND SCORECARD** The Alliance is updating their Equitable Development Principles and Scorecard with the added aspect of livability, access, and safety to shift and expand the values expressed in developments. The purpose is to ensure equitable development is inclusive and representative of BIPOC cultures and people.

Regional Governance

Metropolitan Council is the regional policy-making body and planning agency for the Twin Cities, and its mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for the region. MC also operates Metro Transit which provides 95% of the bus trips in the twin cities and operates a commuter rail line and light rail transit.

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), which is a board of Metropolitan Council, is a key participant in the region’s transportation planning process. TAB was created by the state legislature in 1974 to perform transportation planning and programming for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, as designated by state and federal law. The transportation planning process is based on Minnesota statutes and federal rules and regulations on urban transportation planning. As the region’s federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) the Council and the TAB are responsible for the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition of community based organizations building shared power to influence regional policy towards just outcomes. The Alliance’s member organizations all play an active role in this work, including in the Equity in Place group which influences planning and investments to ensure that people of color and low-wealth people have a role in shaping the Twin Cities. Move Minnesota works to ensure every community has choices for getting around through advocacy, education, and community engagement. African Career, Education and Resource (ACER) is a non-profit that engages African immigrants living in the suburbs of Minneapolis to advance equity and eliminate disparities for this community. Other non-profit actors include the Sierra Club - North Star Chapter, Housing Justice Center, and the University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.
Representatives

**ASAD ALIWEYD** is the Founder and Executive Director of the New American Development Center. Asad wants to develop transformative ways for Muslim people to build wealth. He believes a new, culturally responsive financing infrastructure that addresses current barriers can advance the economic well-being of Muslim Americans in Minnesota and beyond. He seeks to bring change to financial institutions that deal with diverse communities. Asad was selected as a 2018 Bush Fellow.

**JOOHEE POMPLUN** joined the Alliance staff in 2017. Joo Hee was formerly the director of policy and advocacy at Asian Economic Development Association where she worked with Asian communities and small businesses to open opportunities for wealth building. Joo Hee founded the Health Equity Working Committee, a coalition of community-based organizations advancing health equity. She also served as the executive director of the Minnesota Asian/American Health Coalition. Joo Hee has a bachelor’s degree in women’s studies, a master’s of public health, and is a certified massage therapist.

**TIA WILLIAMS** is Co-Director of Frogtown Neighborhood Association. Tia is a lifelong resident of the Frogtown Neighborhood, she has worked with the FNA in the past on engaging the community with the Promise Neighborhood Project, and also training inSafe Growth program, pertaining to the Developments on the Central corridor. She is extremely passionate about building and creating a Community based Neighborhood.

Organizations

**ALLIANCE FOR METROPOLITAN STABILITY** is a coalition of community-based organizations and advocacy groups building shared power to advance strategic campaigns around the intersections of racial justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and health equity. Our mission is to advance justice and equity in economic growth and land development in the Twin Cities region. We are conveners of coalition tables focused on housing, transportation, land use and development, jobs, and emerging issues driving gentrification and displacement.

**FROGTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION** works through accountable collaboration, strategic partnerships, neighbor relationships and shared values to ensure the balance and harmony of our neighborhood by focusing on health, the physical environment, arts centered organizing and community wealth building in the neighborhoods of Frogtown, Mt. Airy, Capitol Heights, and East Midway.

**NEW AMERICANS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (NADC)** is a community-based organization dedicated to improving the health, educational attainment, Economic Empowerment, human welfare, and opportunities for youth, adults, and families of East African immigrant community within the Twin Cities. NADC focused on lowering the poverty rate of refugee, immigrant and low-income skilled workers in the Somali community through authentic, culturally appropriate and sustainable wealth-building programs that include technical assistance, business development, entrepreneurship training, and youth employment.

Regional Challenges

The Twin Cities are experiencing an affordable housing crisis despite the city’s growth over recent years. Development has not been centered in equity and has not incorporated the needs of communities of color. The result of this is a heightened threat for the displacement of marginalized communities. A related issue is the stripping local ownership opportunities from local residents and the land grab by people from outside community. The region needs to work to help communities better leverage tools to influence planning and development, investment models, and funding streams.

According to the state of Minnesota’s latest report, Somalis are the lowest for the overall poverty rate in the state. Somali families have traditionally large families-averaging 8 or more, so the current affordable housing units that are available are incompatible with their housing needs.
GREATER CHICAGO

Cohort Progress

HEALTHY CHICAGO 2025 The Chicago region, led by the Chicago Health Department, has been working together on the Healthy Chicago 2025 initiative to ensure that Chicago is, “A city where all people and all communities are empowered, free from oppression and strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being.” Over the course of this planning process and throughout plan implementation, the Chicago region will aim to shift policies to promote anti-racist, multicultural systems, invest in community capacity, and further the health and vibrancy of neighborhoods most affected by inequities.

ELEVATED CHICAGO is a collaboration of 17 public, private and nonprofit organizations that have come together to build equity into transit-oriented development in Chicago by improving health, safety, climate resilience, and cultural vitality indicators of people of color living and working near transit. They are now at the planning stage deciding between TOD sites, specific to train stops in disinvested communities. They will pick a site and conduct a parallel process to include a health aspect.

LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS CMAP has initiated more than 200 local projects with local governments, nonprofits, and intergovernmental organizations to address local issues at the intersection of transportation, land use, and housing, including the natural environment, economic growth, and community development. Through the process, they developed a resource to be used by the 6 other areas. These communities have long disinvested but in other areas - there is hyper development. At the moment, they are evaluating a second site in the predominantly Latino community surrounding the California Pink Line stop. They are in the process of developing a tool that can be applied to the other areas.

Regional Governance

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning is the MPO that does regional planning for northeastern Illinois. CMAP leads a variety of regional planning efforts around economic development, livability, local technical assistance, and transportation, and leads the long-term regional planning via their "ON TO 2050" plan. Through its programmatic committees it brings together representatives from different counties and organizations around the region.

For transportation, the Regional Transportation Authority provides funding, planning and oversight for the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace. There was discussion around five years ago to merge RTA with CMAP citing declining transit services. Other significant regional public agencies include the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.

City agencies play a large role shaping policy and planning within the region. These include the Department of Public Health, the Department of Planning & Development, the Department of Housing, the Department of Transportation, Park District, and the Mayor’s Office, among others. Cook County has several agencies with significant authority, including the County Health & Hospital Services, Assessor, Forest Preserves, and Land Bank Authority.

Some state and federal agencies have a fair amount of influence, especially around transportation and natural resources, such as the Illinois Department of Transportation for state roads and the US Army Corps of Engineers for navigable waterways.

Non-Profit actors and Coalitions: Metropolitan Planning Council is a non-profit, independent research and advocacy organization that is dedicated to shaping a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous Chicago region. MPC as a non-governmental group pushes the regional planning entities discussed above by conducting quality research to compliment or challenge the work being done within the region. Depending on the issue, other examples of strong civic actors include the Active Transportation Alliance, Center for Neighborhood Technology, and LISC.
Representatives

DEBBIE LIU (she/her/hers) is the Community Engagement Associate at MPC. She was formerly with Asian Health Coalition (Center for Asian Health Equity) and had spent her early career leading the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC) to empower Chinese Americans living in Chicago’s Greater Chinatown through civic engagement and community development. Her research background is in gentrification and displacement and she co-authored the “Chinatown Anti-Displacement Community Research Project Report and Map.” Her interests are in improving health outcomes through equitable urban planning and policy change. Debbie was born in Chicago and received her Master of Public Health degree from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

RICARDO LOPEZ is a Senior Planner at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) with over 11 years of experience in the public and non-profit sectors. Ricardo manages various planning projects, including neighborhood plans and comprehensive plans. In 2017, he led the development of a Health Equity strategy paper to integrate health equity into the ON TO 2050 Regional Comprehensive Plan. Previously, Ricardo worked as a Field Coordinator with the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute. Ricardo was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, and studied urban planning at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

KATE MCMAHON (she/her/hers) is the Director of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion for the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH). She leads citywide efforts to prevent tobacco use and improve the food and built environment by driving policy and environmental change. Prior to joining CDPH, she served as Senior Director of Programs and Policy at Respiratory Health Association, where she directed a comprehensive public health agenda to address tobacco use, environmental air pollution, and chronic respiratory disease. In both roles, she led transformational organizational change to drive strategic priorities “upstream,” and developed a number of high-impact strategies to create conditions in which everyone can be healthy. Kate is pursuing a Doctor in Public Health Leadership (DrPH) degree at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and is a graduate of DePaul University’s Master in Public Health program and Marquette University.

Organizations

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL (MPC) has been dedicated to shaping a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous greater Chicago region. As an independent, nonprofit, non-partisan organization, MPC serves communities and residents by developing, promoting and implementing solutions for sound regional growth.

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH’S mission is to promote and improve health by engaging residents, communities and partners in establishing and implementing policies and services that prioritize residents and communities with the greatest need.

CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING (CMAP) is the regional planning organization for the northeastern counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. The agency and its partners developed and are now implementing ON TO 2050, a new long-range plan to help the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.

Regional Challenges

The Chicago Region’s population growth has stagnated and economic growth lags behind peer regions. Economic outcomes in our region reflect racial lines of demarcation. Residents of color, particularly black residents, often experience lower incomes and higher unemployment. Some communities become caught in a cycle of disinvestment, unable to promote economic development, invest in infrastructure, and otherwise serve their residents.

Further, Chicago has an aging and obsolete infrastructure and significant capital funding shortages limit our region’s ability to provide accessible, high quality service. At current funding levels, the condition of these systems is declining, and the costs to repair them increasing, every day.

The lack of political will, municipal capacity and coordination, and structural racism & classism are underlying barriers to all of this work. A lack of a city/regional master plan (including zoning) that would help prioritize and streamline development decisions contributes to this challenge.

Regional Challenges
Cohort Progress

**HEALTHY HOMES ORDINANCE** Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center (LaFHAC) has built the infrastructure for a local and state campaign to ensure that all New Orleans rental homes provide a minimum standard of health and safety. This includes interviewing a cadre of 25+ renters who have experienced substandard housing conditions and connecting them to the media to help publicize their stories, organizing smaller, progressive landlords to advocate for renter protections, and drafting a report on substandard conditions for the Mayor’s Office of Community and Economic Development. We’ve also provided technical assistance to other communities considering similar legislation and will be engaging state-wide stakeholders to defeat any preemption attempts.

**OPERATION RESTORATION** The purpose and mission of OR is to connect formerly incarcerated women to fair housing. Traditional halfway homes exist but this is a different approach. They are also working with the newly arrived black immigrants who are faced with housing discrimination.

Regional Governance

Regional Planning Commission focuses on transportation, economic development, and environmental planning between the 8 counties around New Orleans. The board of this organization is comprised of local elected officials, citizen members from the area parishes, and the LA Secretary of Transportation. It operates three main committees—Transportation Policy, Technical, and Economic Development Strategy—and two advisory councils—Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation, and Complete Streets. RPC do not have much authority and mostly take on projects commissioned by their members. It also does not do the most effective job engaging its constituents. It should be noted that there currently is not a great amount of cooperation in regional planning efforts in part because of the difference in governance between New Orleans and its neighbors.

The New Orleans City Council has authority over all zoning and land use matters in the city, and the city’s government agencies including the Office of Community Development play a role in shaping planning decisions. The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority provides transit service for New Orleans, and the Housing Authority of New Orleans, which does not operate regionally, serves a quarter of all renter households in New Orleans. Other governmental entities include the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority—a city-funded land bank and redevelopment authority—the New Orleans Aviation Board, Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority, and the Louisiana State Legislature, which often impacts local policy decisions.

The LaFHAC plays an important role regionally and for the whole state to enhance access to affordable housing for the region’s residents. LaFHAC has worked with the Office of Community Development and the Housing Authority of New Orleans to develop and implement the goals stated in the Assessment of Fair Housing Plan. The Foundation for Louisiana tackles issues that most deeply impact communities by funding community-based work at numerous community organizations. Other ally organizations include: Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance, Step Up, Power Coalition, Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative, Louisiana Budget Project, and VOTE. Other powerful, non-ally actors include: Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region, GNO Inc, and New Orleans and Co.
**Representatives**

**MAXWELL CIARDULLO** is the Director of Policy and Communications for the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center (LaFHAC). He leads the organization’s legislative, regulatory, and communications work related to policies that encourage fair housing choice and decrease segregation. Previously, he worked as a health care access policy fellow with the New Orleans Health Department. Maxwell has served on the City of New Orleans Neighborhood Housing Advisory Council, the board of the Lower Garden District Association, and was selected as a 2019 New Leaders Council Fellow. Maxwell holds a master’s degree in regional planning from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and Bachelor’s in Sociology from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

**CASHAUNA HILL** serves as Executive Director of the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center (LaFHAC) since 2015. In 2016, Cashauna led LaFHAC’s partnership with the City of New Orleans and the Housing Authority of New Orleans to submit the nation’s very first Assessment of Fair Housing plan, and has coordinated the expansion of LaFHAC’s services to communities across the state. An expert with years of experience litigating fair housing cases and engaging in advocacy campaigns, Cashauna has written about housing segregation and civil rights for Next City and The Hill, among other outlets. Cashauna is a graduate of Spelman College and Tulane Law School.

**ROSA GOMEZ-HERRIN** is a scholar, community advocate, writer and strategist from the Global South. Her personal, academic and professional experiences in the United States and abroad are rooted in a life-long commitment to social and racial justice, with almost two decades working as an advocate, community organizer and social service providers in the U.S. and abroad. She is the Director of Innovation & Strategic Partnerships for Operation Restoration (OR) where she is in charge of leading the organization’s short and long-term planning and strategy by supporting, connecting and expanding programs in alignment with the organization’s mission. She collaborates with program directors, managers and staff to create and implement equitable and fair policies and practices at OR.

**Organizations**

**LOUISIANA FAIR HOUSING ACTION CENTER (LAFHAC)** is a nonprofit civil rights organization established in 1995. LAFHAC’s work throughout Louisiana includes challenging discriminatory housing policies and practices through litigation and policy advocacy. LAFHAC provides Know Your Rights training to community members, and works to preserve wealth, primarily in black and brown families, through provision of free foreclosure prevention counseling for homeowners facing financial challenges. LAFHAC is dedicated to fighting housing discrimination because it is an illegal and divisive force that perpetuates poverty, segregation, and limits access to opportunity.

**OPERATION RESTORATION** supports women and girls impacted by incarceration to recognize their full potential, restore their lives, and discover new possibilities. OR focuses on advocacy, education, economic mobility and true economic equity for our staff, clients and community. Every program and initiative that OR undertakes is led by formerly incarcerated women and designed in response to community needs. All of OR’s full-time staff members identify as women, seven are formerly incarcerated, and 100% are directly impacted by mass incarceration. Of the 19 contract employees, 14 are formerly incarcerated.

**Regional Challenges**

A critical issue is the displacement of working class, residents of color—who make up the backbone of the city’s workforce and are the creators of its culture—to the margins of the metro area where resources and amenities are sorely lacking. This is due to gentrification, the lack of affordable and accessible housing, and an under-funded and poorly operated public transit system.

Another challenge is the existential threat to the city posed by sea level rise and/or severe storms due to climate change, which acutely harms the working class, residents of color that are also effected most by displacement pressures.
Regional Governance

The “Nashville Area MPO” is staffed by the Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC) whose mission is “to assist local communities and state agencies in the development of plans and programs that guide growth and development in the most desirable, efficient, and cost effective manner.” The MPO conducts transportation planning for 7 counties surrounding Nashville. GNRC works with the Federal government, the State of Tennessee, and governments across 14 counties in Middle Tennessee to deliver services and develop plans and programs that guide growth and development in the region. GNRC’s areas of focus include aging and disability services, as well as economic development, solid waste, land use, and transportation planning.

As coordinated by GNRC, the county governments that make up the region play an important role in implementing policy and coming to consensus on regional planning issues. Nashville MTA coordinates transit for the region, and the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency plays a role in developing affordable housing for Nashville.

Nashville Civic Design Center, whose mission is to elevate the quality of Nashville’s built environment and to promote public participation in the creation of a more beautiful and functional city for all, has produced several plans for the city. There are other small non-profits and neighborhood groups focused on housing, transit, displacement, etc. One of these groups is Conexión Américas who promotes community development for Latinx people in Nashville, focusing in South Nashville along the Nolensville Pike corridor. Other organizations include the Salahadeen Center of Nashville—one of the largest Muslim community centers in the area—and Walk Bike Nashville—a group that promotes active transportation throughout the city.

Cohort Progress

NOLENSVILLE PIKE CORRIDOR The Nashville region has been working together to engage with business owners and community members around the Nolensville Pike Corridor to identify community priorities and advocate for infrastructure investment to promote safer, more complete streets. As a result of this engagement, business owners in the area are considering forming a business alliance to invest in the physical environment around their shops. In many ways, the process led by the Nashville region shows how community engagement and coalition building can fill in some of the gaps of government investment.

REGIONAL EQUITY ATLAS GNRC has been developing a Regional Equity Atlas to map community assets around the region. This resource will be completed over the course of the next year.
Organizations

CONEXIÓN AMÉRICAS builds a welcoming community in Nashville and creates opportunities where Latino families can belong, contribute and succeed. Conexión Américas believes successful efforts to promote the integration of immigrant families into their new community recognize that integration is a multi-dimensional process. Therefore, Conexión Américas focuses on advocating for, and supporting the Social, Economic, and Civic integration of, Latino families in Nashville.

GREATER NASHVILLE REGIONAL COUNCIL (GNRC) works with the Federal government, the State of Tennessee, and governments across 14 counties in Middle Tennessee to deliver services and develop plans and programs that guide growth and development in the region. GNRC’s areas of focus include aging and disability services, as well as economic development, solid waste, land use, and transportation planning.

Regional Challenges

The Nashville region has been experiencing rapid growth over the past several years, driving up housing prices, increasing displacement, and stressing the transportation system.

Representatives

SHELLEY HAZLE serves as a senior policy advisor at the Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC). Shelly works on a variety of issues, including solid waste planning, housing, sustainability, and transportation. In addition, she serves as a liaison, growing GNRC’s relationships with governments and organizations across the region. Prior to joining GNRC, Shelly spent 10 years at Smart Growth America, which helps communities across the nation improve their livability, prosperity, and sustainability. During her time at SGA, she helped lead a technical assistance program that worked with governors and state administrators to develop policy solutions to transportation, housing, and urban planning challenges.

ANDRÉS MARTINEZ is Director of Policy and Communications for Conexión Américas. At Conexión Américas, Andrés executes the organization’s comprehensive communications strategy, and works closely with the executive director and senior leadership to maximize the organization’s influence and impact on relevant public policy issues on the local, state and national level. Prior to joining Conexión Américas, Andrés worked at the Texas Civil Rights Project in Austin, TX, coordinating civil rights lawsuits aimed at positively impacting policy and defending the civil rights of minority and low-income Texans. In Nashville, Andrés also serves on the board of directors of Nashville Pride and the Oasis Center, and was elected by Metro Council to serve on Nashville’s first Community Oversight Board. Andrés holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas at Austin, and master’s in public policy from the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, Germany.
COHORT PROGRESS

FAIR FARES PLATFORM To ensure that no one should be prohibited from taking transit because of the cost, Pittsburgh's fare structure should center the most vulnerable people, and not privilege the commutes or access to basic needs of those with the most resources. The campaign goals for fair fares are free transfers, far capping, and ubiquitous access to the CONNECT card. Long Term Goals include piloting a Low-income fare program, free transit for all people under 18, free fares for riders with disabilities, and free fares for all by 2030.

PARTICIPATORY TRANSIT PLANNING TOOL Beyond the East Busway is a first-of-its-kind tool designed by CivicMapper, and will be accessible at eastbusway.pittsburghforpublictransit.org through September 2019. Residents and transit riders in those communities will plan where rapid bus corridors beyond the East Busway should be aligned, and identify important places underserved by transit in their regions. PPT will use the outcomes of this work to advocate for the funding, design, and implementation of these transit improvements through the Southwest PA Commission and the Port Authority. This work also ties in the work of a broader housing justice coalition to advocate for affordability around housing investments tied to transit expansion.

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission is the regional planning agency serving the Pittsburgh region. They are involved in developing the long range transportation and economic development plans for this region.

The Port Authority is the transit planning agency in Pittsburgh that manages and operates transit for its nearly 200,000 daily riders. According to their website, "Port authority plays an increasingly significant role in economic development efforts and community vitality within Pittsburgh and throughout Allegheny county’s communities". The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the City of Pittsburgh's Economic Development Agency, does work on land acquisition for the city to sell to developers. URA have historically been responsible for some of the most egregious displacement incidents in Pittsburgh history, but now do a significant part of the city's affordable housing development, to mixed effect. The Housing Authority's of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh lead affordable housing development and provide publicly assisted housing through traditional public housing, scattered sites, and Section 8 vouchers.

There are a number of regional coalitions organized around specific issues, like Pittsburghers for Public Transit, who work to enhance access to transit for the city and county's residents. Pittsburgh United brings together labor and community organizations to move the conversation around a broad set of issues that most effect low income and people of color. The Breathe Collaborative focuses on addressing air quality issues, and the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council organizes around food justice questions.
Representatives

HELEN GERHARDT is a Grassroots Organizer at Just Harvest and serves on the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, the City’s Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Task Force, and the Housing Committee of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, which enforces civil rights. Prior she worked as an organizer at Pittsburghers for Public Transit, Action United, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations. She received a BA in English and a BFA in studio arts from the University of Missouri, and a MFA in nonfiction writing from the University of Pittsburgh.

CAROL HARDEMAN is highly trained in community engagement with more than 20 years of experience in managing public and community affairs. Carol’s areas of expertise include program development, public policy, stakeholder management, community engagement, and human rights education. Growing up in a single family home and as the daughter of a community advocate for strong public education, Carol has long understood the effects of systemic oppression including racism and classism. She has worked all her life for social justice issues in small and large communities and in this work, has learned that lasting community transformation and economic development start with intentional equity and inclusion for all people. At the Hill District Consensus Group, she educates low-income tenants about their rights and is committed to getting residents involved in the actions that ensure their neighborhood needs are adequately addressed. She leads residents through an amazing journey of healing, seeking, finding, and learning onward to community stewardship.

LAURA WIENS is the Executive Director of Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT). Over the past two years, she has led successful campaigns to prevent criminalization of fare evasion and massive transit service reductions in marginalized communities. PPT Transit rider-leaders are now advancing campaigns for fare equity, affordable housing and transit policy, and transit as a climate solution. Laura has her roots in labor organizing with Unite HERE, and draws from that experience to mobilize transit riders in the fight for equity, access and transparency within our public agencies. Laura believes in the collective power of people to transform their communities.

Organizations

HILL DISTRICT CONSENSUS GROUP builds the leadership and power of low-income and working class residents of the Hill District to advance racial and economic justice in our neighborhoods, our schools and our city.

JUST HARVEST educates, empowers and mobilizes people to eliminate hunger, poverty, and economic injustice in our communities by influencing public policy, engaging in advocacy, and connecting people to public benefits. Our organization believes that hunger is a symptom of poverty, and poverty is a product of economic and political injustice.

PITTSBURGHERS FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT (PPT) is a grassroots organization of transit riders, workers, and residents who defend and expand public transit. We keep the public in public transit by mobilizing communities to advocate for equitable, affordable, and sustainable transportation systems.

Regional Challenges

Pittsburgh has dramatic inequities in income, opportunities and health outcomes for black households compared to white households, which are nearly the worst in the nation. Structurally, there are issues with the balkanization of communities within the greater Pittsburgh region and disparate access to resources, and problems with state preemption around funding and regulatory mechanisms.

These challenges manifest as disparities in access to good transportation, affordable housing, and sustainable, economic opportunities.
Cohort Progress

**METRO RAIL EXPANSION PROJECT** The Metro Rail Expansion project would extend the existing 6.4-mile light-rail transit (Metro Rail) system in Buffalo from its current terminus at University Station on the University at Buffalo South Campus to Tonawanda and Amherst. Phase 2 was launched earlier this year. As this process unfolds, the Buffalo region will be seeking to ensure housing affordability in proximity to the transit expansion and utilize a TOD fund to advance mixed income housing along the line.

**GREEN DEVELOPMENT ZONES** Creating replicable solutions for green community development is a priority for the Buffalo cohort. “Green development zones” aims to create resilient and regenerative communities in Buffalo which provide sustainable opportunities current and future residents. A key part of this initiative is developing replicable strategies and solutions that are still neighborhood specific.

Regional Governance

Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council is the MPO for the region and coordinates various planning efforts for Erie and Niagara counties to ensure that federally funded transportation funds are spent effectively to achieve the region’s planning goals.

University at Buffalo Regional Institute co-leads the One Region Forward Implementation Council in partnership with the MPO and offers capacity in planning, policy analysis, public process, urban design and communications.

The One Region Forward Council continues to meet quarterly to foster plan implementation. However, the HUD funded planning grant for One Region Forward ended in 2015 so implementation of projects and programs consistent with the plan is largely accomplished through existing funding sources and programs.

The Western New York office of Empire State Development works hand-in-hand with new and existing businesses to help identify program funding to support business growth and expansion. WNY ESD administers the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process for the region.

Buffalo-Niagara Partnership, as the Chamber of Commerce, connects private sector stakeholders to the planning process in this region and is involved in promoting reinvestment in the Opportunity Zones in our region. The Metro Rail is located within or adjacent to approximately eight (8) of the 32 Opportunity Zones within Erie County.

The Coalition for Economic Justice’s (CEJ) mission is to unite our member labor, faith, and community organizations and activist with allies and resources to win campaigns that promote economic justice for all through building strong, diverse, sustainable communities.
Organizations

GREATER BUFFALO NIAGARA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL (GBNRTC) is focused on establishing a comprehensive, coordinated, and continuing transportation planning process to develop transportation plans and programs that ensure an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that serves and support the economic, environmental and community goals of the region.

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC) BUFFALO partners with organizations rooted in struggling neighborhoods to build their financial and organizational capacity, invest in their projects, and connect them with a national network of experts and resources that can help make their communities stronger. LISC works closely with business leaders, policymakers, and philanthropists to assemble the capital that Buffalo needs to seed growth in our neighborhoods. LISC connects partners that give with partners that can drive change.

PEOPLE UNITED FOR SUSTAINABLE HOUSING (PUSH) BUFFALO mobilizes residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing; to expand local hiring opportunities; and to advance economic and environmental justice in Buffalo.

Regional Challenges

The Buffalo-Niagara region lost 214,000 people over the past forty years, yet it has expanded its development footprint by 166 square miles. Sprawl has slowed since 2010, but still continues in our slow growth region. Buffalo as the largest city in the region is the fourth poorest mid-sized city in the United States and 6th most segregated in the nation.

Recently, parts of the region, especially in Buffalo, have experienced increased investment and as a result increased displacement pressures particularly for low income communities of color.

Representatives

JULIE BARRETT O’NEILL is the Executive Director of LISC Buffalo. Previously, Julie served as General Counsel and Green Program Director for the City of Buffalo Sewer Authority. She oversaw the implementation of the Sewer Authority’s $93 million green infrastructure combined sewer overflow reduction program. Prior to her work at the City, Julie served as the ED of Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER, the region’s largest non-profit water advocacy organization, for 10 years. Julie obtained her JD and her master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Iowa, and an undergraduate degree in environmental studies from the University at Buffalo.

HARPER BISHOP is the Deputy Director of Movement Building at PUSH Buffalo, whose mission it is to mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing; to expand local hiring opportunities; and to advance economic and environmental justice in Buffalo, New York. He has nearly a decade’s worth of professional experience in community-based organizations. In that time, Bishop has trained and developed grassroots leadership, written and advocated for progressive policies, and organized for economic, social, and racial justice in his hometown of Buffalo, most recently as the Director of Economic Development at Open Buffalo.

KELLY DIXON is a Principal Transportation Planner with the GBNRTC, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Erie and Niagara Counties. At the GBNRTC, she is involved in Long Range Transportation Planning efforts including Moving Forward 2050, Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning and the Go Buffalo Niagara initiative that is expanding multi-modal transportation in the region. Prior, Kelly was the National Programs Coordinator for the Center for Transportation Excellence, a mobility management company coordinating Non-Emergency Medical Transportation for governmental entities. She is an Eno Transportation Fellow and holds a Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Buffalo.
GREATER NEW YORK CITY

Cohort Progress

EQUITABLE ADAPTATION In February 2020, RPA and Make the Road released a climate change policy agenda for New York City. These are actionable steps that the City, State, and local agencies can take to make Queens and the rest of New York City a more climate-resilient place. “How to Make Your Home More Climate Resilient,” was also published as a how-to guide for tenants to take action in their own homes and better prepare themselves and their families for some of the effects of climate change.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY RPA brought the Metropolitan Planning Council from Chicago to speak with the RPA Board Executive Committee on centering inclusion and diversity in research, advocacy, and hiring practices. It also used the Metropolitan Planning Council as an example in a staff and board retreat on diversity, inclusion and equity. Having a tangible example of organizational change has made all the difference in advancing equity within RPA, and has given the organization models for research projects and internal management.

Regional Governance

Regional governance in the greater New York metropolitan region consists of several metropolitan planning organizations across the three states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, the Port Authority of New York-New Jersey that operates airports, ports and bi-state transportation crossings, two state-run transit agencies—the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in New York and Connecticut and New Jersey Transit—and several special purpose authorities and commissions responsible for conservation, water and open space management and energy regulation. There are no regional governing bodies for housing or land use, although New Jersey has a state housing plan.

The metropolitan planning organizations (mpos) are responsible for producing regional transportation plans that are required to qualify for federal transportation funds, and are governed by boards that include state transportation agencies and the counties in their jurisdictions. There are two large mpos—the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council in downstate New York and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority in New Jersey—and several small mpos in Connecticut and on the periphery of the region.

Regional Plan Association, a non-profit research, planning and advocacy organization that produces and tries to implement long-range plans for economic development, housing, transportation, energy and the environment, is the only organization spanning the entire metropolitan region, but has no governmental authority. Two consortiums were formed under the Obama administration’s Sustainable Communities Initiative to integrate transportation, housing, economic and environmental planning and forge collaboration between governmental and nongovernmental organizations. The Together North Jersey initiative, is still functioning, even though federal funding ended in 2015. The New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities consortium still exists technically but has not been active since producing a sustainability plan and running out of funding.
Organizations

MAKE THE ROAD NY builds the power of immigrant and working class communities to achieve dignity and justice. It is the largest progressive grassroots immigrant-led organization in New York state. The organization works on issues of workers’ rights; immigrant and civil rights; environmental and housing justice; justice for transgender, gender nonconforming, intersex, and queer (TGNCIQ) people; and educational justice. It has over 23,000 members and five community centers in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, Long Island, and Westchester County.

REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION (RPA) works to improve the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut metropolitan region. Some of the region’s most significant public works, economic development and open space projects have their roots in RPA ideas and initiatives. RPA has pursued these goals by conducting independent research, planning, advocacy and vigorous public-engagement efforts. In November of 2017, RPA released the Fourth Regional Plan, which seeks to address issues including housing affordability, overburdened transportation infrastructure, and vulnerability to climate change—by addressing the shortcomings in the region’s governance structures.

Regional Challenges

First, years of population and job growth and underinvestment in both maintenance and new construction have led to congestion, lack of reliability, and major disruptions on a regular basis. The region needs to make investments that will have far-reaching and positive effects on land use, settlement patterns, public health, goods movement, the economy, and the environment.

Climate change is transforming the region. Reducing the region’s greenhouse gas emissions is critical, but it won’t be enough. Today, more than a million people and 650,000 jobs are at risk from flooding, along with critical infrastructure. By 2050, nearly two million people and one million jobs would be threatened.

While household incomes have stagnated, housing costs have risen sharply, straining family budgets and resulting in increased displacement and homelessness. What’s more, the region’s racial and economic discrimination has kept many residents away from neighborhoods with quality schools and good jobs. Instead, many live in areas that are unsafe or environmentally hazardous.

Lastly, public institutions are ineffective in addressing all of these challenges. Solving these existential challenges will require public officials and citizens to reassess fundamental assumptions about public institutions.

Representatives

CHRIS JONES directs research and planning for Regional Plan Association. Since joining RPA in 1994, he has led many multidisciplinary initiatives to improve economic, social and environmental conditions in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region. He led the research and policy development for RPA’s fourth regional plan, a long-range blueprint for the metropolitan region released in 2017. Previously, he managed a federal Sustainable Communities initiative that included 17 cities, counties and planning organizations in New York and Connecticut. Prior to joining RPA, Chris was the special assistant to the deputy mayor for planning and development in New York City.

JOSE LOPEZ is Deputy Director of Make the Road New York. For two decades, Jose has demonstrated his commitment to MRNY and the communities which we serve. Jose served as Co-Director of Organizing where he helped to shape and deliver on impactful projects and policies in the arenas of housing, education, labor and police reform. His commitment and policy expertise on affordable housing and renters rights helped to secure the strongest rental protections passed in Albany in a generation. Outside of providing campaign support to our team of 44 organizers, Jose sits on the board of Communities United for Police Reform Action, a coalition committed to ending discriminatory and abusive policing in New York State. In December 2014, Jose was appointed to President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and since has published pieces on changing youth attitudes towards policing. Jose is a graduate of Hofstra University and dad of Amelie Soleil.

KATE SLEVING is Senior Vice President of State Programs and Advocacy at Regional Plan Association and oversees RPA’s programs in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Kate has 20 years of experience in pushing for sustainable, equitable transportation and inclusive urban planning in the New York City metropolitan area. Kate led RPA’s advocacy for New York City’s congestion pricing program which was authorized by the New York State Legislature in April 2019. She has served as Assistant Commissioner for Government and Community Affairs at the New York City Department of Transportation and Executive Director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. Kate started her career at the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation as an Urban Park Ranger in Brooklyn. She has a master’s in urban planning from New York University and a bachelor’s in earth and environmental sciences from Wesleyan University.
ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

**Partners**

ARLENE RODRIGUEZ brings a life-long commitment to advancing social justice and liberation. She strives to support progressive movements that shift us away from the extractive systems and structures that serve to accumulate power and wealth in the hands of a few and move us toward an inclusive democracy that generates cooperative economies and thriving ecosystems. Through ARC Associates, Arlene helps to 1) align philanthropic programs and resources 2) support leadership development 3) scale up organizational capacity, and 4) advance networks and collaborations as the crucibles for encouraging emergent learning, cooperative leadership and the radical strategies needed to navigate the complexities of transformative movements toward social change. As a professional coach, Arlene supports individuals and collective groups of people, with a vision for justice and environmental compassion, to uncover what it means for to be on this planet in meaningful ways and to consciously and fully live into their values with purpose.

For over 30 years, Arlene has been a bridge builder between sectors and strategies in the non-profit, public, and philanthropic fields. She has assisted individuals, non-profits, foundations, and philanthropic groups to establish strong board leadership; deepen organizational systems, management processes and governance structures; build strategic vision; and develop and implement major programmatic investments. She excels at planning and facilitating open dialogue and establishing effective cross-issue and cross-sector partnerships and lasting collaborations.

In the past, Arlene has served as Director of Membership and Public Engagement for Living Cities, Director of Environment at the San Francisco Foundation and led the foundation’s Organizational Resiliency Program. Arlene was also one of the first program officers during the inception of the $4 billion Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. She currently serves as a trustee for the Center for Environmental Health and is co-founder of Network Ecology.

**Facilitator**

LAUREN TSUBOYAMA is the Director of Communications, overseeing the organization’s strategy and message development, media relations and publications.

Previously, Lauren served as Communications Director for New York City Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr., working on key citywide and South Bronx issues including affordable housing, homelessness, public housing, education, community planning and environmental justice. Prior to the City Council, Lauren was an Account Supervisor at Berlin-Rosen, leading media relations strategies for advocacy and real estate clients in New York, and was a public relations strategist in the Travel and Lifestyle Department at Finn Partners.

Lauren received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Interdisciplinary Studies in Communications, Law, Economics and Government from The American University in Washington, D.C. She currently serves as co-chair of the Urban Assembly School for Criminal Justice Advisory Board, an all-girls middle and high school in Borough Park, Brooklyn.
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Program Leads

VANESSA BARRIOS is a Senior Associate for State Programs & Advocacy at RPA. She conducts research and outreach on projects related to affordable housing, community engagement and equitable economic development in the region. Previously, she worked as a case manager, housing navigator and outreach worker at People Assisting the Homeless, a homeless service organization that serves the Greater Los Angeles area. Vanessa has a bachelor’s in sociology from the University of California, Riverside, and a master’s in urban planning from New York University where she focused on international development planning. This specialization culminated in an analysis of local economic growth in the 30 regions of Tanzania and provided recommendations for industry potential and quality of life improvements. Feel free to reach out to Vanessa with any questions you may have about the learning exchange at vbarrios@rpa.org.

CARLOS MANDEVILLE is a Research Analyst for RPA working across all of RPA’s research areas. Previously, he worked as the 2017-2018 Equitable Public Space Fellow at the Design Trust for Public Space. His work ranged from designing and leading workshops with members of the cultural community on the North Shore of Staten Island in order to better organize and respond to development around the ferry terminal to scoping and planning a community planning project in partnership with South Bronx Unite. He has a Bachelor’s in Geography from Vassar College and is currently pursuing a Masters in Urban Planning at Hunter College. Feel free to reach out to Carlos with any questions you may have about the learning exchange at carlos@rpa.org.