SPARCC

# Building a National Narrative of Anti-Displacement Strategies

Key Takeaways from
SPARCC regions

UC BERKELEY CENTER FOR
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# Acknowledgments

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# Building a National Narrative of Anti-Displacement Strategies

As our national housing affordability crisis intensifies and the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates existing housing inequalities, it is critical now more than ever to understand the many ways that displacement pressures can manifest in communities across the United States. To better understand the dynamics of neighborhood change in diverse regions, the Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC) and the Urban Displacement Project at UC Berkeley (UDP) engaged in a collaborative, community-engaged research project focused on Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Memphis, and the San Francisco Bay Area. SPARCC and UDP discussed local patterns of gentrification, displacement, and exclusion with stakeholders in these six regions through the lenses of racial equity, health, and climate, aiming to build a more national displacement narrative and uplift the diverse policies that communities are pursuing in response. The following common themes emerged from conversations with local SPARCC affiliates:

» Racial equity issues impact communities of color at all sites.
» Investment-driven displacement is a common concern, particularly around "green gentrification."
» Disinvestment perpetuates gentrification and displacement across all four sites, but local drivers vary.
» Residential displacement has impacted the social determinants of health across all four sites, with local variations.
» Climate change's impacts --specifically around rising heat and flooding-- are expected to exacerbate residential displacement patterns across sites.

By engaging with the experiences of neighborhood change and responsive policy approaches in many places, this report empowers communities to learn from one another's displacement stories, acknowledge their connections, legitimize their experiences in the eyes of policymakers and elected officials, and engage with best practices in anti-displacement interventions from around the country.

# Introduction

Rising housing costs and income inequality have led to a national housing affordability crisis that manifests distinctly across regions. The continued loss of affordable rental housing across the U.S. has been exacerbated by gentrification -- the phenomenon of new investment bringing new residents with higher incomes and higher educational attainment into low-income neighborhoods, often communities of color. At its worst, these patterns perpetuate the displacement of lower-income households from their communities, further comprising the economic stability, health and well-being of already vulnerable groups. Despite the significant media attention around gentrification, displacement is perhaps the more important problem, and it can take many forms (Chapple 2020). Some low-income neighborhoods experience displacement due to disinvestment and decline rather than the new investments that usher in gentrification. In regions where new investment does not necessarily lead to wide-scale residential displacement, changes in the make-up and character of a neighborhood can lead to cultural displacement from a reduced sense of belonging in one's community, which also has social and health-related impacts (Hyra 2014; Richardson et al. 2019; Fullilove 2004). At the time of this writing, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to bring new precarity to housing affordability and stability in vulnerable communities nationwide. As regions across the U.S. confront unprecedented changes in employment and mobility, as well as the looming threat of large-scale evictions and foreclosures, they must mitigate this pandemic's potential to exacerbate pre-existing displacement risks in low-income communities and communities of color.

In order to understand how to mitigate displacement and the potential negative impacts of gentrification in communities across the United States, it is critical to understand the many facets of displacement and their implications for communities in diverse regions across the country. This was the impetus for a collaborative, community-engaged research project between Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC)[1] and the Center for Community Innovation's Urban Displacement Project (UDP), a research and action initiative at the University of California, Berkeley[2], which assessed local dynamics around gentrification, displacement, and exclusion in four regions: Atlanta, Chicago, Denver and Memphis. SPARCC includes two other regions, Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, which had previously partnered with UDP in similar projects to explore gentrification and displacement dynamics.[3] This report includes insights from these prior collaborations as well.

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[1] SPARCC, an initiative of Enterprise Community Partners, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, the Low Income Investment Fund, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, works with groups across six regions to ensure that new infrastructure investments help make their communities places where everyone thrives.

[2] In partnership with a team of collaborators from various universities, UDP has created maps visualizing typologies of gentrification, displacement, and exclusion at the Census tract level in the San Francisco Bay Area, Southern California, and the greater New York metropolitan region, as well as internationally in Bogotá, Buenos Aires, and Manila. The typologies demonstrate whether neighborhoods are at risk of or currently undergoing gentrification and/or displacement, or exclusion, or have reached advanced stages of these patterns of neighborhood change. The UDP website currently also hosts gentrification and displacement maps for Portland, which were developed by Professor Lisa Bates and her team at Portland State University.

[3] SPARCC partners who participated in the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Early Warning System/Developing a New Methodology for Understanding Displacement project with the UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG), and the California Air Resources Board included several members of the 6 Wins for Social Equity Network and/or the Great Communities Collaborative: Causa Justa, Council of Community Housing Organizations, Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, Faith in Action, Urban Habitat, Working Partnerships, and Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California. SPARCC partners who participated in the Southern

As part of the above project, in 2018, the UDP project team engaged SPARCC research partners and site leads (See Appendix) in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, and Memphis in site-specific discussions about local patterns of gentrification and displacement with SPARCC strategic priorities around racial equity, health, and climate in mind (See Table 1). The primary goals of these conversations were threefold: 1) to draw upon local insights to inform a modified gentrification and displacement methodology that acknowledges local dynamics and incorporates updated and new data sources; 2) to use this modified methodology to develop gentrification and displacement maps for the four sites that can be used for local planning and anti-displacement policy advocacy efforts; and 3) to synthesize gentrification and displacement themes across the four sites to understand ways in which gentrification, displacement, and exclusion can emerge in different local contexts, and build support for a national, action-oriented narrative around anti-displacement efforts across the United States. Although the data and findings from this project do not account for unprecedented recent changes that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to these diverse communities, UDP engaged with site stakeholders in June of 2020 to discuss the emerging patterns they are seeing on the ground.

This working paper is a product of objective #3 and aims to situate gentrification and displacement themes across the four sites in a larger research and policy context. As such, this paper is organized as follows. First, we review recent gentrification and displacement literature, outlining the need for this broader neighborhood change narrative that acknowledges the role of cultural and political displacement as well as neighborhood decline in perpetuating diverse impacts in vulnerable communities. We then present cross-site themes that emerged during the site visits in dialogue with recent literature and policy initiatives focused on investment and disinvestment-driven displacement, race and displacement, access to resources in communities receiving displaced residents, and the impact of climate change on neighborhoods. Finally, we draw upon lessons from the sites to offer a national narrative of anti-displacement approaches for action across the local, regional, state, and national levels.

**Table 1. Summary of SPARCC Priorities (adapted from https://www.sparcchub.org/about/)**

| SPARCC PRIORITIES | DESCRIPTION |
| --- | --- |
| *Racial Equity* | Fostering "inclusive communities where low-income people and people of color are able to fully participate in and benefit from a strong regional economy." |
| *Health* | Improving "health and opportunity for all" through social determinants of lifespan and wellbeing (e.g. housing, transportation, jobs, financial well-being) and behavioral determinants, like mobility and access to fresh foods. |
| *Climate* | Supporting people most vulnerable to climate change "to ensure that investments in the built environment reduce pollution and limit threats from hazards in ways that create equitable benefits for all residents." |

California Research Advisory Committee for the same project included several members of LA THRIVES and/or ACT-LA: the Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing, Little Tokyo Service Center, Physicians for Social Responsibility Los Angeles, Southeast Asian Community Alliance, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, and Thai Community Development Center.

# Literature Review: Existing Narratives of Gentrification and Displacement

Studies of gentrification and investment-driven residential displacement consistently demonstrate patterns of whiter, wealthier, and more educated residents moving into previously disinvested neighborhoods, while out-movers are often poorer, renters, and/or people of color who are displaced when residential rents rise in these neighborhoods (Zuk et al. 2015). Especially in high-cost coastal metros, the combination of rising income inequality, stagnant wages, rising housing costs, declining homeownership, and increased financialization of housing has put pressure on the rental housing stock. Moreover, insufficient market-rate housing production can end up driving higher-income households into older housing stock (Been, Ellen, & O'Regan 2018; Harvard JCHS 2019, Mast 2019). And decades of disinvestment in some low-income communities of color, in addition to investor speculation, have depressed housing costs and created a rent gap that makes renting to new higher-income renters especially attractive to landlords (Smith 1987). When higher-income households move into previously lower-cost neighborhoods, this reverses the filtering process -- meaning older housing gets upgraded and becomes more costly instead of becoming more affordable to lower-income households as the housing stock ages (Chapple & Loukaitou-Sideris 2019).

Even when new market-rate housing supply lowers median rents in a gentrifying neighborhood, the housing cost burden on low-income households can increase in the short-term, making targeted protections and subsidies for low-income residents critical to ensure their stability in neighborhoods experiencing new investment (Zuk & Chapple 2016). New investments in public transit infrastructure, especially rail, can spur gentrification both within and beyond downtown areas based on neighborhood characteristics and the timing of these investments (Grube-Cavers & Patterson 2015; Chapple et al. 2016). Resulting increases in rents and property values can bring *physical*

displacement, preventing lower-income, long-term Black and Latinx residents from benefiting from new economic growth and amenities; *cultural* displacement, as communities are disrupted, long-established cultural resources disappear and longtime residents no longer feel welcome in their neighborhoods; and/or *exclusionary* displacement, preventing future low-income households from moving in as housing prices go up (Richardson et al. 2019; Hyra 2014; Fullilove 2004; Chapple & Loukaitou-Sideris 2019).

However, in the popular media, the narrative about gentrification and displacement has become muddled, due in no small part to the mixed and complicated results from empirical studies. On the one hand, some point to how gentrification leads to the presence of new amenities and opportunities for financial health and upward mobility in neighborhoods that have historically been excluded from investment (Brummet & Reed 2019; Ding & Hwang 2016; Freeman 2006). Gentrification may not displace low-income residents, at least in the short term; research shows that there is little difference in out-migration between gentrifying and non-gentrifying poor neighborhoods, and demographic change in gentrifying neighborhoods may stem primarily from the relative affluence of in-movers and low rates of intra-neighborhood mobility rather than from displacement (Ding, Hwang & Divringi 2016; Ellen et al. 2019; Ellen & O'Regan 2011; Freeman 2005; Martin & Beck 2016; Vigdor 2002). Yet, these studies likely underestimate displacement of low to moderate-income residents and communities of color due to the short time periods analyzed, as well as the inadequate measurement of gentrification and marginal housing arrangements such as doubling up (Chapple & Loukaitou-Sideris 2019; Rayle 2014). Nonetheless, these and other findings have prompted economists and other scholars to question the ills of gentrification and praise the investment it brings instead. Moreover, some scholars argue that gentrification itself is not occurring to an extent that warrants such media and academic attention. Small-to-midsize cities outside of coastal areas and most low-to-moderate-income neighborhoods did not gentrify between 2000 and 2013 (Richardson et al. 2019). Indisputably, far more low-income residents across the nation experience concentrated poverty and decline than gentrification and displacement (Cortright & Mahmoudi 2014; Institute of Metropolitan Opportunity 2019).

However, by analyzing either national samples that blur local distinctions, or iconic strong market cases like New York City, these studies may obscure the harms of "hypermobility" in disinvested low-income communities (Desmond et al. 2015). Studies that compare mobility rates in gentrifying neighborhoods to low-income communities that are not receiving investment imply that hypermobility in disinvested communities is an acceptable benchmark. Yet, both investment and dis-investment are critical components of recent displacement patterns that merit study and targeted policy strategies (Hwang & Lin 2016); for example, tenant rights' struggles may look different in ongoing disinvested communities, focusing on issues like habitability and relying on direct action where protective regulation lags. Across the United States, the many communities inhabiting these spaces of ongoing disinvestment experience the harms of concentrated poverty and decline rather than those of gentrification (UMN Law School 2019). While gentrification can dominate the conversation in prosperous coastal cities, these factors can bring "displacement by decline," or disinvestment-induced displacement, to numerous regions. Investment and disinvestment can serve as interrelated forces in neighborhoods, with disamenities like proximity to industrial land or poor air quality driving away lower-income communities of color, then paving the way for speculation, redevelopment, and gentrification (Li 2016). This interrelationship points to the need for investment without displacement, or intentional revitalization efforts that also keep in mind longer-term concerns about gentrification.

Not only is it important to pay attention to displacement that is caused by neighborhood change patterns other than gentrification, but it is also critical to address the negative impacts of gentrification that may take place even without residential displacement. The influx of higher-income residents into neighborhoods can prompt cultural displacement, or a loss of sense of belonging, amongst low-income, longtime residents, even as affordable housing efforts aim to stabilize long-term residents in place (Hyra 2014). Cultural and political displacement contribute to "root shock," or the community-scale trauma of disruptive neighborhood change that extends far beyond the impacts of individual household mobility when communities feel "erased" from the place they call home (Fullilove

2004), and when collective action potential may be eroded (Marcus 2018; Martin 2007; Causa Justa Just Cause 2015). For example, gentrification can lead to the expansion of "white space," or spaces in which culturally white norms dominate, and which communities of color in the neighborhood may perceive as "off-limits," "not for us," or even unsafe (Anderson 2015; Danley & Weaver 2018). And even for residents who are not physically displaced, such dynamics mean that communities facing gentrification and displacement pressures also face associated impacts upon their mental and physical health. For example, children living in unsubsidized housing in gentrifying neighborhoods experience more anxiety than those living in persistently poor areas, while adults suffer the psychosocial stress of disrupted social networks, the depression and anxiety of feeling discriminated against in their housing searches, and the sense of alienation that comes with abrupt and transformative neighborhood change (Ellen et al. 2019; Mehdipanah et al. 2018; Izenberg et al. 2018).

Neighborhood change and displacement impact individuals, families, and communities in diverse ways. These impacts do not all conform to the pattern of neighborhood change typically associated with gentrification leading to displacement. Taking into account disinvestment-driven displacement, as well as cultural, social, and political displacement that negatively impacts those who remain in gentrifying neighborhoods, is vital to building a national narrative that demonstrates the diversity of neighborhood change dynamics and the harms of displacement driven by many factors.

# Summary of Themes Across Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, and Memphis SPARCC Regions

In **Atlanta**, site visit participants highlighted the role of the BeltLine (a multi-use trail built on a former railway corridor) in "green gentrification," or the displacement pressures created by public investment in parks, trails, and other urban greening projects; concerns about health and access for "receiving communities" of displacement and households displaced to transit-poor suburbs; loss of political power and sense of belonging through "civic displacement;" and racialized impacts of development led by politically powerful corporations near at-risk communities of color.

Participants in **Chicago** enumerated drivers both of investment-driven displacement -- such as revitalization driven by "anchor institutions" like universities and hospitals, increasing property taxes, and green investments like the 606 and "El Paseo" rails-to-trails projects -- and of disinvestment-driven displacement, including gun violence, school closures, and public housing demolition.

Our **Denver** partner explained that low-income Latinx and Black households are being displaced to parts of the region with poorer access to transit and needed services; neighborhoods are experiencing "churn," or demographic shifts and racial succession that are not necessarily driven by gentrification, where neighborhoods see high rates of eviction and turnover but remain low-income instead of experiencing investment-driven gentrification; and the region may see possible impacts of climate migration with an influx of "climate migrants" projected from higher climate risk regions.

Local collaborators in **Memphis** noted that the region's cooler housing market means disinvestment-driven displacement is a primary concern, although speculation, redevelopment, and commercial development are also driving gentrification in some neighborhoods, especially those close to downtown.

Several key themes emerged from site-specific discussions about local gentrification and displacement dynamics, including the role of intersections between displacement and racial equity, health, and climate. These dynamics will be important to consider in future conversations around housing stability and affordability at these four sites and across the United States. They relate to potential policy and planning interventions to address these issues as outlined below:

» **Racial equity issues impact communities of color at all sites**. Participants across sites mentioned continued challenges around racialized patterns of neighborhood change and unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, political power, and belonging.

» **Investment-driven displacement is a common concern, particularly around "green gentrification."** "Green gentrification" refers to displacement pressures created by public investment in parks, trails, and other urban greening projects that might further perpetuate displacement. Potential solutions include leveraging anchor institutions; value capture; housing preservation and production, including community ownership; and tenant protection policies.

» **Disinvestment perpetuates gentrification and displacement across all four sites, but local drivers vary**. Potential solutions include community ownership strategies; investment without displacement policy and organizing strategies; vacant land management and blight strategies; and healthy housing and housing rehabilitation strategies.

» **Residential displacement has impacted the social determinants of health across all four sites, with local variations**. Site participants particularly noted concerns around the loss of access to community resources, consistent transportation, educational opportunities, and social networks. Potential solutions include equitable transit initiatives; early education and aging services; right to return and affordable housing preference policies; and data-informed redistribution of social service access points to better reflect regional demographic changes.

> » **Climate change's impacts --specifically around rising heat and flooding-- are expected to exacerbate residential displacement patterns across sites**. Potential solutions include weatherization programs for low-income renters; cooling centers; siting affordable housing with attention to climate risk, including avoiding floodplain sites and ensuring equitable access to insurance and other climate-related tenant protections; greening and shade; and promoting community ownership to ensure equitable recovery.

The following section summarizes the site feedback, connects themes to existing literature on these topics, and discusses potential solutions.

## RACIAL EQUITY

**Racial equity issues impact communities of color at all sites.**

The racialized nature of gentrification, and the reality of the disproportionate evictions of people of color, demonstrate the importance of centering race in discussions of displacement (Desmond & Shollenberger 2015; San Mateo County Eviction Report 2016). The legacy of overtly segregationist twentieth-century government policies such as redlining, restrictive covenants, and government-subsidized white flight is ongoing modern segregation, which helped financial institutions efficiently channel subprime loans into communities of color during the foreclosure crisis (Rothstein 2017; Hwang, Hankinson, & Brown 2014). Communities of color have suffered uneven recovery from the 2008 housing crisis, with implications for the enduring racial wealth gap in the United States (Raymond, Wang & Immergluck 2016). This ongoing racial segregation brings detrimental impacts to Americans in all communities (MPC & Urban Institute 2017). Moreover, displacement of low-income communities of color perpetuates patterns of concentrated poverty and unequal access to resources that is racially re-segregating some regions, with new highly segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods taking shape in suburbs and exurbs (UDP & CHP 2018).

Additionally, as previously referenced, neighborhood change can expand "white space" where culturally white norms and claims to spaces can alienate people of color (Anderson 2015). White space as a form of cultural displacement can perpetuate segregation at multiple scales and bring continued friction even as different racial groups begin to share physical space, as evidenced by the rise of online platforms like NextDoor that enable modern racial surveillance and policing in mixed communities (Hyra 2017; Mumm 2008; Kurwa 2019). Displacement also brings health impacts exacerbated along racial lines, with Black residents more likely to self-report worse health outcomes as a result of gentrification (Gibbons & Barton 2016). The racial equity issues that site participants raised in each local discussion reveal the critical need for a racial equity lens in the sites' proposed strategies in response.

Participants at all four sites referenced a diversity of racialized neighborhood change dynamics in their communities, with low-income Black and Latinx communities suffering a variety of displacement pressures. In **Chicago**, participants described neighborhoods like Englewood experiencing significant demographic change by race and income, with certain areas losing their Black population while gaining Latinx residents, and others losing low-income households of color due to public housing demolition. Both **Chicago** and **Atlanta** participants stressed that these neighborhood change patterns are not simply "black-and-white," due to substantial Latinx populations in both cities and the emerging role of Black and Latinx "gentrifiers" returning to lower-income communities of color and often doing important revitalization work there. In **Denver**, neighborhoods are undergoing patterns of racial succession or "churn" as they transition from predominantly Black to predominantly Latinx, and then sometimes to

a mostly white population. **Memphis** participants described a different story, given that the region's population is majority-Black and most neighborhoods have not undergone substantial racial demographic change since the 1950s. Nevertheless, they expressed the importance of planning for the pressures of displacement of low-income residents of color and population loss in Memphis neighborhoods. These diverse patterns described by the four sites reveal the complexities of racialized neighborhood change impacting American regions today.

Participants in **Chicago** and **Atlanta** described the burden of unequal distribution of risks, resources, (dis)investment, and opportunity along racial lines in their communities as their neighborhoods change. Chicago participants highlighted the "resource-hoarding" of high-quality schools, libraries, and community centers in affluent white areas of the region, while lower-income communities of color suffer school closures and lower-quality access to these amenities. They also described the racialized perceptions and distributions of police presence in neighborhoods, where a high police presence in low-income communities of color can bring fear of surveillance and risk of violence while more affluent, white communities may view police presence as a resource instead. Communities of color are also suffering from the suburbanization of jobs typically held by Black and Latinx workers, making these opportunities more difficult to access, and from the racialized impacts of the foreclosure crisis wherein communities of color struggle the most to recover from predatory lending and foreclosure. In **Memphis** and **Atlanta**, participants described the harms of de facto redlining that limits access to capital for communities of color. Atlanta participants voiced concern about the outsize influence of corporate interests that are centering new development in at-risk communities of color, noting the [Mercedes-Benz stadium and Arthur Blank's plan for the Westside](#) as an example. Atlanta participants have come to believe that, despite a great deal of talk about equitable development and distribution of resources, communities are not seeing real implementation or action around the need for inclusive development without displacement in the region.

The harms of racial inequity in development and access to opportunity have brought a sense of othering and stigmatization for low-income communities of color. **Chicago** participants described pervasive "othering," or the notion that spaces of development are not meant to welcome certain racial groups, which leads vulnerable communities to associate new investment with their exclusion from it. They noted the vicious cycle perpetuated by ongoing stigmatization of Black and Latinx neighborhoods as "bad," leading investments to be steered towards "good" affluent white neighborhoods instead. Participants also voiced concern about the microaggressions people of color frequently experience in mixed spaces, as research on mixed-income housing developments in Chicago has demonstrated (Chaskin & Joseph 2015). Similarly, **Atlanta** participants expressed the widespread sense that new developments are not meant for the people already living in the communities of color that receive them, reinforcing the notion that only affluent white newcomers have the power to bring in new resources while their communities are less important. They expressed concern about new residents using online platforms like NextDoor to discriminate against the community of existing affordable housing residents in their changing neighborhoods. In response, participants advocated for more inclusive, community-driven "third spaces" in gentrifying communities -- spaces where people spend time outside of home and work. Atlanta participants also emphasized the need to move from "placemaking," the process where "public, private, not-for-profit, and community sectors partner to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities" (Markusen & Gadwa 2010), to "[placekeeping](#)," which focuses on preserving cultural memories and empowering local residents to thrive in gentrifying communities.

Participants also discussed the barriers low-income communities of color face in participating in governance and decision-making processes across the four regions. In **Denver**, many low-income people of color have recently been priced out of more central places in the region and have moved to Adams County, a region whose county seat providing vital "wraparound services" is very difficult for this community to access. Denver participants noted that regions like Adams County that are receiving displaced communities must adjust their levels of public transportation service since these areas have historically had low ridership. **Chicago** participants voiced concern about racial profiling and immigration enforcement in communities of color and highlighted that race (or the racial

composition of neighborhoods) dictates where people can access transparent governance and participate in decision-making processes. They also noted that many decision-makers, major developers, and financial institutions lack diversity, equity, and inclusion lenses or agendas, leading to colorblind decisions about the built environment that perpetuate or increase racial inequities. In **Atlanta**, participants noted that the City's relationship with the corporate community has disproportionately sped up gentrification in the poorest communities of color, such as Vine City and English Avenue, where participants felt relationships are being leveraged to muffle what the community would want to see happen. Overall, participants felt that Black and Latinx people are increasingly not included in decision-making processes in Atlanta. Residential displacement and changing demographics can also lead to "civic displacement" there, when long-time residents lose political influence as community members are displaced and newcomers move in.

Physical, cultural, and political displacement are pervasive across communities as neighborhoods experience new investment or disinvestment and decline along racial lines. Regardless of the particular patterns of neighborhood change that each community is experiencing, racial equity is a critical goal for local and regional responses to displacement in communities of color.

## INVESTMENT-DRIVEN DISPLACEMENT AND "GREEN GENTRIFICATION."

**Investment-driven displacement is a common concern, particularly around "green gentrification."**
Investment-driven displacement is a common concern across sites, but the development patterns, historical contexts, and community concerns raised around it have varied. In Chicago, site participants noted that both public and private investment have fueled physical and cultural displacement. In particular, community members have reported displacement pressures near the Green Line South 63rd and Cottage neighborhood in connection with the Obama Presidential Library development. New businesses catering to a younger/whiter clientele in Logan Square are a visible sign of demographic shift that contributes to the loss of a sense of belonging for longtime residents. As regional housing cost pressures drive residential gentrification and demographic change, neighborhood retail can experience turnover from local businesses serving basic needs of the existing community (i.e. green grocers) to those targeting new, potentially more affluent residents (i.e. gourmet restaurants) (Chapple et al. 2017). Chicago participants noted that these changes can bring a mixture of "angst, excitement, fear, and confusion" to communities undergoing investment-driven displacement.

The **Atlanta** site team recounted a decades-long history of displacement due to megaprojects such as highways and stadiums. Their stories reflect the complex relationship between investment- and disinvestment-driven displacement. When investments bring disamenities such as flooding, poor air quality, or noise pollution to vulnerable adjacent neighborhoods, they can prompt disinvestment-driven displacement for residents experiencing the negative impact of these investments. This can lead to speculation on disinvested land, gentrification, and calls for further displacement-inducing redevelopment (Li 2016). The damage caused to the fabric of the neighborhood by the original investment therefore becomes a self-fulfilling cycle justifying further intervention. While discussing the relationship between climate and displacement in Atlanta during UDP's site visit, participants shared an [account of this cycle as it impacted the neighborhoods of Peoplestown, Summerhill, and Mechanicsville over time](). Highways cut through these neighborhoods in the 1950s and 60s, contributing to disinvestment there. Then, the construction of a baseball stadium in the mid-1960s displaced many of Summerhill's residents via eminent domain. When the Olympic Stadium was being built for the 1996 Olympics, its water drainage tunnel ended in Peoplestown, leading to flooding issues with especially damaging impacts after heavy rains in 2006 and 2012. On the Westside, in Vine City and English Ave, highways built during the urban renewal era also cut off the community. Then, before the Olympics, construction for the Georgia Dome further isolated the Westside from downtown. In 2002, flooding caused serious damage in this area that has yet to be addressed and threatens to exacerbate displacement pressures when infrastructure investments are eventually made in response.

**Memphis** participants discussed making sure investment in large redevelopment projects and commercial districts does not lead to displacement in surrounding neighborhoods that are at risk of gentrification or already beginning to gentrify. For example, the Crosstown Concourse is a redevelopment of a massive historic Sears distribution center with the potential for displacement pressures in the surrounding vulnerable communities of Evergreen and Midtown. Cooper Young and University of Memphis were also noted as areas of concern for ongoing and future gentrification due to their proximity to mixed-use and retail projects. Cordova and Collierville have already seen big building booms, and gentrification is already taking place in Glenview, Rozelle, Smokey Klondike, and the Medical District due to home upgrades and proximity to anchor institutions like schools, universities, and parks.

In **Denver**, the southwestern neighborhood of Westwood was discussed as the city's "last frontier," as a once stable low-income community now facing the threat of gentrification and displacement while many other city neighborhoods continue to rapidly redevelop and displace residents. Homes in Westwood are typically constructed of clapboard and are of less robust quality than the post-World War II-era brick homes of the northwest neighborhoods, which underwent neighborhood ascent first in the city. Now, southwest Denver is experiencing a "neighborhood renaissance" and attracting new attention from developers, while some current residents are pushing back because they do not want new investment and its potential associated displacement pressures to arrive in their community. Participants also described the Five Points neighborhood as a longstanding African-American cultural center now experiencing rapid gentrification; this neighborhood saw a 27% increase in its white population between 2000 and 2010 (Petrilli 2012).

Representatives from the four sites shared varying ideas on how and by whom local patterns of investment-driven displacement should be addressed. Public-sector policies around tenant protection and housing preservation and production targeted at low-to-moderate-income (LMI) households can help shape the ability of long-term and incoming low-income residents to benefit from public and private investment in gentrifying neighborhoods (Chapple & Loukaitou-Sideris 2019). To mitigate the consequences of investment-driven displacement, the local site teams and UDP discussed the need for investment in neighborhood amenities, housing, and transit that promotes social and racial equity for existing residents without causing displacement. Action to promote investment without displacement at the city or regional level must be both proactively prioritized in policy and program approaches in advance of new investment, and responsive to displacement pressures that are already impacting vulnerable communities. Key proactive strategies include advocating for rent stabilization and just cause evictions, producing permanently affordable housing, and preserving existing affordable housing stock through community land trusts. As a proactive strategy in **Denver**, the community in the city's vulnerable southwestern neighborhoods convened to form the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative (WRDC), which has advocated for strong pathways to add accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and other options to maintain neighborhood stability in the face of new investment. Responsive strategies include guaranteeing tenants' rights to counsel in eviction cases, enacting preference or right to return policies for those who have already been displaced, and offering tenants facing displacement threats an opportunity to purchase or facilitate rehabilitation of their homes (Cash & Zuk 2019).

The idea of ensuring that investment by anchor institutions (universities, hospitals, and other large organizations that are rooted in place) is a source of inclusion and not displacement came up in multiple regions as an example of a strategy to mitigate investment-driven displacement. Anchor institutions can provide jobs in low-income areas through construction, long-term employment, and procurement practices (Porter et al. 2019), but they can also attract higher-income workers who can drive up housing prices in the vicinity. In **Memphis**, this conversation revolved around the Medical District, a 2.6-mile area of central Memphis containing eight large medical institutions that collectively employ over 20,000 people and have annual budgets totaling $1.2 billion in goods and services (Fisher-Bruns & Logan-Robinson 2018). The Memphis Medical District Collaborative coordinates community engagement and programs for these institutions, including efforts around workforce development, local hiring, and procurement from minority- and women-owned businesses, to promote anchor institution development without displacement. In **Atlanta**, the TransFormation Alliance focuses on the neighborhood between Fort McPherson (an

army base in the process of being redeveloped) and the Atlanta University Center and leverages these two anchor institutions to improve quality of life along southwest Atlanta's Lee Street corridor.

As a subset of investment-driven displacement, site teams reported concerns in their communities about "green gentrification," or the displacement pressures created by public investment in parks, trails, and other urban greening projects that may or may not have a direct relationship to climate mitigation or adaptation. Green gentrification can bring community benefits to more educated, high-income, and home-owning neighbors who benefit from access to green space and increased property values, while threatening the stability of more vulnerable community members. For example, **Chicago** has undergone significant residential changes near the "606," a rails-to-trails project running east-west along Bloomingdale Avenue on the northwest side of Chicago. On the east end of the 606, home prices were already high, but the neighborhoods that border the west end of the trail have seen prices increase as home buyers place a premium on trail access (Smith et al. 2016). In **Atlanta**, house prices rose by as much as 80% in some of the areas within a half-mile of the BeltLine rails-to-trails project between 2011 and 2015, which was between 18% and 27% more than the increase in values in other parts of the city during that time (Immergluck & Balan 2017). In response, Atlanta's Housing Justice League has conducted a community-based research and advocacy effort to outline strategies for a "BeltLine for All." Efforts to promote equitable open space development are especially critical in the face of rails-to-trails developments like the BeltLine and the 606, as these iconic greenways are the type of parks that recent research has found most likely to cause gentrification in vulnerable communities (Rigolon & Németh 2019).

Representatives across the four sites referenced concerns about green gentrification, but this phenomenon took different forms in each local context. Workshop participants in **Chicago** noted that green projects intended to provide needed investments in neighborhood resilience and wellbeing have also sparked concerns about displacement among residents of those neighborhoods. For example, the city's "Large Lots" program sells city-owned vacant parcels for a dollar, typically to neighboring homeowners who can plant gardens or simply maintain the parcel and increase the value of their home. In the Garfield Park neighborhood, two of these lots are slated for an "Eco-Orchard," which is being promoted as a climate strategy for the neighborhood and is part of Elevated Chicago's Kedzie Corridor workplan. A recent design competition winner proposed net-zero energy housing on two adjacent Large Lot sites. Such projects have faced community concerns about their potential to fuel displacement.

**Atlanta** participants described an ongoing "contagion of the BeltLine," with local governments and developers inspired by the BeltLine and seeking to create their own "mini BeltLines" in other vulnerable neighborhoods across the city. Low levels of trust in local government and developers have led to community suspicions about green infrastructure projects, according to workshop participants. For example, in Atlanta's Peoplestown neighborhood, the City is currently seeking to use eminent domain to build a park and pond to help with the street flooding discussed previously, but some residents suspect the city wishes to spur private development in the neighborhood and is using the flooding mitigation as a pretext to do so.

Multiple SPARCC sites, including **Atlanta**, **Chicago**, and **Memphis**, are identifying strategies to promote equitable park and open space development that prioritizes affordable housing, community stabilization, and access to opportunity to mitigate the harms of green gentrification. Participants mentioned a variety of potential solutions to the adverse impacts of green gentrification, most of which have been explored or proposed but have yet to be implemented. In response to the impacts of green gentrification on communities, some regions are attempting to adopt parks-related anti-displacement strategies (PRADS). PRADS may include broad policies, like requiring anti-displacement strategies in park funding systems, or project-specific actions like developing affordable housing near park sites (Rigolon & Christensen 2019).

**Chicago** has proposed implementing PRADS by relying on local small businesses to provide park concessions as an economic opportunity for low-income longtime residents of color, and by considering establishing community land

trusts and permanently affordable housing in targeted neighborhoods where new parks bring the greatest risk of gentrification and displacement. In **Atlanta**, the BeltLine tax-increment finance district was designed to capture value from this green investment to fund affordable housing (ibid.), and the Atlanta Land Trust formed to steward land for permanently affordable housing with a focus on areas around the BeltLine. **Memphis** participants expressed interest in value capture for future green infrastructure projects that could drive displacement, such as future portions of the Wolf River Trail and nearby green spaces such as the Heights Line. Revenue from that value capture could support community investments to prevent displacement and build wealth in communities. In **Denver**, a collaboration is leveraging community benefits resources from the Colorado Department of Transportation and the City of Denver to create a community land trust in response to plans for a new park at the site of a former highway viaduct, which has sparked concerns about green gentrification.

Beyond these four sites, coalitions like the Los Angeles Regional Open Space & Affordable Housing Collaborative (LA ROSAH), founded in 2016, are an impactful way to convene affordable housing and community developers, advocates, and community-based organizations to collaboratively identify strategies, like joint development and value capture, that promote open space development without green gentrification (Trinh & Yee 2018). LA ROSAH has identified scattered-site development with shared infrastructure and funding, "transformative infrastructure" integrating affordable housing with anti-displacement strategies, and strategic infill development as possible approaches to prevent green gentrification (Sivasubramanian 2019).

## DISINVESTMENT-DRIVEN DISPLACEMENT

**Disinvestment perpetuates gentrification and displacement across all four sites, but local drivers vary.**

Participants across the sites raised issues around disinvestment-driven displacement. Disinvestment in low- and moderate-income communities, especially communities of color, stems from both public- and private-sector decisions. LMI areas with large populations of people of color have systematically received less public-sector investment in infrastructure, from streets and sewers to schools and parks, due to racially-motivated policies, lack of political power, and neglect (Trounstine 2018, Kinder 2016). Racially-discriminatory housing policies and redlining reduced private-sector investment in low-income and minority communities, with ongoing implications for intergenerational wealth-building for people of color (Jackson 1985, Rothstein 2017). Access to credit, both for businesses and homeowners, has long been an issue in low-income and minority neighborhoods (Immergluck 2016). These and other forms of neighborhood disinvestment can induce displacement of LMI communities and communities of color, either when decay and abandonment prompt residents to leave, or when neighborhood decline paves the way for reinvestment that ultimately gentrifies the neighborhood and prices out these residents (Grier & Grier 1978). Disinvestment can also cause displaced residents to endure "hypermobility," both through forced moves and when relocations to substandard housing compel them to quickly move again, creating a cycle of detrimental housing instability (Desmond et al. 2015), as experienced in some of the immigrant gateway communities in **Denver**.

Although disinvestment-driven displacement emerged as a concern across sites, the drivers of this pattern vary by region. In **Atlanta**, participants raised concerns about limited access to capital in communities of color for business investment, home upgrades, and energy efficiency. This could further their risk for disinvestment-driven displacement, either by contributing to decay and eventual abandonment of these communities' neighborhoods or by inviting reinvestment and gentrification there.

Participants in **Chicago** cited numerous sources of disinvestment-driven displacement in their communities. As factors that particularly spur displacement of Black communities in Chicago, they described overcrowding, deferred

maintenance, and a lack of high-quality affordable housing as pervasive issues, along with gun violence, declining school quality, foreclosure, public housing demolition, and proximity to industrial land and other disamenities. Participants explained that the impacts of these factors in disinvested neighborhoods, along with lack of access to places of investment, contribute to an unequal distribution of risks and opportunities across the region. In particular, participants in the Chicago site visit noted that the city's Green Line South neighborhood is experiencing disinvestment-driven displacement, and vacant lots and public safety are of concern. One participant described that "near the 51st Street station, around 55th and Garfield, the conversation is around disinvestment, displacement, and lack of opportunity because of disinvestment" and emphasized local efforts to "[counter] the 'deficit narrative' of these areas." Nevertheless, despite the resourcefulness of this community, she noted that "people are leaving the community because there are not many opportunities to feel fulfilled." Participants described the detrimental cycle these dynamics create in Chicago neighborhoods, with the community trauma that comes with experiencing disinvestment leading to violence that contributes to families leaving the area, prompting school closures and further disinvestment.

The **Memphis** team noted health risks from disinvestment, such as mold in housing, and local efforts to address this, such as strategic code enforcement. A lack of access to capital makes it difficult for low-income Memphis homeowners to make necessary upgrades -- for example, in the Northside neighborhood. In Memphis, participants framed disinvestment in terms of employer departures and the resulting loss of jobs, which have compounded challenges around housing and the racial wealth gap. Factory closings have meant that fewer entry-level jobs are available, and participants reported that job centers have moved to the south of the region. There is a perception of a dearth of jobs in Memphis, with the result that a younger generation of Black professionals is leaving the city to look for opportunity elsewhere. Participants also described environmental justice concerns around brownfields near homes, such as former industrial sites and salvage yards. Households remaining in neighborhoods that are experiencing disinvestment-related displacement face issues such as increased crime and school closures. Participants in Memphis also described obstacles to accessing capital for home purchases and repairs in disinvested neighborhoods, along with issues for people who inherit homes, such as titling issues or disagreements among multiple beneficiaries.

Site partners noted potential responses to disinvestment-driven displacement concerns in their communities, including community land trusts and policy interventions to promote housing affordability and stability. Stakeholder working groups in **Memphis** are combatting disinvestment-driven displacement stemming from these and other forms of disinvestment from several angles: equitable development (racial equity impact assessments, homeownership strategies, and anti-displacement work), food and transit access (including funding a new grocery store), neighborhood preservation (building community development infrastructure in North Memphis and working with local business associations), and community engagement.

Examples from other US regions offer further pathways toward mitigating the harms of disinvestment-driven displacement. For example, high property tax delinquency rates present challenges for residents seeking loans for home repairs. In Minneapolis, the City of Lakes Community Land Trust is addressing this by helping stabilize at-risk low-income homeowners, particularly seniors, who face back taxes and deferred maintenance. Additionally, there is a perception in **Memphis** that heirs and institutional investors sit on properties without improving them because they expect the neighborhood to gentrify and are waiting to cash in. Prospective low-income homebuyers in Memphis face a relatively "slow" housing market, making it hard to get a loan because the values are too low or the number of comparable sales is too low for lenders to assess the value of a home. Policy ideas to address this pattern of disinvestment in a slow housing market, such as how to appraise properties for home loans when there are few sales, have been identified in Detroit.

To manage vacant and disinvested land and prevent speculation, Chicago's "Large Lots" program sells city-owned vacant parcels for a dollar, typically to neighboring homeowners, while Oakland, California has introduced a vacant-property tax of $6,000 per parcel to encourage restoring vacant land to productive, community-focused use.

Recently in Oakland, collective action by the [Moms 4 Housing](#) group led to an investor-speculator agreeing to sell a vacant house to Oakland Community Land Trust, potentially entering into negotiations around dozens of other vacant properties they own. Cities across the country are also pursuing "blight-fighting" strategies. For example, Kansas City has launched the data-driven [SOAR](#) (Stability, Occupation, and Revitalization) initiative to identify and plan for reinvestment in vulnerable neighborhoods. In Saint Petersburg, Florida's fight against abandoned "[zombie properties,](#)" the city files lawsuits against absentee owners and moves the properties into foreclosure to pursue rehabilitation and sell them to mission-driven affordable housing developers. Each of these approaches to mitigating disinvestment-driven displacement makes important strides toward high-quality, healthy affordable housing, along with increased stability and pathways toward community ownership.

## HEALTH

**Residential displacement has impacted the social determinants of health across all four sites, with local variations.**

Feedback from site participants reflected the new and mounting challenges low-income people face following displacement, ranging from loss of social capital, to lack of access to services, to poor access to transit and jobs. The conversation around receiving communities of displacement raised a variety of issues that these communities often face, including impacts to receiving community members' health, education, housing affordability, transit accessibility, and associated climate impacts on their neighborhoods.

Evidence from around the country demonstrates the likelihood of displaced people moving to places with lower resources. A study of out-movers from gentrifying neighborhoods in Philadelphia showed that people with lower credit scores were more likely to move to lower-income neighborhoods than out-movers with higher credit scores (Ding, Hwang, & Divringi 2016). A Bay Area survey of displaced households suggested that they tended to move to areas with fewer jobs and healthcare providers and more health and safety concerns than where they lived previously (Marcus & Zuk 2017). The survey also found that about a third of displaced households reported some period of homelessness or marginal housing following their displacement (Marcus & Zuk 2017). Another Bay Area study suggests that people with lower credit scores leaving areas with tenant protections tend to move to areas with more opportunities than low credit score tenants leaving areas without those protections, suggesting a greater share of forced moves among low-income people in areas lacking tenant protections (Hwang & Shrimali, 2019). A UDP and California Housing Partnership study of the Bay Area finds that current displacement of the region's low-income communities of color reveals emerging patterns of concentrated poverty, unequal access to resources, and racial re-segregation. In other words, as housing costs went up between 2000 and 2015 in job cores, low-income people of color moved to areas with lower housing costs, but also with fewer resources; the share of low-income people of color living in high-poverty, segregated areas in the Bay Area was higher in 2015 than in 2000 (UDP & CHP, 2018).

Low-income populations have been suburbanizing over the last several decades in response to a variety of forces, including housing cost pressures and changes in where jobs are located (Kneebone & Berube 2013). However, for many, this move to the suburbs has not been a move to opportunity. Neighborhoods of concentrated poverty have emerged in the suburbs (Kneebone, Nadeu, & Berube 2011). In many regions, the concentration of suburban poverty is occurring in particular outlying cities (Mattiuzzi & Weir 2019). In the **Atlanta** region, suburban poverty has grown in unincorporated areas that are dependent on county services, while a spate of incorporations has encompassed mostly higher-income populations (ibid.). In the **Chicago** region, suburban poverty has grown in small, suburban cities with populations under 50,000 people, which may have limited capacity and resources due to their size. In the **Denver** region, poverty has suburbanized, but less dramatically and more in large suburban cities which may have greater capacity (ibid.).

Impacts to receiving communities emerged across sites, particularly related to transit access and social determinants of health, including economic security and access to social networks. When assessing transit accessibility impacts on receiving communities, **Atlanta** stakeholders expressed concerns about people who are displaced to suburban areas losing access to public transportation and facing unsafe conditions on large arterial roads and highways that do not have sidewalks or safe pedestrian crossings. They also raised the issue of people who do have cars having to travel farther to jobs, childcare, schools, and services. The **Denver** team noted that outlying working-class suburbs have become destinations for Blacks and Latinxs displaced from urban neighborhoods. The cities of Thornton, Commerce City, and Northglenn in the Central North part of the metro area have also absorbed displaced households. These suburbs have poor transit access to reach the Adams County seat of Brighton, forcing families to travel long distances to access countywide human services based there. Traditionally, the transit districts in these areas have had low ridership, and the Denver site team identified a need for conversations about improving service in these areas. In **Memphis**, participants described stories shared by residents about receiving communities with worse access to transit, sometimes resulting in job loss.

Upon being displaced into new communities, residents are also impacted by changes in social, economic, and environmental factors that act as social determinants of health and wellbeing. For example, participant concerns about receiving communities included challenges using SNAP benefits for food because some merchants in these areas do not accept EBT payment. The **Atlanta** site team discussed the impact of unemployment and housing instability on physical health and on the wellbeing of children in particular. Atlanta participants noted the impacts of displacement on school systems and on children's life trajectories, expressing that children "lose a chunk of learning every time they move; if they move multiple times a year, that's hard to recover from" and can produce "ripple effects" or even become a "precondition for incarceration" among vulnerable youth communities. In **Memphis**, participants stressed physical and mental health risks in receiving communities, given that people are moving to areas without the social networks they had in place to help mitigate poverty. Participants also noted that loss of social networks impacts both displaced households and the friends and family they leave behind.

To address these impacts on receiving communities, the **Atlanta** Regional Commission (ARC), which works on everything from transportation to aging issues at the metropolitan level, has a strategic initiative that specifically addresses education issues. "Learn4Life", initiated by the ARC, promotes regional coordination and provides data to its partners on issues from early childhood education to high school graduation rates. Housing stability is also a strategic goal of the Atlanta public school system.

Local and regional governments must acknowledge the emerging mismatch between where their low-income communities live and where the services they depend on are provided, as displacement is part of a new geography of poverty in regions across the US. Once they have done so, they can pursue a variety of solutions to more equitably connect displaced residents with vital resources and social networks. Outside of Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, and Memphis, a pilot program called Via to Transit in King County, Washington is providing on-demand van rides to and from transit stops for the cost of a bus fare and allowing riders to transfer fares to and from transit. Community preference policies, which offer priority for residents seeking to live in new subsidized housing when it is built in the city in which they live or work,[4] can be an effective strategy to support communities wishing to remain in place as their neighborhoods benefit from new development. For example, Portland, Oregon's "Right to Return" or North/Northeast Preference Policy aims to counteract the harms of forced relocations to receiving communities by giving family members of displaced residents preference for housing support and a chance to return to the communities in North and Northeast Portland where urban renewal pushed their families out.

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[4] Community preference policies are often structured to provide preference to residents who live and/or work in the city in which the subsidized housing is being built.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Climate change's impacts – specifically around rising heat and flooding – are expected to exacerbate residential displacement patterns across sites.**

Climate change is impacting low-income communities and intersects with issues of gentrification and displacement (Urban Displacement Project 2020). The term "climate gentrification" refers to several phenomena: 1) low-income people being priced out of areas that are newly desirable because of their relative lack of vulnerability to climate impacts, such as sea level rise; 2) displacement that occurs because of the cost burden of climate impacts where people currently live, such as loss of home insurance or increases in rent to pay for repairs after an extreme weather event; and 3) the potential for green gentrification and displacement due to the value increase of homes and rental properties created by public-sector investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, if these investments are not coupled with protections or support for LMI renters and homeowners (Keenan et al. 2018).[5] Migration from coastal areas to temperate, inland metropolitan areas of the US, or "climate migration," may also cause population pressures in regions including **Atlanta**, projected to have 250,000 or more climate out-migrants by 2100 due to previously unforeseen sea level rise, and **Denver**, to which 50,000 people may flee from coastal cities like New York and Miami under the most severe sea level rise projections over the same time period (Hauer 2017).

Recovery from past disasters, and vulnerability to costs and risks associated with future events in existing low-income communities and receiving communities of displacement, are concerns in diverse regions across the country. Recent extreme weather events, from Hurricane Michael in Florida to flooding in the Midwest to wildfires in California, have demonstrated the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable residents who struggle to recover from the loss of a scarce affordable housing stock and may face displacement or homelessness as a result (Lee & Zandt 2018).

The **Denver** site visit surfaced the issue of the health impacts of urban heat islands. The 2013 floods in Denver led to displacement when the flooding damaged both stable and disinvested housing types. Participants in **Atlanta** pointed to rising heat as a climate concern, and an equity issue given uneven ability to bear rising energy costs. Atlanta participants also noted the emerging pattern of "land and property further away from climate events getting more valuable" as a "flip" from previous land value patterns that can push poor people away. The costs of weatherization improvements, installing air conditioning, and rising energy bills were among the climate adaptation issues of concern to **Memphis** participants. **Atlanta** participants noted that, given uneven ability to bear rising energy costs in the region, the City's cooling centers are a resource for residents in need that may or may not be available to displaced residents in their new locations. **Memphis** participants expressed a desire to learn more about weatherization programs for multifamily buildings and energy cost relief for low-income renters.

Public- and private-sector investments are needed to address climate shocks and stresses, as well as disaster preparation and recovery, in low-income communities (Keenan & Mattiuzzi 2019). Strategies include green bonds, post-disaster loan pools, and property-assessed financing for weatherization (Community Development Innovation Review 2019). Given the burden of climate risk that residents face when living in affordable or public housing developments sited within floodplains in regions across the US, organizations like the Greater Houston Flood Mitigation Consortium and Enterprise's Green Communities program can empower these communities with

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[5] The third part of this definition, green gentrification, was discussed separately above, as we have teased apart impacts on displacement of climate shocks and stressors (in this section) from impacts of mitigation and adaptation investments (in above section).

information about flooding risk and mitigation opportunities to reduce their vulnerability (Furman Center 2017). Additionally, advocates have pointed to community ownership as a proactive strategy to help ensure recovery happens more equitably in the event of a disaster. The Caño Martín Peña Community Land Trust in Puerto Rico is an example of a community ownership model that has meant a quicker return and recovery for residents following climate disasters, such as Hurricane Maria (Leon 2019).

# Connecting Local Engagement Themes to San Francisco and Los Angeles

Although San Francisco and Los Angeles were not within the scope of UDP's site engagement for this project, cross-cutting themes from the four project sites noted are also pertinent to local efforts to address gentrification and displacement in these California regions. It is worth noting that San Francisco and Los Angeles housing justice efforts are occurring against the backdrop of extreme housing shortages and wealth gaps that have contributed to severe housing affordability issues, further perpetuating gentrification, displacement, and exclusion at a larger scale and faster pace compared with other parts of the country.[6]  For example, in Los Angeles County, the number of gentrified neighborhoods (Census tracts) increased by 16% between 1990 and 2015. Sixty-two percent of low-income households across the thirteen-county Bay Area region live in neighborhoods at risk of or already experiencing displacement, with moderate and high-income neighborhoods losing 40% more low-income households than more inexpensive neighborhoods (Zuk et al. 2015). Both regions are experiencing advanced stages of gentrification and displacement, which further justifies the need for early action in places like Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, and Memphis.

While the underlying conditions driving gentrification and displacement are markedly different in San Francisco and Los Angeles compared with the four sites that comprised this project, the cross-cutting themes still speak to ongoing challenges as well as numerous local advances made to address them. This section provides a high-level summary of a selection of these efforts to illuminate potential pathways for anti-displacement efforts in other parts of the country, a number of which are being led by local SPARCC affiliates (See Table 2).

Racial equity advocacy is strong in both the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, influencing grassroots organizing and local government work. Both regions have created "equity atlases" that track key metrics disaggregated by race, including income, employment, housing burden, linguistic isolation, and use of police force. These indicators help to demonstrate racial inequities in the regions and offer critical data and frameworks to build coalitions for racial equity-driven work. In Los Angeles, embRACE LA has trained facilitators to host over 100 community "dinner dialogues" about race and racism. In the Bay Area, the City of Oakland founded its Department of Race and Equity in 2016, leveraging this resource to work with departments across city government on eliminating systemic causes of racial disparity for Oakland residents. The Bay Area's 6 Wins for Social Equity Network further promotes racial equity in the region by convening advocates to lobby for regional planning policies that break the patterns of sprawl, segregation, and pollution that continue to disadvantage communities of color.

Both California regions have faced the threat of green gentrification, and local community groups have responded with innovative solutions. In the Bay Area city of Richmond, Pogo Park facilitates the transformation of blighted or little-used spaces in the city's Iron Triangle neighborhood into "by the people, for the people" parks that aim to connect lower-income residents and youth to vital resources rather than catalyzing gentrification there. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust applies an environmental justice lens to create accessible parks and community gardens for all, guided by community input throughout the process. LA THRIVES convenes organizations focused on

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[6] See Urban Displacement Project's gentrification and displacement maps for San Francisco and Los Angeles at https://www.urbandisplacement.org.

equitable development in Los Angeles and has made the case for joint development of parks and affordable housing to mitigate the pressures of green gentrification (Trinh & Yee 2018).

**Table 2. San Francisco and Los Angeles examples across SPARCC gentrification and displacement themes**

| SPARCC GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT THEMES | SAN FRANCISCO | LOS ANGELES |
|---|---|---|
| **Racial Equity** | - 6 Wins for Social Equity Network**<br>- Bay Area Equity Atlas<br>- Oakland Department of Race and Equity | - embRACE LA<br>- Southern California Equity Atlas |
| **Green Gentrification** | - Pogo Park | - LA THRIVES**<br>- Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust |
| **Disinvestment-driven displacement** | - Oakland Community Land Trust<br>- Oakland Preservation of Affordable Housing Fund<br>- San Francisco Small Sites Program | - Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust<br>- T.R.U.S.T. South LA |
| **Social Determinants of Health** | - Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative**<br>- East Oakland Building Healthy Communities<br>- Healthy Richmond | - Healthy, Equitable, Active Land Use Network<br>- Boyle Heights Building Healthy Communities<br>- South LA Building Healthy Communities |
| **Climate Change** | - Resilient By Design- Bay Area<br>- Climate Equity Strategy Group/Great Communities Collaborative** | - South LA Climate Commons Plan/SCOPE |

\*\* Denotes Local SPARCC Affiliate

Land trusts in both communities have emerged to promote neighborhood stability and mitigate disinvestment-driven displacement pressures in communities of color. In the Bay Area, the Oakland Community Land Trust incorporated in 2009 and has since established 21 permanently affordable single-family homes, three multi-unit/mixed-use preservation projects, and ten parcels dedicated to community food production and job training. The Bay Area cities of San Francisco and Oakland have also initiated local government efforts to preserve their stock of existing affordable housing. San Francisco's Small Sites Program removes small rent-stabilized properties from the speculative market and converts them to more permanently affordable housing, ensuring that these properties remain affordable long-term and protecting their tenants from vulnerability to eviction and displacement. Oakland's Preservation of Affordable Housing Fund, established in 2019, offers a municipal investment in the work of community land trusts and limited equity housing cooperatives to protect small rental properties from speculation and preserve their long-term affordability. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust focuses on empowering communities of color in the design, construction, and stewardship of accessible open spaces in their neighborhoods while also working on grassroots policy reform toward more equitable development. The community land trust T.R.U.S.T. South LA focuses on stabilizing the neighborhoods south of Downtown Los Angeles,

combatting the pressures of disinvestment and displacement there with long-term community control of the land in close collaboration with low-income community residents.

Health-focused organizations in both California communities acknowledge the critical importance of social determinants of health and seek to address regional health inequities that extend into housing, transportation, and access to resources and social networks. Neighborhoods in both regions participate in the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative that uplifts land use planning and anti-displacement work as critical to community health and convenes organizations fighting for affordable healthcare access and access to opportunity in underserved communities. In Los Angeles, the Healthy, Equitable, Active Land Use Network advocates for more inclusive land use investments and practices as a pathway to reduce health inequities and secure funding for "health-promoting infrastructure" in low-income communities of color. Healthy Richmond convenes youth, residents, and community-based organizations advocating for policy change toward health equity and racial justice in the Bay Area city of Richmond, with priorities including healthcare access for vulnerable populations, health in all policies, education equity, economic revitalization, and criminal justice reform. The Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative takes this work to the regional scale by providing public health departments with research, policy briefs, and other guidance to support affordable and supportive housing as a means of reducing housing burden and therefore promoting health equity.

San Francisco and Los Angeles are both experiencing vulnerability to climate change impacts, and a variety of initiatives have arisen to promote equitable, community-based resilience strategies at both sites. The Bay Area's Resilient by Design challenge called upon youth and other residents to engage with government stakeholders and design experts to craft community-based solutions, including innovative resilience plans for local creeks, estuaries, and the San Francisco Bay itself. In 2018, the Great Communities Collaborative convened the Climate Equity Strategy Group to support existing community-led efforts to prepare for the impacts of climate change, centering the lived experiences of low-income communities and communities of color throughout a yearlong process. In Los Angeles, the South LA Climate Commons works with local residents and schools to develop solutions both to climate change impacts and displacement pressures, with a particular focus on the Slauson Corridor as this area contends with historical disinvestment, climate vulnerability, and proposed catalytic transportation investments.

Both of these California regions have made meaningful progress toward addressing the cross-cutting themes that emerged in Chicago, Atlanta, Denver, and Memphis, from bringing a racial equity focus to the forefront of decision-making processes to empowering residents to build healthy, stable, and resilient futures for their communities. These successful actions and innovative coalitions offer inspiration for the other SPARCC sites to take comparable steps relevant to their local contexts as their gentrification and displacement pressures intensify. Nevertheless, San Francisco and Los Angeles face immense challenges as they continue to grow and experience the tumultuous impacts of catalytic investment, affordable housing shortage, and ever more frequent extreme weather events. Stakeholders from the four sites that comprised this project will need to watch closely as Californians adapt to these challenges and critically reflect upon what they may mean for residents of their regions in the future.

# Conclusion

This project confirmed that gentrification and displacement impact communities across the U.S., not just regions considered to be "hot markets" such as San Francisco and Los Angeles. Furthermore, as we learned in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, and Memphis, there is no one definitive pattern around displacement. Given everything we know about the negative impacts of displacement, whether residential, cultural, or political, this points to a need for policy strategies that address the varied manifestations of neighborhood change. In engaging with these sites, we saw the influence of not only investment but disinvestment (and the complex relationship between the two); the role of cultural and political displacement even where residential displacement does not take place, including the impacts on mental and physical health of both displacement and gentrification; the challenges of shifting demographics in receiving communities, particularly for service provision and access; and the impacts of climate shocks and stressors, as well as the investments designed to mitigate them, on neighborhoods. With this diversity of experiences, we hope that readers in cities around the country will be able to identify with some aspect of the neighborhood change patterns covered here, in order to be able to more effectively and proactively respond towards more equitable development.

The experiences of these diverse sites should also be a call to critically reflect on literature that calls into question the prevalence or seriousness of displacement, especially in cases where such findings are premised upon narrow problem definition (e.g. only looking at residential displacement, while ignoring the impacts of cultural and political displacement), national samples, or misleading comparisons (using non-gentrifying low-income neighborhoods experiencing hypermobility as a comparison for gentrifying neighborhoods).

Turning towards the types of strategies that can be put into place across these different kinds of neighborhoods, some principles emerge. First, all solution approaches must come with a strong focus on racial equity, since all are up against generational legacies of racial inequity. And it takes organizing to pass anti-displacement policies, such as tenant protections, right to return/preference policies, value capture towards affordable housing production, leverage of anchor institutions, and preservation policies, including community ownership models. Moreover, it is key to not only prevent displacement, but also to respond to displacement that has already taken place, ensuring receiving communities have services and a means of accessing these services. Finally, all equitable development strategies must be implemented with a climate lens -- both to ensure these strategies are not vulnerable to climate risk, and to ensure that efforts toward equitable development do not conflict with climate goals. By the same token, climate resiliency strategies must be implemented with a lens for vulnerability and equity (Urban Displacement Project 2020).

Our goal with bringing together these different experiences of neighborhood change and responsive policy approaches is to facilitate the construction of a national narrative based on this unifying knowledge -- so that communities can lift up and learn from one another's displacement stories, acknowledge their connections, legitimize their stories in the eyes of policymakers and elected officials, and engage with best practice policy and planning interventions from around the country. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to bring catalytic change to our communities, we must facilitate this national collaboration now more than ever to shift the narrative toward a just and equitable recovery that mitigates displacement risk and promotes stable, thriving, and affordable communities for all.

# Local SPARCC Collaborators

| REGION | RESEARCH PARTNERS | SITE LEADS |
|---|---|---|
| Atlanta | Atlanta Regional Commission | TransFormation Alliance |
| Chicago | DePaul Institute for Housing Studies | Elevated Chicago |
| Denver | Colorado Futures Center (formerly Shift Research Labs) | Mile High Connects |
| Memphis | Neighborhood Preservation, Inc. | BLDG Memphis |

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