

Capitol Hill EcoDistrict

# Public Life in Capitol Hill, Seattle

A Vision and Implementation Report



Fall 2023



**MITHŪN**



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### PROJECT TEAM

Donna Moodie, EcoDistrict Executive Director

Erin Fried, EcoDistrict Deputy Director

Brooke Bradford, EcoDistrict Community Development Coordinator

Anisha Azad, EcoDistrict Intern

Sarah Diekroeger, EcoDistrict Intern

MiKayla Cole, EcoDistrict Intern

Vesta Behboodi, EcoDistrict Intern

Sierra Topp, EcoDistrict Intern

## Context-setting

The Capitol Hill EcoDistrict promotes environmental resilience, social equity, and cultural vibrancy in Seattle's center city. Our community, which we define by impact, includes all who live, work, play, or are otherwise affected by the choices made here. In many ways, this includes most Seattle residents. In addition to those present in the neighborhood, we feel specific accountability to adjacent communities and to those displaced from Seattle due to rising rents and other consequences of skyrocketing development.

The EcoDistrict works to meet a broad mandate while connecting directly with specific segments of our community, prioritizing the needs of BIPOC communities, people experiencing homelessness, elders, LGBTQIA+ communities, youth, low-income people, and immigrants and refugees. In addition, we partner closely with artists and small business owners to build communities of support.

Capitol Hill is the heart of the LGBTQ community in Seattle and home to more artists than any other neighborhood. Its nearly 40,000 residents, more than 80% of whom are renters, represent a range of identities, backgrounds, and experiences. Nearly 30% of the total population are people of color. While Capitol Hill is one of the most densely populated communities in the Pacific Northwest, living and moving within it is not a homogenous experience – income disparity between the northern and southern edges is profound. In 2018, more than 16% of Capitol Hill residents lived below the poverty level. We believe that number to have increased due to the pandemic, evidenced in part by the dramatic increase in people living in public.

The pandemic and racial reckoning have had outsized impacts on our neighborhood, which is burdened with a history of redlining and racial covenants. Cal Anderson Park, often thought of as Seattle’s “living room”, was central to months of protests against police brutality toward Black communities, was the site of the Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHOP) zone and was a subsequent focus of tension as homeless encampments increased the visibility of our unhoused neighbors in public spaces. The EcoDistrict has been instrumental in addressing these issues, poignant and painful as they are, with participation in the [Sentinel Event Review](#) and with leadership in convening dialogue to hold community needs and to chart a path forward together.

## Methodology

The following section includes several components. First, a literature review evaluates local initiatives and concepts with relevance to the Capitol Hill neighborhood and zooms out to a global context for learning and diversifying perspectives. It pulls from theoretical texts and experts in the field to round out real-world examples. As goals were formulated for study, this literature review guided an understanding of where improvements, stronger connections, and recommendations could be made, and how to better involve the community. Second, it describes several baseline studies conducted to assess the quality of space and social interaction. These were performed prior to the COVID pandemic and shutdown, which prompted further study in the form of a community resilience mapping exercise to better understand systems of resilience as they contribute to unmet needs which surface in public spaces as those needs grow. Finally, several supporting efforts by students at the University of Washington College of Built Environments furthered ideas for pilot projects, activations, and public realm improvements that focused on stormwater management.



# Literature Review

## Local Context

Capitol Hill and other Seattle neighborhoods hold valuable lessons for public life planning. A review of existing success stories is critical in knowing where to allocate time and resources to Capitol Hill's neighborhood-specific goals. From the research, it was found that public participation and engagement, implementation strategies, and testing different pilots/strategies for effectiveness is crucial to any successful project. Where possible, it is important to enhance existing infrastructure through cultural and historical considerations and preservation. Many projects use language and methods to avoid and reduce displacement and gentrification while bringing in new opportunities for vibrancy. Lastly, to have a sense of completion, visualizations that clearly report back to the community are essential. The above ***strengths can also be weaknesses and points of tension without clarity on who the audience, stakeholders, and decision-makers are.***

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Methods for public participation were pulled from the Jackson Hub project located in Seattle's Chinatown International District, which brought into focus the history of constructing large infrastructure projects without centering Black, Indigenous, and People of Color voices and the reality that they will bear the burden of systemic racism and racialized violence<sup>1</sup>. The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) sought to remedy this by building on past community-led planning processes, raising community voices, and

improving coordination to center racial equity and focus on community values. Meetings and presentations to stakeholders informed project direction, as well as broader public input including online surveys, public

events with non-narrative forms for guiding design direction, and walking audits.

Most other local initiatives followed a similar pattern. Pioneer Square Street Concept plans conducted public outreach through community meeting and surveys so the public could vocalize what changes they would like to see to the streets<sup>2</sup>, Neighbours Alley held workshops,

<sup>1</sup> Jackson Hub (2019, March) [Jackson Hub Reconnecting Neighborhoods](#). Jackson Hub Concept Plan by Alliance for Pioneer Square.

<sup>2</sup> Alliance for Pioneer Square, & framework. (2016, July). [Pioneer Square Streetscape Concept plans](#). Pioneer Square Streetscape concept plan by Alliance for Pioneer Square.

conducted surveys, and celebrated successes<sup>3</sup>, Belmont Green Streets educated and involved residents with a one day community charrette<sup>4</sup>, and Melrose Promenade refined their process through community engagement including surveys, public meetings, and a community lottery for the crosswalk art design<sup>5</sup>. Providing the community with an activity or a fun event and then asking questions is a great way to create value, build trust, and establish a relationship. In turn, community engagement on a small scale can help to support involvement, awareness, and generate buzz for larger projects.

From public meetings, a shared fear was evident among residents that improvements will lead to gentrification and displacement. Local examples showed potential mitigation of displacement by building on existing infrastructure and taking into consideration the cultural and historical elements of the area. Projects like Belmont Summit Green Streets were conscious of where they sourced funding to reduce pressures that could contribute to gentrification. They instead tried and received funding from mission-aligned organizations and focused more on community led efforts that used volunteer labor and donated materials. When thinking about other context experts on this topic, it was beneficial to look to the people who formed the

Central District's neighborhood design guidelines. The goal of the design guidelines was to improve the historic pattern of discrimination that has created a structural foundation of inequity. They addressed segregation, inequality, and the lack of progress to build the black community's socioeconomic status through intentional design and public life planning<sup>6</sup>.

At every step, it was crucial to report back and update participants on how their engagement contributed to the projects' successes and the ability to move forward. Neighbour's Alley held a community visioning process to reimagine the alley and then shared out the results in a publicly available report. Jackson Hub produced a concept plan to show overall project goals, which were being addressed by each project, and where there was overlap. Across projects, multimedia and mixed methods were used for reaching different audiences with varying understandings of the content and process. This included infographics, reports, videos, social media, newsletters, and other ways of packaging a story for public consumption.

Where project support can falter is when organizations do not report back or engage the correct audiences and decision makers. Uptown Urban Design Framework provided insight into the consequences. In this study, multiple

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<sup>3</sup> Capitol Hill EcoDistrict & Framework (2019, October) [Neighbour's Alley Vision Report](#).  
<sup>4</sup> Green Infrastructure Foundation, (2018) [Community, Equity, and Placemaking with Green Infrastructure in Seattle. A Visualization and Cost-Benefit Analysis](#).

<sup>5</sup> Berger Partnership, Schemata Workshop, and Weinstein AU (2013, September). [Melrose Promenade Visioning Project](#).  
<sup>6</sup> Seattle Office of Planning & Community Development (2018). [Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines](#).

designs were proposed, but there was no association to who was responsible, what agencies would need to be considered, or who the target audience might be for the report<sup>7</sup>. The study was completed without updates on successes or implementation strategies. As was learned from Neighbour's Alley and Pioneer Square, partnerships are vital in garnering community support and involvement, especially once projects are completed and stewardship is necessary to maintain infrastructure and engagement.

From regional and hyperlocal examples, it is evident that public life planning projects that center human interaction, engagement, and design offer the most benefit. For the projects to be successful, public participation and community learning should be addressed before implementation. Pilot projects and surveys can guide decisions that are aligned with community needs in the moment and foreseeable future. There will have to be distinctions made between competing priorities, and the public life study will have to take into consideration the historical and cultural implications of decisions made, who is historically left out of the conversation, and who could be negatively affected. These considerations will inform a more equitable project.

### **Global Context**

Shifting to a global perspective, many examples exist which show unique and

creative solutions to public life challenges. This section looks to Providence's Climate Justice Plan, Milan's efforts to reduce car use in a post COVID-world, India's street vendors, and shared lessons and challenges from Urban Commons around the world to better understand how changes could be implemented in Capitol Hill around public life planning.

In Hyderabad, India, a survey of street vendors uncovered the importance of tree canopies and green spaces to the success of their businesses and personal well-being<sup>8</sup>. It's estimated that 91% percent of the street vendors in Hyderabad live in slums with limited access to essential resources, and there is extremely low per capita green space. The livelihood of these residents relies on this commerce, and the functionality of trees keeps people healthy while they conduct business and attract customers.

Coordination between decision-makers and marginalized communities is essential for the creation of policies that heal and do not further discrimination and inequity. This relationship helps to aid in the transition, scale, and risk involved, but it is important to set clear boundaries and agreements. Joining forces with like-minded groups to increase collective action and partnerships, in essence, do not reinvent the wheel but tap into the expertise of


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<sup>7</sup> Seattle Office of Planning & Community Development (Revised 2019). [Uptown Neighborhood Design Guidelines](#).

<sup>8</sup> Nagendra, Harini (2020, July). [The street as workspace: Assessing street vendors' rights to trees in Hyderabad, India](#). ScienceDirect: Landscape and Urban Planning, Volume 199.



people who have been doing this work<sup>9</sup>. ***When trust is built into those relationships, decision making power can begin to shift to front-line communities***<sup>10</sup>. In the case of Hyderabad, India there was more momentum behind advocating for the accessibility of trees and greenspaces in urban planning decision (Nagendra, 2020). In Milan, data was gathered during the COVID-19 shutdown which showed that when vehicular traffic dropped by 30-75%, air pollution followed<sup>11</sup>. From this drop in numbers, there has been an attempt to keep them reduced as people returned to work. This looks like reallocating 22 miles of street space that was for vehicle traffic and instead widening pavements, implementing 20 mph speed limits, and designating pedestrian and cyclist priority streets.



When trust is built into those relationships, decision making power can begin to shift to front-line communities.

Lastly, these global perspectives share lessons on how to ensure sustainability and longevity in a project and place. There are two main characteristics to consider once the problem is established: the action needed to be taken, and where to find support to ensure that an organization, idea, or project can survive beyond the initial “fight”. Passion will

help keep the project afloat even when it is faced with challenges. Examples of grassroots and community centered design are present in both Milan and Providence. In Milan, with the expanded pedestrian prioritization, the city will see economic benefits as walking and cycling will promote the visitation of shops, bars, and restaurants. In Providence, sources of industrial health hazards and toxic sites are being held accountable for their air and water pollution. Now, the area will see improvements to design policies that can make clean energy more affordable and accessible to low-income communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change.

Through a participatory process, these global cities have seen improvements to their communities’

health and well-being. Inspiration can be drawn and applied to this public life project by focusing on the initial problem, who is affected, and who has power to change it. From there, experts in lived experience can be empowered to participate on the “front lines” to advocate for themselves and their communities. Lastly, succession planning

<sup>9</sup> Dellenbaugh-Loss, Mary (2020, July). [Shared lessons and challenges from urban commons around the world](#). Shareable: Urban Commons Cookbook Series.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzgerald, Joan (2020, August). [Transitioning from Climate Justice Planning to Climate Justice Action](#). Planetizen.

<sup>11</sup> Laker, Laura (2020, April). [Milan announces ambitious scheme to reduce car use after lockdown](#). The Guardian.

can ensure the sustainability of an idea once the initial effort is complete.

### ***Best Practices from the Literature***

Moving from project specific examples to a more theoretical approach, the history of planning as a discipline is embedded in settler colonialism and racial biases. The continued strategy of making decisions based on precedent risks perpetuating problems and repeating negative outcomes. To understand how cities function and their role in society requires a deeper dive into history, decisions made, and outcomes that create separation in the name of preservation or that support growth, vitality, and a diverse community. A potential first step to understanding this involves looking at ownership of the land itself and the laws that govern it.

The power dynamics between land and people can be traced back to Indigenous ways of life and how it has been submerged beneath settler colonial ideologies, which persist today<sup>12</sup>. For example, the racist history of zoning and land use policies, which were used as a means for social control and to keep specific people out of areas deemed more valuable and in need of protecting<sup>13</sup>. The desire to maintain a neighborhood often holds undertones or blatant “othering” that limits opportunities for diversity and accessibility. This brings up crucial questions as the project moves forward:

How does zoning function on Capitol Hill? How is the “character” and “history” of this area defined? Are the methods of research and implementation strategies proposed in this study equitable?

Once again, to help support a just and responsive approach to urban planning and changes to the built environment, there must be alignment and agreements across owners, renters, and other stakeholders to fully understand the local conditions, history, narratives, and nuances<sup>14</sup>. The theory and practice of co-production is one possible intervention into how the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous placemaking could be conceived and enacted in the urban environment (Barry, 2020). Through co-creation and asking questions, there are opportunities to be responsive to the community’s actual needs and not propose or implement non-priority items. Heavier reliance can be placed on the coordination with and cooperation of residents and strangers who have an unspoken/mutual understanding of how to act and move around each other<sup>15</sup>.

Placemaking can call attention to the notions of belonging and becoming in a settler-colonial U.S. city. Thinking about what cities could become and who is allowed to belong in them are fundamentally linked (Barry, 2020). However, that kinship and feeling of safety has been stripped from people and

<sup>12</sup> Barry, Janice and Julian Agyeman (2020, September). [On belonging and becoming in the settler-colonial city: Co-produced futures, placemaking, and urban planning in the United States](#). Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and the City, 1:1-2, 22-41.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, Gretchen (2020, September). [How discussions of ‘neighborhood character’ reinforce structural racism](#). Rewire, Twin Cities Public Television.

<sup>14</sup> Gehl Institute (2017, September). [The Open Public Life Data Protocol](#).

<sup>15</sup> Jacobs, Jane (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities: The Uses of Sidewalks - Safety*. Random House. PP 29-54.

requires recognition of the harm done to implement restorative justice in the future<sup>16</sup>. Physical spaces, like sidewalks, that would have no meaning without people using them or buildings to be connected to, show how the built form influences daily life. The meaning placed on them, the routes people choose to take, and where they feel safe from block to block is very personal (Jacobs, 1961). Planning requires a commitment to centering issues of equity in every discussion, including streets, parks, and private use of mixed-use developments<sup>17</sup>.

Once an understanding of stakeholders, history, and impact is established, there must be a system of accountability to ensure that actions are being taken on promises made. This could look like building real and ongoing relationships with community members and moving beyond gestures of solidarity (Barry, 2020). As this project progresses through data collection, surveying the community, and creating recommendations for how the city can respond, the larger context and existing conditions need to be front of mind so as not to perpetuate racial and cultural biases.

## **Conclusion**

Because this work is human centered and scaled, it is important to foster those relationships and build a foundation of trust with constituents. Accountability is a crucial component. When working with communities that have been disproportionately affected by negative outcomes, this is especially important. Next is transparency. Intentions should be made clear at the beginning of a study, project, or change in physical space and why that specific location or group of people was chosen. Involving others and giving people the opportunity to share their opinions and expertise helps balance power dynamics and inspire creative solutions. If people are committed to the results, there will also be sustainability and longevity in a project. Overall, people need to be at the center from start to finish, and various types of expertise can be used to support advocacy for change.

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<sup>16</sup> Toronto Abolition Convergence. [An Indigenous Abolitionist Study Guide](#). Yellowhead Institute, 10 Aug. 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Brasuell, James (2020, June). [Violence against Black Americans a moment of reckoning for the planning profession](#). Planetizen.

## Baseline Studies

### PUBLIC LIFE STUDY

The [Public Life Study](#) takes an in-depth look at the physical qualities of Capitol Hill's public realm. Conducted in summer of 2019 by UW Landscape Architecture master's candidates Peter Samuels and Lauren Wong, the study used the Gehl Method, an internationally recognized protocol to assess how people experience cities at various scales (Gehl, 2017). This work was supported by the Scan Design Foundation of Inger and Jens Bruun, the UW Green Futures Lab, and Schulze + Grasso Urban Design in Copenhagen. It was informed by staff at Community Roots Housing, Capitol Hill EcoDistrict, Seattle Department of Transportation, and local institutions, businesses, and residents.

The study area focuses on main themes around mobility, neighborhood destinations, and ecological qualities. To do this, they assessed the effectiveness of the public realm in all of Capitol Hill: pavement quality, lighting, noise, cycling network + facilities, public transit, vehicular traffic + parking, collisions, resources + amenities, open spaces, public art, trees, and stormwater management.

Lastly, the students used the 12 Quality Criteria developed by Gehl Architects to further assess the neighborhood the study area (*figure 1*): the Pike Pine corridor, the Broadway business district,

the Olive and Denny economic area, and the 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue business district. Each block face was assessed for enjoyment, comfort, and protection for community members. They found while certain areas were strong across the criteria, there was not consistency or much communication/connectivity amongst the different zones.

Within Capitol Hill, public spaces hold both desirable and harmful aspects. Patches, parks, and campuses provide a space to gather and connect, however they can also create isolation and lack cohesion across the neighborhood without proper wayfinding, poor connectivity, and degraded pavement quality. The distinct corridors of restaurants, bars, and organizations reflect the history of the neighborhood and its character, but the way these spaces are activated vary differently between day and night and do not always invite diverse groups of people in to explore or linger. Lastly, multi-modal forms of public transportation provide many options for community members to get around, however a lack of integration and the prioritization of car infrastructure rather than improved pedestrian and bike safety weaken the transit system. By studying the public realm and integrating transit, improving wayfinding, and strengthening the quality of infrastructure, connectivity can be fostered in central Seattle.

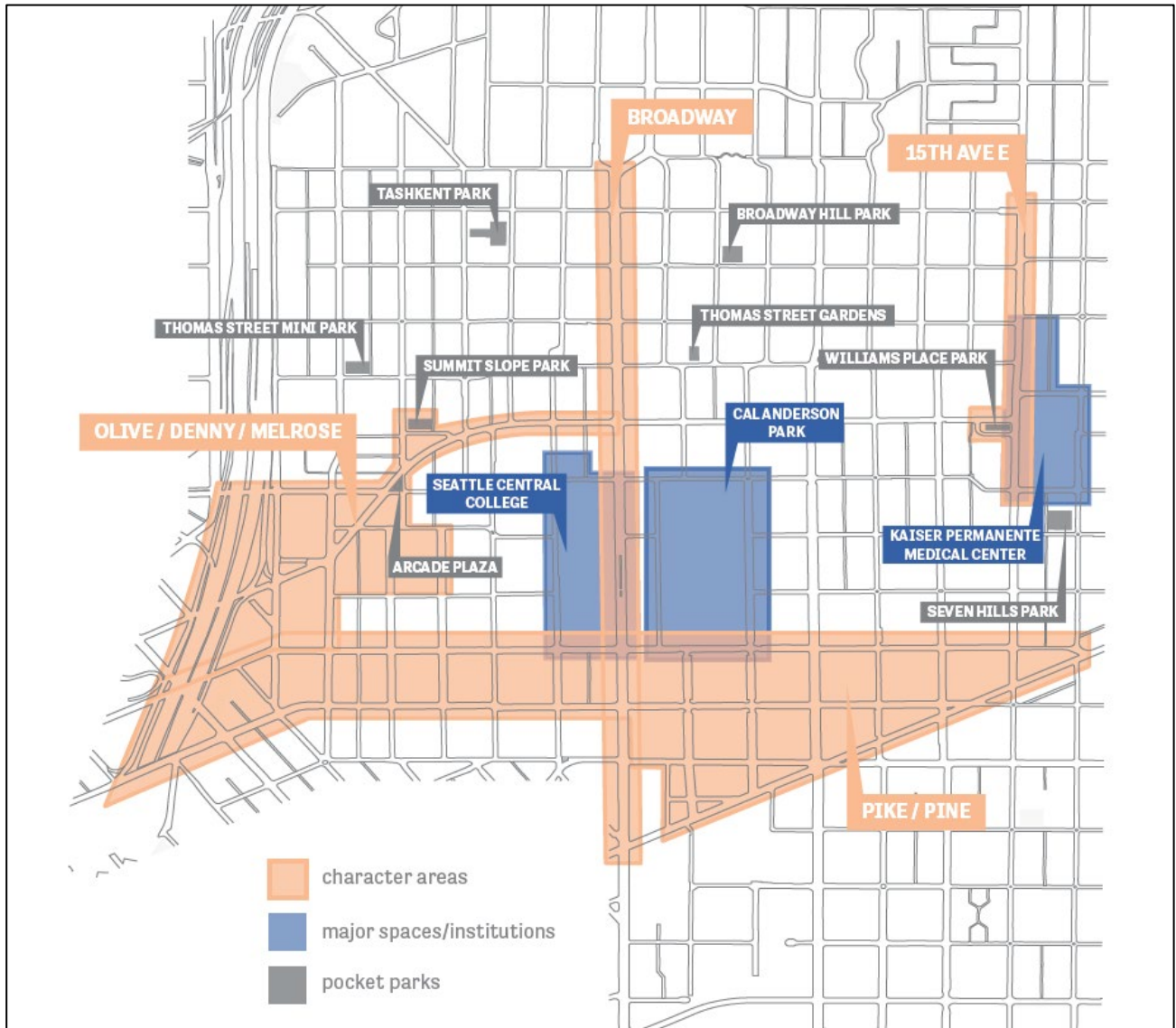


Figure 1: public life study areas

## OBSERVATIONAL COUNTS



*Volunteer training for observational counts*

[Observational counts](#) were also completed using the Gehl Method in the same four zones to show how people are using public spaces in Capitol Hill. Research questions included: How many people are passing through? How many people are staying in place? What are the environmental conditions? Who is there by age, group size, etc.? What kind of activities are people doing? By looking at 48 different sites with the help of 72

volunteers a standardized set of metrics were created to record public life data that can be analyzed and implemented toward the strategic design of urban public spaces.

District wide it was observed that 15,215 people were moving versus 1,968 staying and they were most often talking, using electronics, or waiting for transit. 58% of staying counts observed were people living in public. There were more people during rush hour and late evening with 92% of all people observed being adults.

The Pike Pine corridor held the most people of any zone and was busier on the weekends. During the day, volunteers observed commuters at bus stops and, in the evening, more groups than individuals. Broadway held most people in the north and south ends with more people movement during weekdays and more lingering on weekends. Olive Way saw more people staying in late evening than moving overall and most were moving east-west on Pine Street. Lastly,

15<sup>th</sup> avenue saw mostly commuters or people waiting for transit.

One limitation for this study was the time of year. The counts were completed in November, and one of the days coincided with the general election, which skewed staying numbers on Broadway. The project team decided not to capture data on gender, as assigning gender identity to strangers violated the core principles of the EcoDistrict.

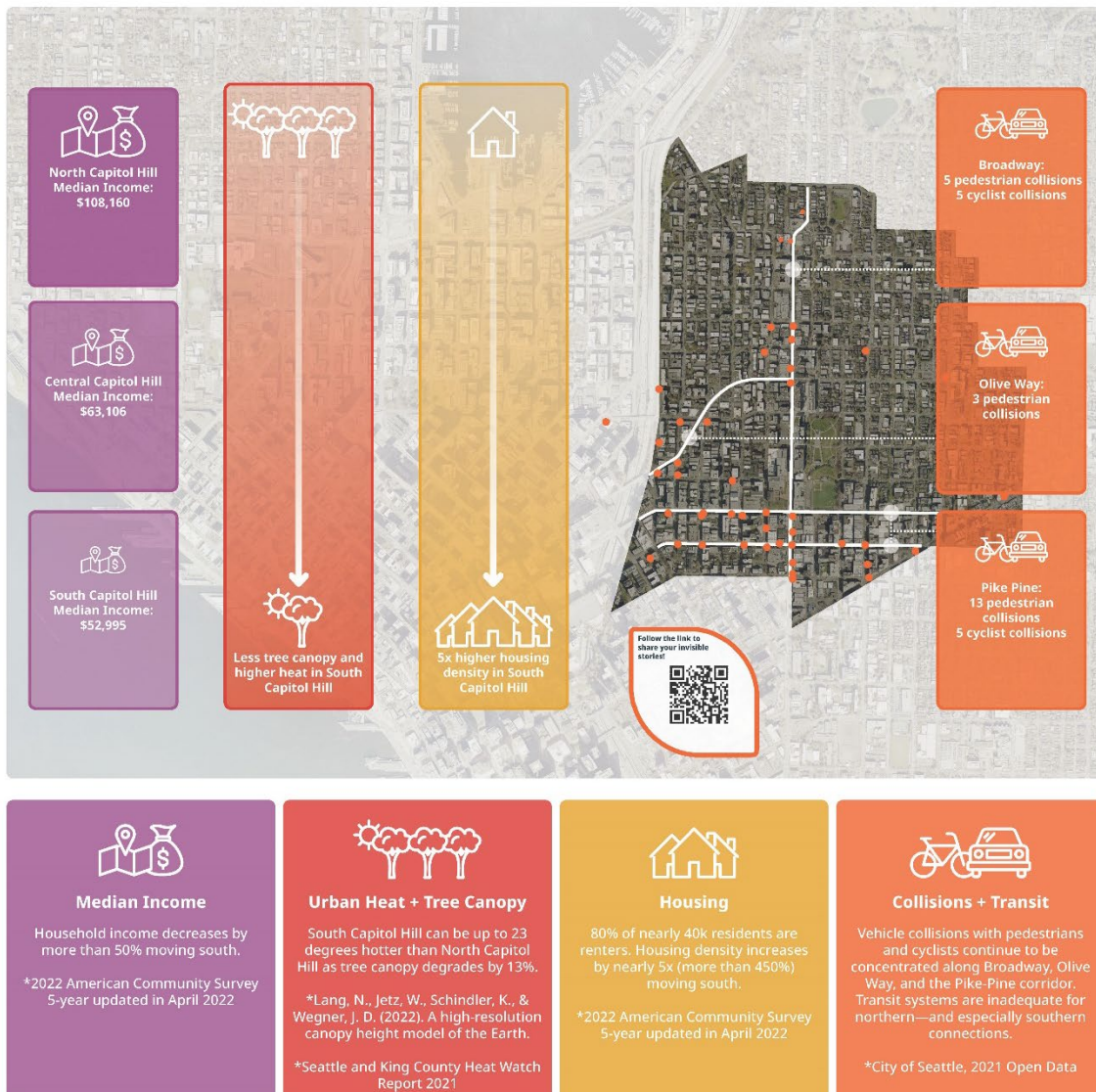


Figure 2: Community resilience mapping visual

## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MAPPING

In 2021 and 2022, the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict conducted a community resilience mapping exercise (see [Appendix 1](#)) to inform public life planning and the [One Seattle Comprehensive Plan](#). COVID-19 both illuminated and changed the extent to which community members brought unmet needs into public spaces. For this study, the EcoDistrict sought to develop a statistically sound understanding of existing needs relating to systems of resilience evident within the Capitol Hill neighborhood. As well, it worked to project future needs based upon current trends and best available thinking, establish clarity and visibility of existing systems capacity for Capitol Hill community stakeholders, and identify gaps between existing and projected needs and existing capacity for systems of resilience to address those needs.

The EcoDistrict identified eight social determinants of health (demography, education and job training, environmental resilience, food security, health and human services, housing, safety, and social connection) and posed the following research questions for each determinant: 1) What systems exist and what resources are available? 2) What gaps exist between need and capacity? How accessible are systems? What is the quality of resources? 3) How are needs, service availability, and gaps trending? 4) What is the impact of the pandemic?

The complexity of needs present in Capitol Hill along with its experience of decades-long skyrocketing growth,

infrastructure investment, and social problems create an ideal study area where lessons learned may bear fruit across the city.

## SUPPORTING RESEARCH

### *Porous Public Space Study*

Capitol Hill is surrounded by bodies of water on all sides, except for the south, which means stormwater runoff from contaminated streets, rooftops, and sewers is carried directly into Lake Union, Lake Washington, and the Cedar River Watershed. Seattle's population growth has spurred a hardening of surfaces, and tree canopies, native soils, and vegetation have declined. As the neighborhood expands in infrastructure and grows in population, Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) is an essential part of strengthening the urban ecosystem – a critical element of public life for the Capitol Hill community. This neighborhood is one of many in the Puget Sound area that operates on a combined sewer system. This means that in some neighborhoods, the pipes that collect sewage are the same pipes that collect stormwater. During major storms, these pipes cannot hold the sewage and increased stormwater simultaneously, causing the excess wastewater to outpour into pipes that lead into Puget Sound. A [Porous Public Space study](#), conducted by 16 graduate students in Professor Nancy Rottle's Scan Design Studio at the University of Washington College of the Built Environments, sought



to enhance the public realm of Capitol Hill by lessening impacts of stormwater runoff through innovative design. Students used Copenhagen and Malmö as design examples for how to create successful public spaces that are also climate resilient and hoped these examples could be used to design equitable, sustainable, and porous public spaces that embrace stormwater.

### ***Pilots***

[Capitol Hill Public Space Pilots](#) were a continuation of the Public Life Study, designed by the students as part of their graduate work. It is an assessment of potential areas in the neighborhood as opportunities to test projects out, providing ideas that could further activate Capitol Hill and encourage stewardship. The five areas chosen for investigation were Arcade Plaza, Seattle Central College Plaza, Neighbours Alley, Nagle Place (a neglected edge of Cal Anderson Park), and Williams Place Park. This study created a kit of parts that could easily be constructed for different sites, which varied in scale, use, and needs. Identifying these pain points then helped to generate opportunities for projects and initiatives that would create more connection in Capitol Hill's public realm. However, due to the pandemic and resultant limited funding, these pilot areas could not be used. Specifically, they held encampments of unhoused people, and activations of these spaces that would have displaced vulnerable people were not in the spirit of the project.



### **PUBLIC LIFE COUNTS!** A PUBLIC LIFE STUDY ON CAPITOL HILL



CAPITOL HILL ECODISTRICT | CH Capitol Hill Housing | Board of Vellum | City of Seattle | Seattle Department of Transportation

## Pilot Projects

To demonstrate the value of public life activations and to begin prototyping potential changes to public spaces, the EcoDistrict conducted several pilots in support of the outreach phase of this project. Drawing on the Public Life and Porous Public Space studies as well as Community Resilience Mapping, the team prioritized reclamation of the right of way for equitable economic development and climate change adaptation. Due to COVID, the need for safety precautions, and encampments forming in public spaces, many of the original sites could not be used. The following section details these efforts and their impact.



## REVIVAL MARKET STREET

As an exploration of marginal public spaces and to support small business recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the EcoDistrict developed REVIVAL Market Street.

To support small business in recovery from COVID-19 and as an exploration of marginal spaces, the EcoDistrict developed REVIVAL Market Street. Noting that small businesses face steep overhead and ongoing costs to launch and maintain brick and mortar locations and that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color face financial discrimination and disparate liabilities to establish small businesses, this pilot focused on right-of-way vending and prioritized BIPOC-owned small businesses without a location in Capitol Hill.

From December 2021 through June 2023, the EcoDistrict hosted four REVIVAL Market Street pop-ups and published a [December 2022 holiday gift guide](#) featuring all REVIVAL vendors to date. Unique to these markets is a model that includes \$500 vendor stipends, a recorded workshop, a thorough vendor checklist, promotional support, and day-of staging materials, set-up, and takedown to support involvement at all levels of business readiness.

### ***December 12, 2021: Howell Street***

The first REVIVAL Market Street pop-up included seven vendors, all of whom were BIPOC-owned. On a cold, rainy day in December, the market also featured a JazzEd youth quartet and experimented

with outdoor heating elements. This market, hosted in partnership with the Seattle Department of Transportation's Public Space Management team took advantage of a pilot program to test potential changes to the City's vending ordinance ([RWC 15.17.005](#)). By temporary closing the short block of E. Howell St. between Broadway and Nagle Pl., the EcoDistrict could demonstrate the value of underutilized space for small scale commercial purposes. The pop-up market also reclaimed the critical eastern edge of Cal Anderson Park along Nagle Place, for positive community activation. While initially selected as a location for semi-permanent market stalls, Nagle Place presented challenges due to its narrowness.

### ***June 19, 2022: Juneteenth***



As the first larger scale market, the Juneteenth REVIVAL Market Street pop-up leveraged an as-of-yet activated quasi-public space within new construction at Midtown Plaza (2301 E. Union St.). This location bears significance as it is a redevelopment of a central economic area in the historic home of the Black and African diaspora communities in Seattle. With 20 Black-owned businesses, five

community partners, and a live broadcast from media sponsor KEXP, the market was attended by nearly 400 people, earning media mentions in several local outlets including the Capitol Hill Seattle Blog and the South Seattle Emerald.

### ***August 18, 2022: Capitol Hill Night Market***

Trying out a new venue, the REVIVAL Night Market launched activations at Capitol Hill Plaza alongside the Aids Memorial Pathway. This space, designed to host frequent activations, had primarily been used for weekly farmers markets, leaving the space largely vacant for years. Maintaining a similar scale, the pop-up featured 20 BIPOC vendors and a local DJ. Capitol Hill Plaza is a transit-oriented development site above the Capitol Hill light rail station with multi-family apartment buildings and commercial spaces surrounding it. The night market experimented with commuter traffic as a consumer base. Despite a heat wave and some wildfire smoke, the market was well attended with many visitors inquiring about the potential for ongoing activity.

### ***June 18, 2023: Juneteenth***

This second annual event grew in scale, featuring 23 vendors, four community partners, a deeper partnership with anchor tenant ARTE NOIR, which manages the square. While most businesses facing the square had not yet opened, several participated as pop-up vendors in their spaces. KEXP expanded its broadcast to six hours instead of four, and the market remained open for

visitors for an extra hour, as well. Despite rain during the afternoon, the market was again very well attended.

### ***Moving Forward***

With the success of this pilot project, the EcoDistrict decided to make the program a permanent fixture of its portfolio. REVIVAL will move forward with strategically placed pop-up markets and the addition of a technical assistance program that focuses on one-on-one coaching along with networking opportunities for peer learning and to connect vendors to local developers as potential future commercial tenants.

## **GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

### ***Geocaching Scavenger Hunt***

In 2020 as the pandemic shut down most forms of in-person social activity, the EcoDistrict worked with the Seattle 2030 District to create a geocaching scavenger hunt of natural elements and stormwater management in Capitol Hill. Using leave-no-trace-focused Adventure Lab software, the team conceived of an [Ecological Scavenger Hunt](#) with 12 locations, including the water tower in Volunteer Park, the Bullitt Center, an ethnobotanical garden on Seattle University's campus, and the reservoir lid in Cal Anderson Park.

### ***Walking Tours***

Drawing on a longstanding partnership with the [Seattle 2030 District](#), the EcoDistrict hosted two public stormwater-focused walking tours of the neighborhood. Stops included McGilvra

Park next to the Bullitt Center, Central Lutheran Church, Capitol Hill light rail station transit-oriented development, E. Howell St., the Broadway Building, and Pike Motorworks. Each stop focused on a different aspect of green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) currently in use in the neighborhood, including permeable paving, cisterns, trees, rain gardens, and other forms of bioretention.

### ***Rain Paint Murals***

The EcoDistrict then commissioned two artists, Amol Saraf and Lourdes Jackson, selected via an open application process, to design two murals each for installation with Rain Paint on sloping sidewalks across Capitol Hill. These designs, which are meant to tell the story of the interaction between stormwater, the built environment, and the larger natural context of the Pacific Northwest, are visible only in the rain. Permitting through the Seattle Department of Transportation presented the main challenge, as a time-consuming, confusing, and expensive process delayed installation of artwork by seven months.

### ***World Water Day Workshops***

In partnership with Seattle 2030 District and King County [RainWise](#), the EcoDistrict hosted green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) workshops to highlight incentives and opportunities for property developers and faith-based communities.

Each workshop provided audiences with an overview from the RainWise team about their program, site eligibility requirements, and case study examples. Additionally, presenters provided an outline of how properties can play an integral role in Puget Sound climate resilience through GSI and strategies for building new (or enhancing existing) stormwater projects.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

### ***Biodiversity Corridor***



Flooding, extreme heat events, and wildfire smoke are primary impacts of climate change facing the Pacific Northwest. In partnership with [Birds Connect Seattle](#), the EcoDistrict will integrate its GSI work through the development of a biodiversity corridor, leveraging the right-of-way for increased tree canopy, rain gardens, and other GSI improvements to create more supportive green space and improve environmental resilience.

## Community Engagement

With baseline research and community resilience mapping completed, the EcoDistrict worked with Mithun to design a community outreach strategy amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Challenges of the shut-down and the need for social distancing inspired a new virtual format and many outdoor opportunities for safe engagement.



## VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FORUM 2021

The EcoDistrict hosted its first public life engagement event on the evening of November 10, 2021. To accommodate COVID-19 safety considerations, it took place over Zoom with roughly 60 participants joining a two-hour program emceed by Sharon Nyree Williams of the [Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas](#). Participants broke into small groups with facilitators and technical assistance provided by Mithun to share their concerns and needs for public spaces using a Miro board (see *figure 3*). In the first breakout room, facilitators asked attendees to respond to the question, ***“what does an inclusive, resilient, healthy, and connected Capitol Hill feel like?”*** with the goal of identifying needs and shared experiences. Several themes emerged from responses, including accessibility of public spaces for people with disabilities and for the elderly, a need for regularly activated spaces, and attention to the needs of unhoused people. Several remarks focused on a need to make more diverse identities visible, encouraging people of a wider range of backgrounds to feel welcome and belonging in public spaces. Others remarked on a need for opportunities to showcase artistic expression, more accessible nature, and a general desire to feel connection. Safety repeatedly surfaced in conversations as a concern and a goal, noting inequities in what helps people to feel safe based on their lived experience and identity.

The second breakout room focused on idea generation, with facilitators asking, ***“What does an inclusive, resilient, healthy, and connected Capitol Hill look like?”*** with attendees visualizing the future together using the Miro boards. All groups noted a desire for more trees, pedestrian-prioritized areas, better lighting, more art, and improved opportunities to linger. Emerging themes included free access, family-friendly programming, free social services such as public restrooms, improved support for local businesses to thrive, additional affordable housing, physical and mental health service access points, and improved signage.

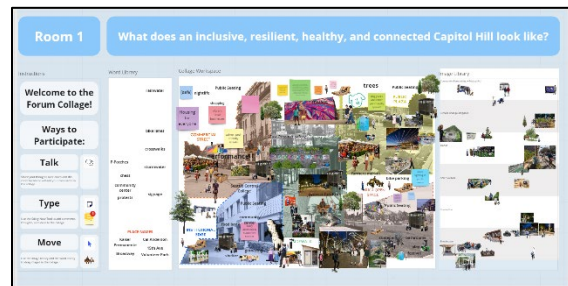


Figure 3: Miro board and collage example

## TABLING

The EcoDistrict tabled at several events in advance of and following the 2021 community forum to promote engagement via public life outreach materials. At two Capitol Hill Farmer's Markets in 2021, the Juneteenth REVIVAL Market Street pop-up, Capitol Hill Garage Sale Day, a Seattle University student involvement fair, and four back to school events hosted by Community Roots Housing Resident Services in 2022, community members offered feedback on their needs, ideas, and priorities for improvements to public spaces in the neighborhood. Their responses largely mirrored those from the community forum.

## SAFETY FOCUS GROUP

A virtual safety focus group was held on April 27, 2022, with twenty-five community members in attendance, and was hosted by the Cal Anderson Park Alliance. Goals included discussing safety concerns, clarifying community priorities, and charting a path forward for Cal Anderson Park. Using a Google Jam board, attendees responded to three initial questions: ***"How do you define safety in a public space?"***, ***"If you've hesitated to use the park in the past year, what caused your hesitation?"***, and ***"What's going on when you feel safer in the park?"***

From the fruitful discussion, common themes and topics for further analysis emerged like activation, mobility, transparency, intergenerational activities,

cleaned and maintained restrooms, off-leash dogs, people in the park around the clock, wayfinding, and a well-lit environment at night. Safety, for this group of people, was less about crime and policing, and more about stewardship and public investments.

## DIGITAL SURVEY

The Capitol Hill EcoDistrict used a digital survey (see [Appendix 2](#)) to garner broader engagement, asking respondents to envision more resilient, inclusive, safe, and connected public spaces for all in the neighborhood.

Questions consisted of a variation of multiple-choice, ranking, short answer, and interactive imagery and related to experiences of safety and belonging, for example: "what helps you to feel a sense of belonging in a public space?" Questions also focused on stability and resilience as pertaining to social determinants of health, such as stable housing, access to health services, employment, food security, and social connection; experiences of vulnerability due to climate change and other environmental impacts; impacts of gentrification and displacement in Seattle; and improvements that could create more resilient, inclusive, safe, and connected public spaces in Capitol Hill.

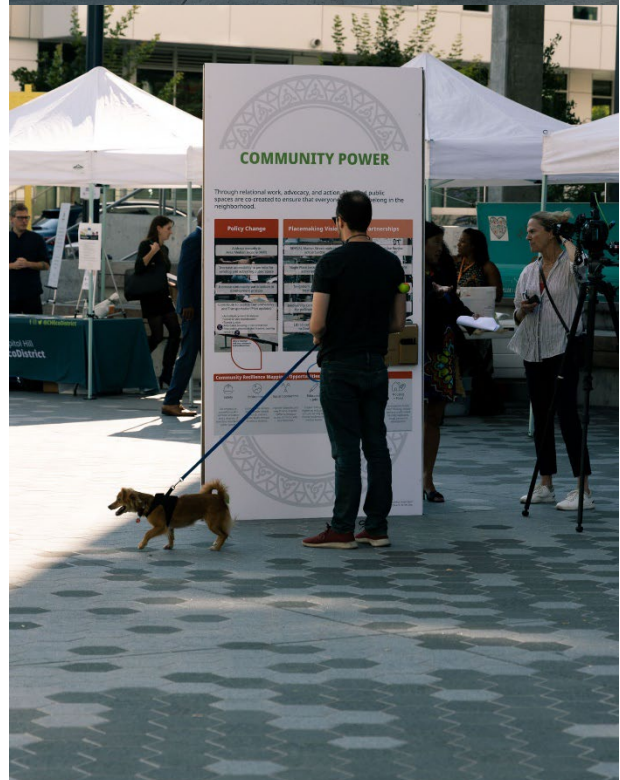


## LIVE COMMUNITY FORUM 2022

Capping the community engagement phase of public life planning, the EcoDistrict again worked with Mithun to develop an interactive exhibit of work completed to date at Capitol Hill Plaza on September 29, 2022, including baselines research, pilot projects, and responses from a variety of outreach efforts. Two eight-foot-tall three-sided pillars with visuals of each progressive step of public life planning offered attendees the opportunity draw, write, add stickers, or respond to the digital survey (see [Appendix 3](#)). This opportunity to test early findings allowed for course corrections and data verification by the community.

Attendees drew attention to an increased desire for pedestrian-focused design, concerns about climate change impacts such as heat and wildfire smoke, and growing safety concerns associated with Nagle Pl., Cal Anderson Park, the Pike Pine corridor, and Broadway.

In addition to collaborative infographics, the EcoDistrict hosted a REVIVAL Market Street redux with seven recurring vendors who had each seen their businesses grow since beginning their involvement with the EcoDistrict.



## Findings

### DEMOGRAPHICS & THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE

The neighborhood has been transformed by growth but has disproportionate levels of income, racial and ethnic diversity, and density in the northern part of the neighborhood, versus the south. As income stratification worsens and costs rise, the north-south divide in Capitol Hill is likely to grow. The decennial census split several existing tracts, allowing for a clearer understanding of demographic data, which illuminated income stratification as well as more precise densification.

In 2020, census block groups in north Capitol Hill making up 40% of land mass reported a median household income of \$131,728 whereas southern block groups making up 29% of land mass reported a median household income of \$68,157, nearly half that of northern households. In all but three block groups, white households earned at or above the median, sometimes by more than 50%. Southern block groups also reported a significantly larger percentage of households receiving SNAP benefits (10-14%) compared to northern block groups (1-3%). The redistricting of the area from seven census tracts to twelve shows a clearer disconnect between tracts, and north and south Capitol Hill

Additional demographic and housing data gathered through community resilience mapping revealed that 80% of the nearly 40,000 residents of Capitol Hill

are renters, though vastly more people rent in south Capitol Hill than in the north. North Capitol Hill residents earn roughly twice the household income of those in southern census tracts, though housing is five times as dense in the southern part of the neighborhood. This stratification plays out regarding climate change impacts and vehicle collisions, as well. The physical features of North Capitol Hill mean people are living in safer and healthier housing and environments, with less stress from vehicular movement and extreme weather-related problems.

### SAFETY & ACCESS

Vox Pop interviews conducted by students at the University of Washington's College of Built Environments in Cal Anderson Park and a subsequent focus group focused on the park itself and illustrated that safety concerns are less about crime and feelings of physical insecurity or threat and more focused on park stewardship and neighborhood resources. This includes accessible bathrooms, adequate lighting, services for unhoused people, and stronger enforcement of dog leash laws. However, when zooming out, the digital survey focused on the entire neighborhood and the responses received spoke to a greater feeling of physical safety being a concern.

The community members who participated in the Vox Pop interviews reported feeling safer when Cal Anderson Park was activated with programming, events, and was well populated generally.

Public and tourist reviews found that cleanliness was noted 50% of the time, citing the time of day greatly impacts their decision to move through a public space. Additional lighting has been added to Cal Anderson Park in recent years, residents still reported that a lack of lighting is one of the leading factors that influence their perception of safety in the park. Beyond the park, one of the biggest concerns is vehicle collisions with pedestrians on the main arterials that are heavily used by cars as well as serve as destinations for community members.

When looking at survey data, there are often responses that are in line with the Vox Pop interviews, but sometimes they conflict. More often in these survey results, respondents were concerned about crime and feelings of physical insecurity or threat. Similarly, to the Vox Pop interviews, survey respondents most frequently named safety (49%) as a barrier to feeling a sense of belonging, followed by accessibility (18%), availability of social services (16%), and the presence of stewardship (16%). Respondents noted social connection (32%) and housing (27%) as needs preventing a sense of resilience. When asked what contributes to a sense of stability, respondents reported feeling that 77% of the time over the past year, referencing social connection (32%), housing (27%), and safety (19%) as primary barriers.

People in Capitol Hill have big concerns about safety, but when it comes to the park and being inside the park, people were more concerned about stewardship

and the activities they can participate in. An observed difference between the interviews and the survey is that when focusing on the park, they were conducted during the day, in real time, while people were in that physical space and doing the activities they enjoy at the park. This seemed to steer answers towards how they felt when participating in those activities or barriers that arise when attempting to. The surveys were done on people's own time and location, leaving more interpretation to what time of day, the area, and concerns they were thinking about and how safety was being affected.

Through the various needs observed from community members around safety, it is recommended that the safety strategies focus on activation and connectivity rather than surveillance. Community members perceived lack of safety is most closely related to inaccessible resources such as public restrooms, lack of illumination, presence of law enforcement, and property damage. Lastly, greater investment in community stewardship through maintenance and trash removal, investment in infrastructure, and scrutiny of tools such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) through a racial equity toolkit is recommended.

## DISPLACEMENT & IMPACTS MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SPACES

Social connection is both a social determinant of health and a human need. While many public and semi-public gathering spaces exist to support these important experiences, they must be managed to function well.

The baseline research suggests that physical infrastructure, such as sidewalks, are often cracked or otherwise damaged, potentially representing a barrier for people with disabilities. Conversations with community members indicate that more free gathering opportunities, especially for families, would be welcome. Many commented on the lack of maintenance to public facilities, overflowing trash, and growing numbers of unhoused people living in public. In general, access through reliable transportation and proximity through affordable housing would go a long way toward supporting community members to engage in public spaces. With no Stay Healthy Streets, Capitol Hill was unable to benefit from this pilot to increase access to the right of way for social connection.

From the digital survey, respondents reported feeling a sense of belonging in public spaces 57% of the time over the past year. Respondents reported feeling a stronger sense of belonging in public spaces when they are free to access (79%), have opportunities to connect with nature (70%), are accessible for all ages and abilities (70%), reflect neighborhood identity in art and design (60%), and offer connection opportunities (59%) (see *figure 3*).

Respondents would like to see a variety of improvements made to public spaces, especially increased shade (74%), car-free zones (65%), more seating (60%), free public toilets (60%), Green Stormwater Infrastructure (51%), and art and music, such as murals and buskers (51%) (see *figure 4*). Vox pop interviews and a focus group concentrated on Cal Anderson Park noted a desire for opportunities to linger, increased lighting, more art in the vicinity, greater enforcement of leash laws, accessible bathrooms, greater stewardship of the space, and more activation.

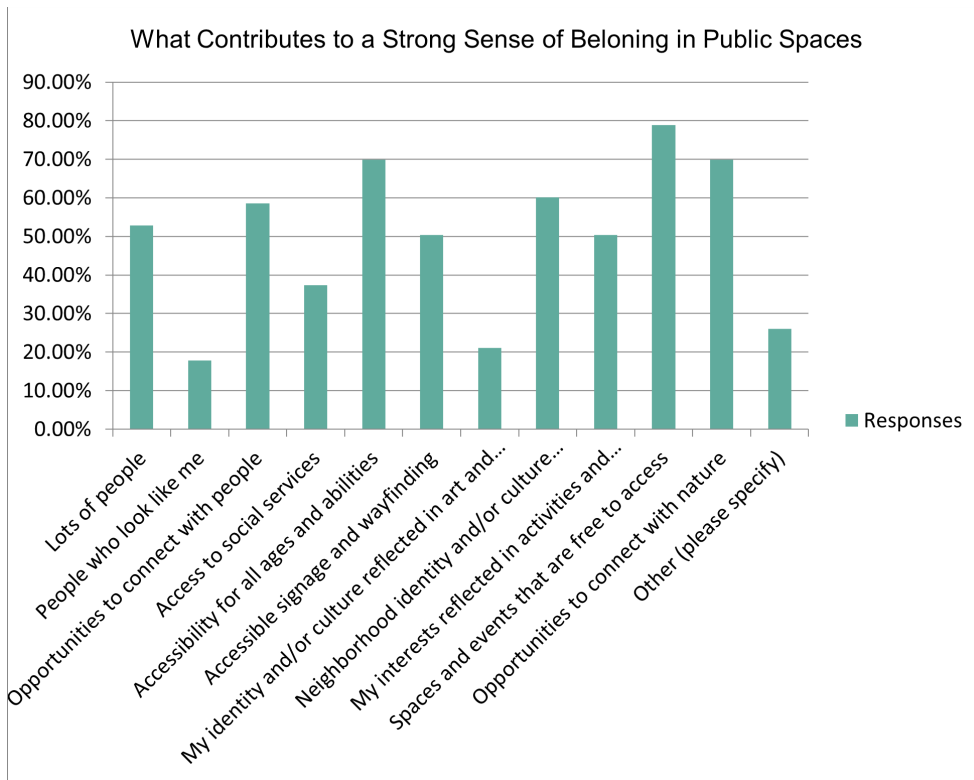


Figure 4: what generates belonging?

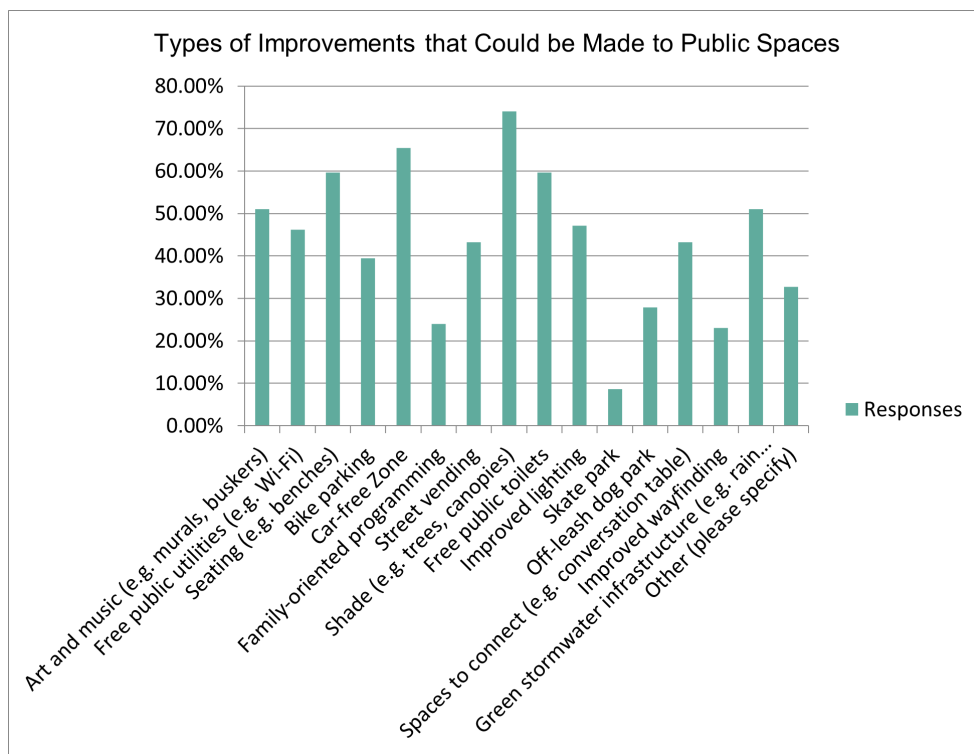


Figure 5: public space improvements

## TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION



While not a first-tier transportation hub, Capitol Hill is home to important nodes of several transit systems: light rail, buses, trolley, bike lanes, and cars. Only one official Greenway – Melrose Ave – runs through the neighborhood.

As vehicle collisions with both pedestrians and cyclists have increased particularly in the south along the Pike Pine corridor, Broadway, and the Olive-Denny connection, the intersection of these transit systems is failing to divert car traffic or avert safety concerns. Lack of north-south routes and of adequate wayfinding between economic corridors and transit systems prevent ease of travel, and hazards such as poor sidewalk infrastructure and lack of illumination discourage pedestrian movement.

In ranking effective strategies for preventing displacement, digital survey respondents pointed to the need for access to more public transportation options (58%) and more direct public transportation routes with fewer transfers for longer trips (50%). In a neighborhood with plentiful options,

coordination between them and lack of reliability discourages community members from taking advantage.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has negative impacts for infrastructure and with rapid population increases and urban development, added stress is placed on systems that are disproportionately impacting unhoused and lower resourced communities.

Through the community resilience mapping exercise, it is confirmed that a negative impact on infrastructure and systems were increased flooding due to higher density, development, and population growth, specifically in South Capitol Hill. With more impervious surfaces rainwater has less opportunity

to be absorbed before pooling and flooding certain areas and then running downhill carrying toxic storm water into our drains, and eventually other bodies of water like the Puget Sound. Oppositely, during extreme heat events, the lack of greenspaces and higher proportion of impervious surfaces in South Capitol Hill led to increased heat islands effects.

Pressure to find shelter and relief is experienced more by unhoused individuals and residents of south Capitol Hill that live in homes without adequate cooling strategies. When addressing how air quality is impacted during these events and within the city, it was found that there are not adequate studies or sensors available to measure air quality index (AQI) and determine appropriate responses and steps to take to combat it.

This data is especially important with the increased population growth, number of vehicles, construction, and severe wildfires.

Respondents to the survey reported that they were moderately impacted by environmental stressors such as flooding, extreme heat, poor air quality, extreme cold, or snowstorms over the past three years. **When asked how they coped with these extreme weather events,** they said to have leveraged the following strategies: stayed home (79%), used an air filter (54%), used air conditioning (48%), and used a park or green space with shade (34%). **When asked what strategies they could imagine being helpful in the future,** survey respondents emphasized: increased tree canopy and greenspace (26%), more efficient buildings (26%), accessible public spaces (18%), car reduction strategies (17%) and temporary shelters (16%). These strategies, illustrate the need for investments into buildings and protections and incentives for tenants and homeowners. If they do not feel safe in their homes, they then seek relief in public and outdoor spaces. There must be attention paid to both when considering the various environmental stressors and how they will affect people differently. Lastly, it is seen across community resilience mapping areas that car reduction and green space are needed to satisfy a multitude of needs beyond just environmental impacts, like displacement, sense of belonging, and safety.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As income stratification continue to increase along with commercial rents, barriers to marketplace entry grow, locking many out and contributing to displacement. Small businesses operate with fewer employees, in part because their employees cannot afford to live close by. Prices rise to support profit margins, which for many small businesses is a story of survival more than success. Still, with southern Capitol Hill community members making less than 50% on average than their northern Capitol Hill counterparts, small businesses and their residential neighbors at times find tension over the purpose of shared spaces.

Digital survey respondents ranked more living wage jobs (54%) higher than other anti-displacement strategies, such as equitable support for arts and culture organizations (43%), equitable support for small businesses (39%), and more job training (25%). Considering these results in the context of the larger demographic picture, residential and commercial anti-displacement strategies must both consider the constraints that small businesses face in shouldering policy initiatives without adequate support.

# Implementation Plan

Recommendations	Action Plan
<p>1. Invest in infrastructure to pace growth</p>	<p>Taken as a whole, our findings indicate that, as Capitol Hill has densified over the past decade, government-supported infrastructure has not kept pace with increasing needs. Over the past three years, community members reported significant concerns regarding living wage jobs, stewardship of the public realm, adequately coordinated transit, and especially the accessibility and availability of social services for unhoused or drug involved individuals. Housing remains a primary need, but as this is addressed, inadequate infrastructure investment will lead to lower community resilience even as housing stock increases.</p>
<p>2. Study Area Median Income (AMI) by geography and race and invest in family-sized housing.</p>	<p>Community members named affordable housing as a consistent need in every forum we engaged, and community resilience mapping indicated an inadequate supply of family-sized units. Household incomes vary widely between north and south Capitol Hill, and significant racial disparities exist. Eliminating single family zoning would go a long way toward equalizing the impact of densification, and mixed income levels within urban zones is a hallmark of healthy public life.</p>
<p>3. Improve accessible permitting for activation.</p>	<p>The ability to activate a space successfully – and legally – depends on the ease of navigating permits for events, artwork, or other temporary changes to parks, sidewalks, streets, etc. Both the Seattle Department of Transportation and Seattle Parks and Recreation must reform their systems and protocols, or community members will continue to struggle and step outside of legal protocols.</p>
<p>4. Focus safety strategies on activation and connectivity rather than surveillance.</p>	<p>Generally, community members perceived lack of safety as most closely related to inaccessible resources such as public restrooms, lack of illumination, presence of law enforcement, and property damage. Greater investment in community stewardship through maintenance and trash removal, investment in infrastructure, and scrutiny of tools such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) through a racial equity toolkit is recommended.</p>



The EcoDistrict plans to move forward with two big moves in 2024:

1. Prioritize pedestrians in the Pike Pine corridor and on Nagle Place.
2. Implement and steward a biodiversity corridor linking Volunteer Park, Lowell Elementary School, Cal Anderson Park, Seattle University and beyond along 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, leveraging Green Stormwater Infrastructure.



## Limitations of Research & Areas for Further Study

Limitations and areas for further study exist within Capitol Hills public realm, and while there are never-ending opportunities to pursue topics and update findings, these are the ones that stood out and affected this project the most.

A significant barrier to this research is the availability of public data at the granular level needed to conduct an assessment at the neighborhood scale. Another factor that worked against the process was the changing landscape of the neighborhood through redistricting, the constant movement of those unhoused, the pandemic, and fluctuation in pricing and costs of everyday services. It posed a challenge in staying consistent with the data and creating a timeline of patterns across the years.

While extremely in depth and meticulously vetted, this project was often under resourced. That required seeking out participation and using the time of many different groups of students, organizations, staff members, and community members and then compiling all the information and years' worth of work into a digestible form.

One area that could use further discussion and analysis are the impacts of zoning. Zoning is important because if we understand vibrant life to be based on

mixed use multi-dimensional neighborhoods, zoning can be a barrier and is a crucial element to development in the City of Seattle. However, the Gehl Protocol, that was used to conduct the baseline study, does not consider zoning. The decision to not conduct a zoning analysis was made in two parts, 1) the neighborhood just changed to part of the mandatory housing affordability (MHA) upzone, which included several of the corridors, but it had not taken full effect yet and results were not yet being felt, and 2) it wasn't a dimension of the earlier studies we were relying on. As implementation strategies and ideas for changes to the neighborhood form, zoning will be a determinant of possibility and will need to be further analyzed by those pursuing these transformations.

Lastly, there could be more done around small business involvement to understand their experiences, how they perceive the public realm, and what's most important to them. This could look like conducting entirely separate surveys with businesses specifically, conducting counts on pedestrian and vehicular movement to, from, and around them, and how the facades, seating, or other right of way elements draw attention to or away from them. Any strategies implemented that would benefit the community would need to ensure they are not causing harm to businesses success.

## Appendix 1: Community Resilience Mapping

In 2021 and 2022, the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict conducted a community resilience mapping exercise to inform public life planning. COVID-19 both illuminated and changed the extent to which community members bring unmet needs into public spaces. For this study, the EcoDistrict sought to develop a statistically sound understanding of existing needs relating to systems of resilience evident within the Capitol Hill neighborhood, to project future need based upon current trends and best available thinking, to establish clarity and visibility of existing systems capacity for Capitol Hill community stakeholders, and to identify gaps between existing and projected needs and existing capacity for systems of resilience to address those needs.

The EcoDistrict identified eight social determinants of health (demography, education and job training, environmental resilience, food security, health and human services, housing, safety, and social connection) and posed the following research questions for each determinant:

- What systems exist and what resources are available?
- What gaps exist between need and capacity? How accessible are systems? What is the quality of resources?
- How are needs, service availability, and gaps trending?
- What is the impact of the pandemic?

## Community Resilience Mapping - Challenges

Safety	Environment	Social Connection	Education + Jobs	Demographics	Health + Human Services	Housing + Food
People experience safety differently based on their identity and lived experience.	Climate change increases flooding, wildfires, and extreme heat events. Rats proliferate in warmer temperatures.	Networks build resilience to stress, loneliness, and other challenges.	Schools meet social and health needs beyond education, and opportunity must be accessible.	Public spaces carry the legacy of redlining and racial covenants.	Unmet needs show themselves in public spaces.	These basic human needs are at risk as costs rise.

Research conducted by students from the University of Oklahoma, College of Built Environments.

## Community Resilience Mapping - Systems

Safety	Environment	Social Connection	Education + Jobs	Demographics	Health + Human Services	Housing + Food
Lack of lighting and wayfinding erode feelings of safety.	Heat islands and lack of transit to shelters increase vulnerability. Use of toxic rodenticides harms ecosystems.	Gathering spaces and convening organizations are inaccessible. Damaged sidewalks endanger people with disabilities.	Resources are distributed inequitably, and job training is at risk of being further reduced.	The Area Median Income (AMI) of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people is significantly lower than overall AMI.	The needs of low-income and unhoused people exceed available services. Providers lack coordination and support.	Lack of affordable and family-sized housing, barriers to development, and provider burnout strain the system.

Research conducted by students from the University of Washington, College of Built Environments.

## Community Resilience Mapping - Opportunities

Safety	Environment	Social Connection	Education + Jobs	Demographics	Health + Human Services	Housing + Food
De-emphasize surveillance and increase activation and a diversity of identities reflected in public spaces.	Increase tree canopy and improve reliable transit to shelters. Expand trash removal to reduce rodents.	Improve sidewalks and way-finding. Expand access for those with less resources.	Support low-cost higher ed and public schools serving low-income students with medical needs.	Study Area Median Income as a barrier to equitable community development.	Improve access for unhoused and low-income people; support providers with resources and rest.	Advocate for family-sized housing, reduce barriers to affordable housing applicants. Study barriers to development.

Research conducted by students from the University of Washington, College of Built Environments.

## DEMOGRAPHY

To understand the population of Capitol Hill and their needs for study, the team looked at census data from the American Community Survey in 2013, 2018, and 2020, tracking several indicators. A legacy of redlining and racial covenants has defined the population over time, and tracking these changes is critical in understanding whether and how progress toward equity has been made and how, as a result, existing needs might be shifting.

The US Census Bureau restructured census tracts in Capitol Hill ahead of the 2020 census, making some direct comparisons impossible and allowing for deeper insight into others. Census tracts with 2013 and 2018 data include 74.01, 74.02, 75, and 84. Census tracts with 2020 data include 64, 65, 74.03, 74.04, 74.05, 74.06, 75.01, 75.02, 75.03, 76, 84.01, and 84.02.

From 2013 to 2020, the population of Capitol Hill rose by 23% to 39,510. Median household income rose by 52% to \$82,029. The non-white population increased from 21% to 30%, though the Black/African American population decreased by 3% and the Asian population

increased by 5% – to 3% and 13% respectively. The median age rose by 11% to 33.4 years. Population density rose by 11% to 22,629 people per square mile, and the number of housing units rose by 37% to 26,814. These data, taken as a whole, describe a neighborhood transformed by growth.

With twelve census tracts rather than seven, it becomes possible to disaggregate to gain a clearer understanding than ever before of geographic difference within the neighborhood. In 2020, census block groups in north Capitol Hill making up 40% of land mass reported a median household income of \$131,728 whereas southern block groups making up 29% of land mass reported a median household income of \$68,157, nearly half that of northern households. In all but three block groups, white households earned at or above the median, sometimes by more than 50%. Southern block groups also reported a significantly larger percentage of households receiving SNAP benefits (10-14%) compared to northern block groups (1-3%). These inequities align with densification as south Capitol Hill reported more than five times the housing, households, and population per square mile.

2020	64	65	74.03	74.04	74.05	74.06	75.01	75.02	75.03	76	84.01	84.02	Total	% Total/ Average
Population	3,732	4,843	3,107	2,799	2,887	2,458	4,312	2,676	2,222	4,786	2,850	2,838	39,510	
Households	1,509	2,640	2,199	1,912	2,070	1,910	3,215	1,960	1,714	2,304	1,995	2,138	25,566	
Race/Ethnicity (Population)														
White	3,068	3,774	2,028	1,912	1,365	1,064	3,188	2,034	1,657	3,932	1,623	1,928	27,573	70%
Black	26	19	96	76	57	174	236	0	82	135	170	185	1,256	3%
American Indian and/or Native Alaskan	42	9	4	0	92	0	0	0	38	0	6	3	194	0%
Native Hawaiian	24	15	0	0	0	0	137	0	0	0	0	0	176	0%
Asian	248	626	749	420	217	444	168	299	348	419	744	370	5,052	13%
Hispanic or Latino Descent	131	325	180	214	262	125	130	214	20	396	185	207	2,389	6%
Median Household Income	\$ 162,313	\$108,160	\$ 74,954	\$100,529	\$ 55,417	\$ 52,995	\$ 67,450	\$ 63,106	\$62,426	\$ 96,744	\$85,739	\$71,196		\$ 82,029
White	\$ 163,833	\$104,347	\$ 81,667	\$100,036	\$ 66,927	\$ 54,826	\$ 67,912	\$ 41,299	\$94,185	\$115,227	\$90,817	\$70,815		\$ 85,879
Black	-	-	-	\$103,194	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$63,537	\$64,818		
American Indian and/or Native Alaskan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Native Hawaiian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Asian	\$ 172,031	\$137,589	\$ 54,075	\$120,000	-	\$ 66,833	250,000+	\$104,742	\$45,226	\$ 58,462	-	-		
Hispanic or Latino Descent	\$ 169,844	\$ 64,766	\$ 25,778	\$ 80,147	\$ 48,191	-	\$ 56,304	-	-	-	\$68,040	-		
Households receiving food stamps	46	37	107	18	108	224	464	189	230	184	42	68	1717	7%
% of total households	3%	1%	5%	1%	5%	12%	14%	10%	13%	8%	2%	3%		
Median Age	38.2	38	32.6	32.6	29.7	30.4	35.1	30.6	29	32.9	33.4	32		33.4
Under 18 years	731	416	36	54	161	0	187	107	0	584	94	33	2403	6%
65 years and over	592	607	92	82	149	125	496	0	0	445	502	3	3093	8%
Density														
Total area (sq mi)	0.3	0.4	0.046	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.746	
Total Housing Units	1,516	2,890	2,296	1,912	2,209	1,974	3,329	2,134	1,714	2,344	2,071	2,425	26,814	
Pop per sq mi	12,440	12,108	67,543	27,990	28,870	24,580	43,120	26,760	22,220	23,930	28,500	28,380		22,629
Households per sq mi	5,030	6,600	47,804	19,120	20,700	19,100	32,150	19,600	17,140	11,520	19,950	21,380		14,643
Housing units per sq mi	5,053	7,225	49,913	19,120	22,090	19,740	33,290	21,340	17,140	11,720	20,710	24,250		15,357

Decennial Census, 2020 – demographics by census tract in King County, WA

<b>2018</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>74.01</b>	<b>74.02</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Total/ Average</b>
Population	3,616	4,995	5,502	5,560	9,289	4,389	4,865	<b>38,216</b>	
Households	1,369	2,560	3,842	3,699	6,221	2,273	3,345	<b>23,309</b>	
<b>Race/Ethnicity (Population)</b>									
White	3,132	4,241	3,959	3,957	6,998	3,567	3,304	<b>29,158</b>	76%
Black	39	24	116	292	203	177	378	<b>1,229</b>	3%
American Indian and/or Native Alaskan	9	9	0	0	280	0	13	<b>311</b>	1%
Native Hawaiian	22	19	0	0	0	0	39	<b>80</b>	0%
Asian	215	321	1,135	738	710	394	888	<b>4,401</b>	12%
Hispanic or Latino Descent	169	236	346	293	532	310	255	<b>2,141</b>	6%
Median Household Income	\$ 157,670	\$103,750	\$71,453	\$55,181	\$68,838	\$80,152	\$60,910		\$ 68,303
Households receiving food stamps	43	33	126	369	481	151	143	<b>1346</b>	6%
Median Age	38.8	36.6	32.3	31	30.9	33.3	32.2		29.2
<b>Density</b>									
Total area (sq mi)	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.15	<b>1.55</b>	
Total Housing Units	1,379	2,700	3,956	3,930	6,309	2,352	3,793	<b>24,419</b>	
Pop per sq mi	12,053	12,488	55,020	55,600	30,963	21,945	32,433		24,655
Households per sq mi	4,563	6,400	38,420	36,990	20,737	11,365	22,300		15,038
Housing units per sq mi	4,597	6,750	39,560	39,300	21,030	11,760	25,287		15,754

American Community Survey, 2018 – demographics by census tract in King County, WA

<b>2013</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>74.01</b>	<b>74.02</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Total/ Average</b>
Population	3,233	4,032	4,330	5,310	7,214	3,927	4,098	<b>32,144</b>	
Households	1,272	2,345	3,175	3,528	4,465	1,913	2,873	<b>19,571</b>	
<b>Race/Ethnicity (Population)</b>									
White	2,882	3,554	3,444	3,740	5,875	3,012	2,890	<b>25,397</b>	79%
Black	61	17	219	409	580	311	325	<b>1,922</b>	6%
American Indian and/or Native Alaskan	0	97	0	105	71	18	25	<b>316</b>	1%
Native Hawaiian	0	0	0	12	0	0	17	<b>29</b>	0%
Asian	132	284	346	642	355	334	608	<b>2,701</b>	8%
Hispanic or Latino Descent	112	246	217	369	646	304	193	<b>2,087</b>	6%
Median Household Income	\$ 143,125	\$ 83,839	\$62,639	\$35,812	\$52,781	\$61,329	\$41,497		\$ 54,099
Households receiving food stamps	0	58	207	473	291	88	360	<b>1477</b>	8%
Median Age	39.8	39.8	32.7	30.6	33.1	32.7	32.7		30.1
<b>Density</b>									
Total area (sq mi)	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.15	<b>1.55</b>	
Total Housing Units	1,302	2,429	3,443	3,798	4,658	1,988	1,988	<b>19,606</b>	
Pop per sq mi	10,777	10,080	43,300	53,100	24,047	19,635	27,320		20,738
Households per sq mi	4,240	5,863	31,750	35,280	14,883	9,565	19,153		12,626
Housing units per sq mi	4,340	6,073	34,430	37,980	15,527	9,940	13,253		12,649

American Community Survey, 2013 – demographics by census tract in King County, WA

## EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING

As a centrally located neighborhood, Capitol Hill is served by a great number of educational facilities, including 22 public schools and 29 private schools with tuitions ranging from \$14,000 to \$44,000. Three colleges are located nearby, two of which are public. In addition, there are 15 job training facilities located within the neighborhood or nearby. Seattle Central College, notably the most affordable nearby institution for higher education and job training, noted significant reductions in funding and matriculation during the COVID-19 shutdown, greatly impacting and endangering programs such as the Culinary Academy, Wood Technology Center, and Yesler Community Center.

Looking at K-12 public schools serving the neighborhood in 2020, all reported more than 50% students attending their area school. Despite census tracts reporting no more than 33% BIPOC population, nearly every public school in the area reported more than 40% minority students with 11 of 16 schools reporting more than 60%. BIPOC students are overrepresented in public schools while their white counterparts appear to be opting for private facilities.

Lowell Elementary stood out as noting a 78% minority population with 58% of the student body as economically disadvantaged. 40% of students experienced some form of homelessness and all students qualified for the free lunch program. The school, which has experienced significant faculty turnover, is amid another leadership transition in 2023, and the family services counselor reported a caseload of 105 students, noting than an average caseload should be 35 students or less.

School	Neighborhood	Green Space per person by neighborhood school is located (m <sup>2</sup> )	GreatSchools Rating	Equity Rating	% Minority	% Black	% Economically Disadvantaged	Students Per Teacher	Students Per Counselor
Garfield Highschool	Minor	1 m <sup>2</sup>	3/5	1/5	59%	25%	30%	22:01	371:01:00
Summit Public School: Sierra	Yesler Terrace	3 m <sup>2</sup>	2/7	0	69%	34%	37%	21:01	--
Bailey Gatzert	Yesler Terrace	3 m <sup>2</sup>	0	0	94%	57%	71%	10:01	319:01:00
Northwest School	First Hill	3 m <sup>2</sup>	--	--	42%	3%	--	--	--
TOPS K-8 at Seward School	Eastlake	4 m <sup>2</sup>	4/5	--	51%	11%	25%	19:01	473:01:00
Madrona School	Madrona	7 m <sup>2</sup>	2/7	0	65%	33%	42%	13:01	393:01:00
Kimball Elementary	Mid Beacon Hill	8 m <sup>2</sup>	2/7	1/5	75%	25%	42%	16:01	743:01:00
Lowell Elementary	Broadway	9 m <sup>2</sup>	4/5	2/3	78%	29%	58%	13:01	385:01:00
Leschi School	Leschi	13 m <sup>2</sup>	2/7	0	64%	36%	44%	15:01	--
Stevens Elementary School	Stevens	16 m <sup>2</sup>	1/2	1/5	49%	16%	29%	15:01	290:01:00
Meany Middle	Stevens	16 m <sup>2</sup>	1/2	2/7	67%	31%	--	18:01	273:01:00
Thurgood Marshall	Atlantic	20 m <sup>2</sup>	2/3	2/7	65%	25%	35%	17:01	965:01:00
Beacon Hill School	North Beacon Hill	23 m <sup>2</sup>	3/5	2/5	83%	6%	49%	11:01	417:01:00
Franklin High School	Mount Baker	23 m <sup>2</sup>	2/5	2/7	90%	28%	62%	20:01	367:01:00
John Muir Elementary	Mount Baker	23 m <sup>2</sup>	2/5	1/5	83%	52%	58%	13:01	--
Montlake	Monlake	51 m <sup>2</sup>	4/5	--	30%	3%	4%	16:01	538:01:00
McGilvra	Madison Park	56 m <sup>2</sup>	1/2	--	39%	4%	7%	15:01	--

*American Community Survey, 2018 – demographics by schools in King County, WA; GreatSchools*

## ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

In Seattle, the main impacts of climate change are increased flooding, wildfire smoke, and extreme heat events. Rats proliferate in warmer temperatures, and winter storms stretch already thin resources. As southern Capitol Hill continues to densify at staggering rates while northern Capitol Hill remains relatively constant, tree canopy erodes by 13% moving south. During an extreme heat event, a Seattle and King County Heat Watch Report in 2021, temperatures in paved heat islands like the Seattle Central College Campus on Broadway can reach 23 degrees hotter than that of canopied green space like Volunteer Park.

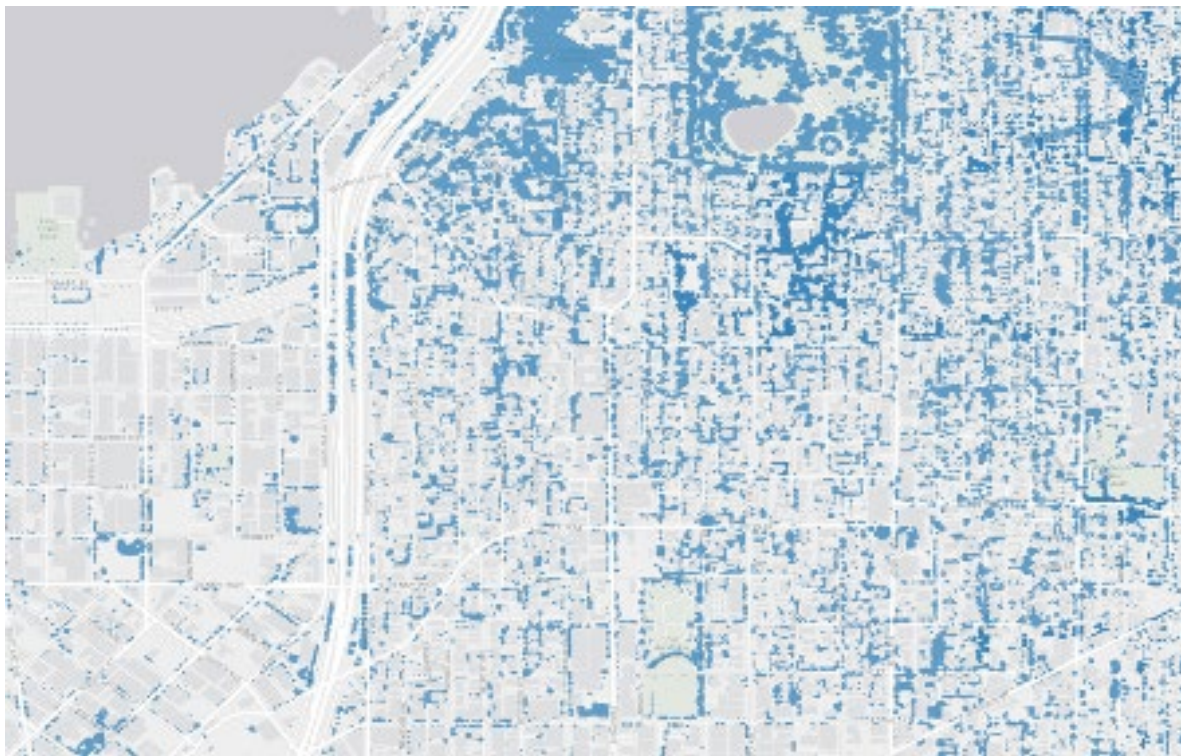
Heat mapping results shows that South Capitol Hill is on average 5-10 degrees hotter than North Capitol Hill. The proximity of North Capitol Hill to large green spaces, like Volunteer Park and Interlaken Park, help keep the area relatively cool. North Capitol Hill is significantly wealthier and whiter than South Capitol Hill. The physical features of north Capitol Hill mean people that are living in a safer and healthier environment with less stress from heat-related events. There are larger buildings in South Capitol Hill as compared to more single-family homes in north Capitol Hill. This in turn creates larger areas of impervious surfaces. Industrial areas, which are already below target canopy ranges, heat up more during the afternoon and are unable to cool down. Tree canopy mapping correlates the coolest places in Capitol Hill to green spaces, which are in the



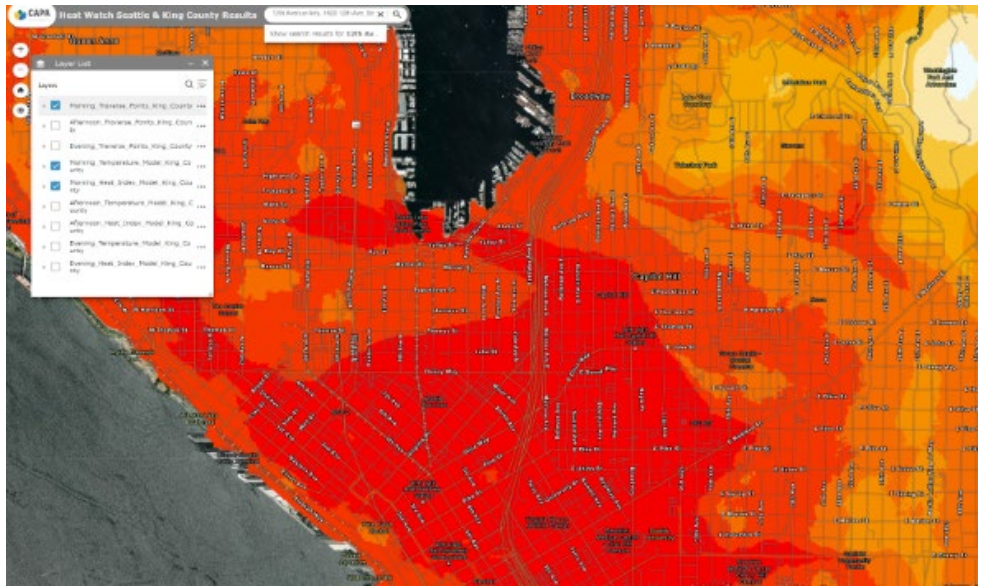
north. In industrial parts of Capitol Hill, canopies are below target. In east Capitol Hill, 36% of the neighborhood has cooling-level canopy coverage. This level exceeds the city of Seattle goals of 30% by 2037.

The lack of greenspaces and more impervious surfaces is associated with hotter temperatures in South Capitol Hill, specifically the lack of cooling seen in between morning and evening temperatures. During heat waves, this especially puts pressure on unhoused individuals, and residents of south Capitol Hill, who are more likely to live in homes without adequate cooling strategies.

There is not a difference in Air Quality between North and South, but air quality worsens in proximity in to I-5. Particulate matter mapping shows that proximity to major roads, like I-5, leaves more PM2.5 in the surrounding areas. However, near volunteer park these affects are mitigated in a linear relationship. Cal Anderson, the largest greenspaces in South Capitol Hill, has not been studied for air pollution mitigation effects. Some argue that magnetic signatures, that pick up on magnetic signatures on leaves at ground level, could be more accurate ways to monitor air pollution as opposed to the ~20 laser particle sensors distributed throughout Capitol Hill. These sensors often measure pollution inaccurately near very polluted areas like highways. There are notably no sensors for the part of south Capitol Hill that borders I-5.



*City of Seattle, Urban Tree Canopy*



OSE, Morning Heat Mapping during extreme heat event, 2020

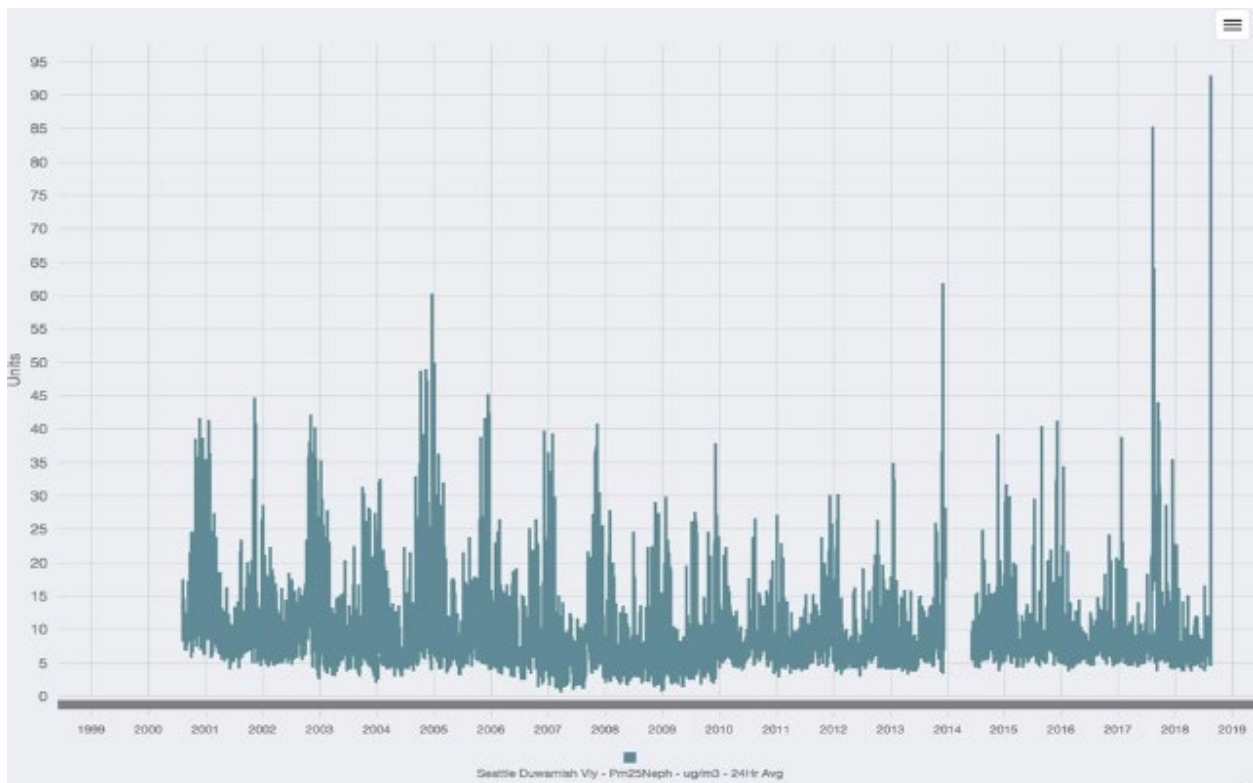


OSE, Afternoon Heat Mapping during extreme heat event, 2020

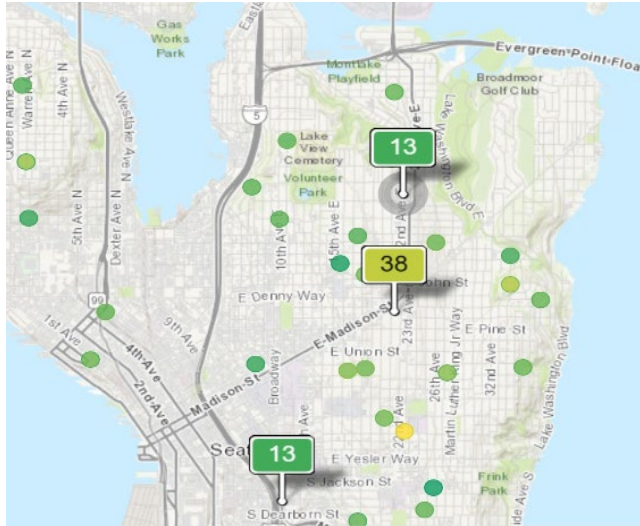
Capitol Hill has relatively good air quality compared to the rest of Seattle. However, during extreme heat events, hospital admissions for ages 18-64 related to respiratory and cardiovascular issues match the rest of Seattle's admissions. Heat mapping was primarily conducting in north Capitol Hill, data used to create an index in southern Capitol Hill was taken from the First Hill area. This data was taken along Aloha St., and a more

representative road in south Capitol Hill might be helpful for pinpointing the most affected heat islands.

Seattle experiences about 14.2 unhealthy pollution days a year. Half of these days can be attributed to high ozone and the other half to high PM2.5 (particles that are less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter). This is more than double the US Environmental Protection's Agency's recommended amount of unhealthy air quality days. There is a variety of producers for the pollutants in the Seattle area. For example, the EPA suspects that population growth (an increased number of vehicles), construction and severe wildfires can be blamed for a decent amount of the air pollutants. According to the American Lung Association in 2020, Seattle ranked 36th (out of 299 metropolitan areas) nationally for high ozone days. It also tied for 14th (out of 216) for worst 24-hour particle pollution.



*Washington Air Quality Map*



Overall, there is low variability in AQI across Capitol Hill. Multiple types of sensors and monitoring companies are used to collect data. Standard EPA procedure outlines that sensor should be between 3-6 feet above the ground. Sites are also specifically chosen to be away from pollution sources or sinks, which could be potentially skewing data. Notably, there are no sensors on the Southwest end of Capitol Hill.

In terms of rainfall, Seattle does not appear to be getting wetter. Capitol Hill, however, does experience significant flooding around Cal Anderson Park.

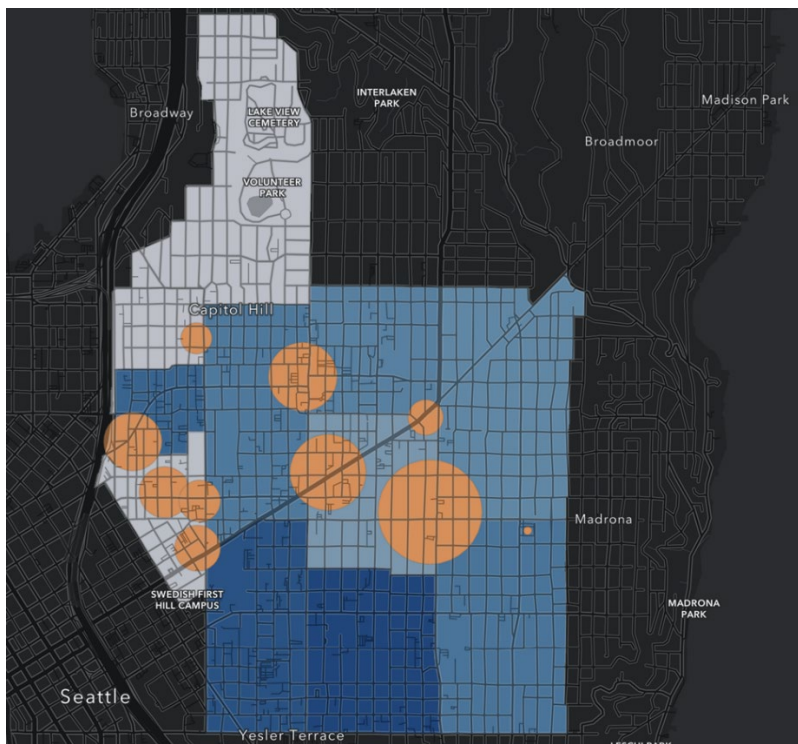
Year	Precipitation (inches in rain)
2016	45.18
2017	47.87
2018	35.73
2019	33.8
2020	41.32

[Seattle Weather Blog on Annual Precipitation](#)

## FOOD SECURITY

Food security research involves macro-level data collection that assesses availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. If costs rise and wages are stagnant, the portion of income dedicated to meeting this need increases and households become cost burdened. The EcoDistrict worked with students at the University of Washington College of Built Environments to build a food price index. Students identified 15 stores (10 supermarkets, four neighborhood stores, and one drug store) and compiled pricing data on one pound of chicken, onions, broccoli, rice, apples, and a gallon of milk. A “total price index” related the total cost of these ingredients from each store to the average cost from all stores. Grocery Outlet at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard was most affordable with a ratio of .58 whereas PCC at 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and E Union St was most expensive with a ratio of 1.48. Amazon Fresh at 610 E Pike St came closest to the average price with a ratio of .99.

Students then mapped price ratios to the percentage of people receiving SNAP benefits (2018 American Community Survey). They found little reprieve for households living in south Capitol Hill where wages are lower, and costs are higher.



*Price ratios and % population receiving SNAP benefits*

## HEALTH SERVICES

Health and human – or social – services represent a critical sector in addressing social determinants of health, as unmet needs show themselves in public spaces and stress systems of resilience in any community.

Students at the University of Washington College of Built Environments reviewed 42 health and human services providers serving Capitol Hill, creating typologies that included mental health, LGBTQ services, substance abuse, women’s health, hospitals, culturally specific services, and general health. They found a range of programs but little in service of substance abuse.

**Ten mental health facilities.** For the mental health services in the capitol hill neighborhood, there were a lot of private therapists and doctors that were welcoming of all types of issues and people. However, there are almost little to no free services for those who need help on their mental health and are not financially capable of doing so.

**Five LGBTQ Services.** There was a wide variety of health services for LGBTQ people, ranging from small, safe spaces, to outlets in large hospitals. Many of these health services help members of the LGBTQ community find a way to get adequate health care and most offer STD and HIV testing. Additionally, there are community-based organizations where LGBTQ people can seek connection.

**Five substance abuse services.** There were several resources for people that struggle with substance abuse problems in this area. Many of the bigger hospitals and medical centers offer different kinds of support and programs for substance abuse, as well. There were also a lot of separate clinics for people to choose from. Capitol Hill sees many drug-involved individuals, and there is great potential for the community to leverage these resources to welcome those who are struggling.

**Seven women’s health.** Many centers were all-encompassing and offered most women's health services. Many of these centers were OB/GYN services specifically, however others offered services like abortion, birth control, pregnancy services, STD and HIV testing, etc. These centers offer a great community for women and are incredibly important in emphasizing women's health.

**Six hospitals.** All hospitals offered an emergency room, in-patient, and out-patient services. Most hospitals had a general health clinic next door (part of the same campus). Many were clustered together in the SW corner of the neighborhood.

**Four culturally specific services.** These were specialized towards a certain demographic of people: religion, race, and language being the main categories. Each of these places provide culturally appropriate guidance for the community that they serve but not

necessarily complex medical care. These services are in place to provide more support to individuals in communities who may feel disconnected or need more guidance regarding healthcare.

**Six general health services.** This type categorizes health services related to the general day-to-day health of patients. This includes but is not limited to clinics or general practices offering primary care. This serves as an important resource for the general health of community members.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services definition, Capitol Hill in its entirety does not represent a medically underserved population, as it meets standards for the number of primary care providers per capita, infant mortality, poverty, and elderly populations. However, with 2018 data, census tract 84 does qualify as medically underserved. Healthcare services are concentrated in the Central District and downtown areas. Currently, Country Doctor Community Health Clinic, Swedish Medical Center, and Kaiser Permanente offer the most medical services in the area. However, Country Doctor, which is a federally qualified health center, is the only service that offers no cost and uninsured payment options. A significant limitation of this research comes in the difficulty to identify need. Unhoused people tend to be transient, and point-in-time counts do not disaggregate by neighborhood for this reason. While there were 46% more people living in cars in King County in 2018 than in years past, data on the neighborhood level remains elusive.

A community needs assessment at Lowell Elementary ahead of the development of a school-based health center in 2020, identified 75% of the student body as students of color, 60% of the student body as eligible for free and reduced lunch, and approximately 25% were eligible for special education services. Results from surveys, key informant interviews, and a focus group revealed that families were most interested in accessing urgent care services, vaccinations, well child checks, dental and vision services, treatment of ongoing illness and infection, and behavioral health. Despite having a designated health home, families expressed frustration in lack of appointment availability, noting that providers were fully booked for extended periods of time or appointments were available at times not ideal for families. Language barriers represent a distinct challenge in ensuring equitable access to health care.

## HOUSING

The City of Seattle is in the midst of a well-publicized housing crisis, and Capitol Hill shows itself to be a microcosm of this emergency. Plagued by a lack of affordable and family-sized housing, barriers to development and provider burnout strain the system further.

80% of the nearly 40,000 residents of Capitol Hill are renters, though vastly more people rent in south Capitol Hill than in the north. While housing supply is a primary concern, barriers to access remain a significant issue. In interviews, housing professionals identified several challenges, including lack of uniformity in application processes across providers, lack of internet access and required documentation. As well unhoused people frequently named isolation as a concern in seeking housing through coordinated care networks, as encampments provided a sense of community and security. Many opted to stay in motels where they could pay per day rather than have to amass a deposit as well as first and last month's rent to sign a lease.

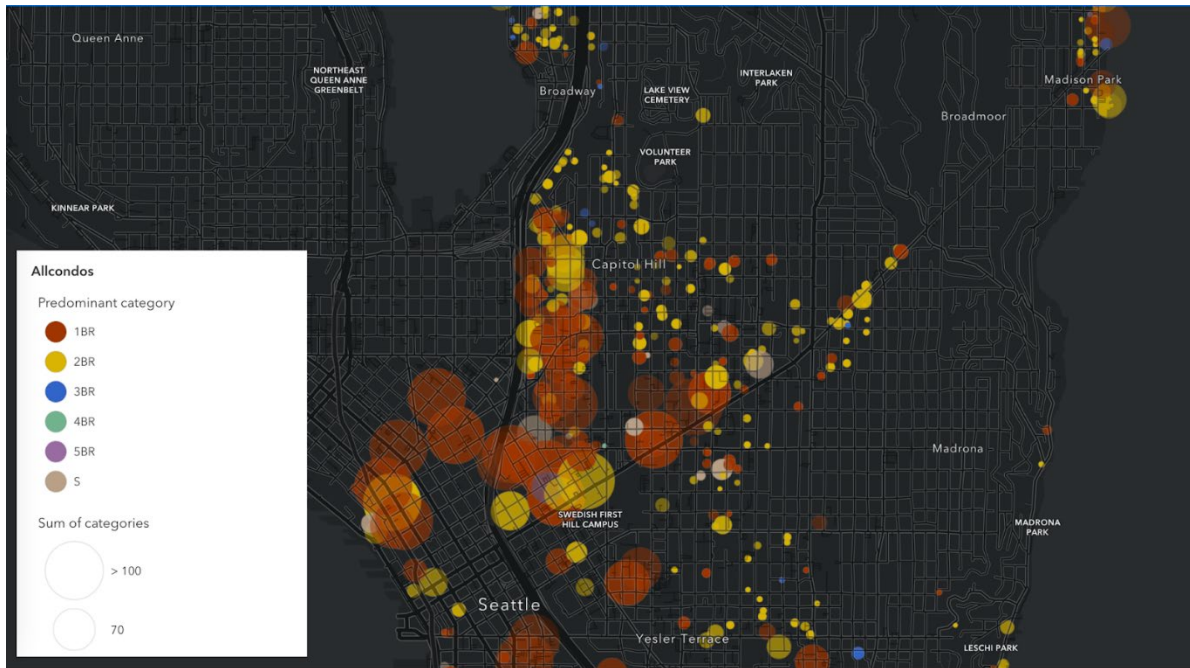
Housing providers noted limited budgets and staff retention as barriers to operating. They noted uprenting and downrenting, outstanding warrants, strict tenant laws, and no-pet rules as other barriers to access for low-income individuals.

Building Type	Number of units by size												Total units	Total bedrooms (duplexes, triplexes)	Total Beds (social services, shared living)	
	4 BR+	(%)	3BR	(%)	2BR	(%)	1BR	(%)	Studio	(%)	Unspecified	(%)				
Apartment (unsubsidized)	48	0.2%	418	1.4%	5263	17.7%	14980	50.5%	8969	30.2%	0	0.0%	29678			
Apartment (mixed-use, unsubsidized)	48	0.3%	85	0.6%	2255	15.3%	6399	43.4%	5961	40.4%	0	0.0%	14748			
Apartment (affordable/subsidized)	SHA	17	1.1%	71	4.4%	254	15.8%	790	49.3%	471	29.4%	0	0.0%	1603		
	CRH	0	0.0%	35	3.1%	212	18.9%	598	53.4%	275	24.6%	0	0.0%	1120		
	Bellwether	3	0.5%	55	9.7%	71	12.5%	199	35.0%	241	42.4%	0	0.0%	569		
	F.A.M.E.	14	14.3%	24	24.5%	34	34.7%	26	26.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	98			
	Others listed as subsidized	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.8%	327	68.7%	145	30.5%	0.0%	0.0%	476		
AADUs											133	100.0%	133			
DADUs											114	100.0%	114			
Microhousing											1859	100.0%	1859			
Shelter, Transitional, PSH, AL, etc	0	0.0%	10	0.9%	47	4.1%	67	5.8%	1027	89.2%	0	0.0%	1151		203	
Co-ops	0	0.0%	22	3.6%	83	13.7%	396	65.6%	103	17.1%	0	0.0%	604			
Condos (residential only bldg)	17	0.3%	250	3.9%	2918	45.9%	2655	41.8%	518	8.1%	0	0.0%	6358			
Condos (mixed-use bldg)	4	0.3%	36	2.9%	333	26.6%	664	53.1%	214	17.1%	0	0.0%	1251			
Retirement Facilities	1	0.1%	24	1.3%	556	30.0%	684	36.9%	590	31.8%	0	0.0%	1855			
Duplex													687	2780		
Triplex													228	1159		
Fourplex	0	0.0%	32	4.5%	297	42.0%	338	47.8%	40	5.7%	0	0.0%	707			
Townhouse	98	3.1%	1674	52.2%	1361	42.5%	70	2.2%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	3205			
Total	250	0.4%	2,736	4.1%	13,688	20.6%	28,193	42.4%	18,556	27.9%	2,106	3.2%	66,444	3,939	203	

*2020 Housing inventory*

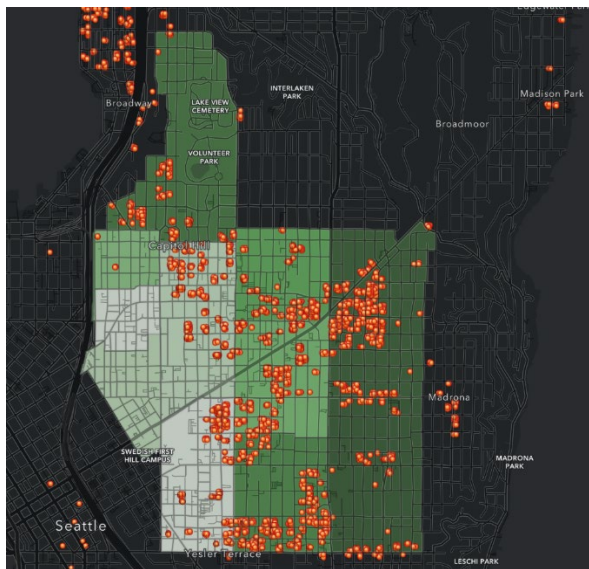
In Capitol Hill, most multi-family units are studios, one-bedrooms, and two-bedrooms with most units being one-bedrooms. Group homes, nursing homes, and rooming houses combined with subsidized apartments that offer on-site care fall into a category called “shelter, transitional, permanent supported housing (PSH), assisted Living (AL)” and only account for 2% of overall housing units in the neighborhood.





Map of apartments across central Seattle

Multifamily housing generally exists as townhomes, which are clustered in wealthier areas with higher rents.



Townhouse plats and median income (wealthier census tracts in darker green)

## SAFETY

The EcoDistrict assessed safety in Capitol Hill with a series of vox pop interviews conducted by students at the UW College of Built Environments, a safety forum, and archival research. These found that current implementation practices for safety are not addressing most identified needs, including activation and inclusive activities, lighting, wayfinding, and dog control. The current system is not resourced to respond to stressors, leaving the neighborhood highly impacted by funding availability, population growth, and labor shortages.

Community members reported feeling safer when Cal Anderson Park was activated with programming, events, and was well populated generally. Public and tourist reviews found that cleanliness was noted 50% of the time, citing the time of day greatly impacts their decision to move through a public space. While additional lighting has been added to Cal Anderson Park in recent years, residents still reported that a lack of lighting is one of the leading factors that influence their perception of safety in the park.

A review of a recent Cal Anderson Park CPTED analysis found that park activation policies have fallen short of consideration of user groups such as unhoused people and minorities, the latter of which reported general feelings of unwelcome in Seattle parks. A lack of wayfinding seemed to cause confusion.

Beyond Cal Anderson Park, one of the most significant safety issues plaguing Capitol Hill, and Seattle generally, is vehicle collisions. In 2021, according to city data, there were 13 pedestrian collisions and five cyclist collisions along the Pike Pine corridor, three pedestrian collisions on Olive Way, and five pedestrian and cyclist collisions each on Broadway. While protected and unprotected bike lanes do form a network in the neighborhood, these arterials also represent economic corridors. Treating arterials as destinations in a highly populated neighborhood that is still reliant on cars creates significant danger.

## SOCIAL CONNECTION

Social networks build resilience to stress, loneliness, and other challenges. During the pandemic, this became even more clear. Capitol Hill is home to many gathering spaces and convening organizations, but many are inaccessible due to inadequate transit. Physical infrastructure, such as sidewalks, are damaged and endanger people with disabilities.

The EcoDistrict built an asset map, assessing the following:

**69 convening organizations.** With many focus on culture and identity, these organizations offer engagement opportunities without a fee.

**33 service organizations.** These organizations provide services and create advocacy opportunities.

**5 public transit systems.** Metro bus, light rail, streetcar, and bike lanes create multi-modal access that is uncoordinated, unreliable, and with inadequate wayfinding.

**28 physical public places.** While everyone has access, public seating is limited with little public art and some examples of hostile architecture.

Housing stands out as a significant barrier to accessing these opportunities for connection. For those living in the neighborhood, this is not a barrier. For all others, they must contend with an unreliable transit system or be resourced with their own car or afford a rideshare.

COVID-19 represented a great challenge to social connection in Capitol Hill and, as the City offer treatments in other neighborhoods, there were no Stay Healthy Streets in Capitol Hill. Several community members applied for and secured permits for Stay Healthy Blocks.

## Appendix 2: Public Life Digital Survey

### A Vision for Public Life in Capitol Hill

#### What does a resilient Capitol Hill look like?

Please complete this 5-7-minute survey to help us envision more resilient, inclusive, safe, and connected public spaces for all in Capitol Hill. This learning and other community engagement activities will influence a Public Life Vision and Implementation Plan for Capitol Hill. Learn more about public life planning [here](#).

#### Fostering Belonging

The following questions relate to experiences of safety and belonging in public spaces in Capitol Hill.

What is your relationship to the Capitol Hill neighborhood? Please check all that apply.

- I live here.
- I work here.
- I recreate here.
- I receive services here.
- I travel through the neighborhood.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What helps you to feel a sense of belonging in a public space? What might you need to feel this way in a public space? Please check all that apply.

- Lots of people
- People that look like me
- Opportunities to connect with people
- Access to social services
- Accessibility for all ages and abilities
- Accessible signage and wayfinding
- My identity and/or culture reflected in art and design
- Spaces and events that are free to access
- Opportunities to connect with nature
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Over the past year, what percentage of the time did you spend feeling a sense of belonging in public spaces in Capitol Hill?

0%    25%    50%    75%    100%

When you haven't felt like you belong, what was going on?

---

### **Stability and Resilience**

The following questions relate to experiences of stability and resilience as they pertain to stable housing, access to health services, employment, food security, and social connection.

Over the past year, what percentage of time have you spent feeling a sense of stability (stable housing, access to health services, employment, food security, social connection)?

0%    25%    50%    75%    100%

When you haven't felt a sense of stability, what was going on?

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### **Climate Change and other Environmental Impacts**

The following questions relate to experiences of vulnerability due to climate change and other environmental impacts.

Over the past THREE years, to what extent were you affected by environmental impacts (e.g., flooding, extreme heat, poor air quality, extreme cold, snowstorms, rats)?

Not impacted            1        2        3        4        5        Significantly impacted

What strategies did you use to cope? Check all that apply.

- Stayed home
- Stayed with friends or family
- Park or green space with shade
- Temporary shelter
- Air conditioning
- Air filter
- Pesticides
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

What strategies could you imagine being helpful in the future?

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### **Gentrification and Displacement**

The following questions relate to your experience of the impacts of gentrification and displacement in Seattle.

What strategies do you think would be most effective at addressing displacement resulting from gentrification? Please check all that apply.

- More affordable housing
- A greater diversity of housing options
- More housing and commercial development in less densely populated neighborhoods
- More community input on development projects (housing, commercial, institutional)
- Access to more transportation options
- More direct public transportation routes (fewer transfers for longer trips)
- Equitable support for arts and culture organizations
- More job training
- More living wage jobs
- Equitable support for small businesses
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

What do you need to manage impacts of displacement for your household?

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## Design this space.

The following questions relate improvements that could create more resilient, inclusive, safe, and connected public spaces in Capitol Hill. See examples of designed spaces from our [2021 Community Forum](#).

Click on the image to identify the places where you recommend improvements. Click as many places as apply.



What types of improvements would you like to see made? Please check all that apply.

- Art and music (e.g. murals, buskers)
- Free public utilities (e.g. Wi-Fi)
- Seating (e.g. benches)
- Bike parking
- Car-free Zone
- Family-oriented programming
- Street vending
- Shade (e.g. trees, canopies)

- Free public toilets
- Improved lighting
- Skate park
- Off-leash dog park
- Spaces to connect (e.g. conversation table)
- Improved wayfinding
- Green stormwater infrastructure (e.g. rain gardens)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What else would you add or change about public spaces in Capitol Hill?

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### **Getting to know you.**

The following OPTIONAL section gives us a better understanding of who you are and helps us to ensure that we are listening to the many different sectors, identities, and perspectives contained within our community.

Are you willing to answer demographic questions?

- Yes
- No

### **Demographic Questions**

The following questions are optional.

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+



By what race and/or ethnicity do you identify? Please check all that apply.

- Black or African American
- White or Caucasian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Asian American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which best describes your sexual orientation?

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Heterosexual
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following best describes your gender identity? Please check all that apply.

- Trans female/Trans woman
- Trans male/Trans man
- Genderqueer/Gender-nonconforming/Genderfluid
- Female (Cisgender)
- Male (Cisgender)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, or climbing stairs?

- Yes
- No

What is your annual household income?

- Under \$15,000
- Between \$15,000 and \$29,999
- Between \$30,000 and \$49,999
- Between \$50,000 and \$74,999
- Between \$75,000 and \$99,999


- Between \$100,000 and \$150,000
- Over \$150,000

What is the current status of your housing? Please select all that apply.

- I rent my home
- I own my home
- I am staying with friends
- I am staying at a shelter, tiny house village, or other managed facility
- I live in assisted living
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

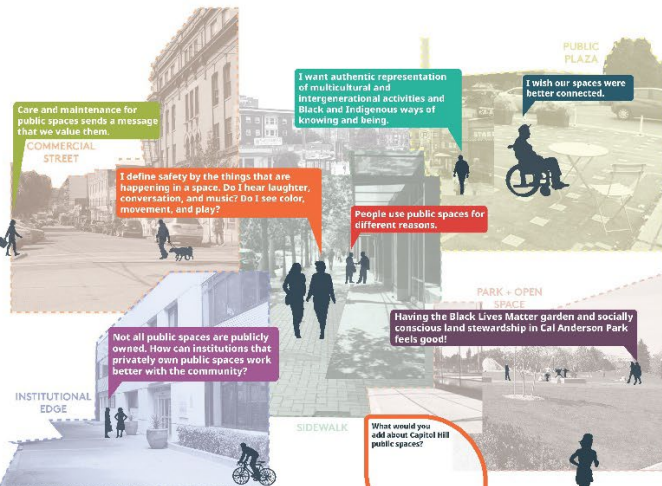
# Appendix 3: 2022 Community Forum Visualization

Many thanks to Deb, Jake, Christian, Claire, and the entire team at Mithun for their guidance, support, and consistent high-quality design.



## WELCOME!


Public life is defined by our experiences of public spaces and of each other in public spaces. How well do the streets, sidewalks, parks, squares, and alleys of the neighborhood meet community needs, enrich lives, and help us to connect with one another?



- COMMERCIAL STREET:** Care and maintenance for public spaces sends a message that we value them.
- SIDEWALK:** I define safety by the things that are happening in a space. Do I hear laughter, conversation, and music? Do I see color, movement, and play?
- PUBLIC PLAZA:** I want authentic representation of multicultural and intergenerational activities and Black and Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
- PUBLIC PLAZA:** I wish our spaces were better connected.
- PARK + OPEN SPACE:** People use public spaces for different reasons.
- PARK + OPEN SPACE:** Having the Black Lives Matter garden and socially conscious land stewardship in Cal Anderson Park feels good!
- INSTITUTIONAL EDGE:** Not all public spaces are publicly owned. How can institutions that privately own public spaces work better with the community?

When would you add about Capitol Hill public spaces?

\*Quotes collected from community members at Capitol Hill Frontliner meetings and events.



Plan Form Map Artist: Lourdes Jodas  
Mural: local artists: Rowley & Broadway Ave

# THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

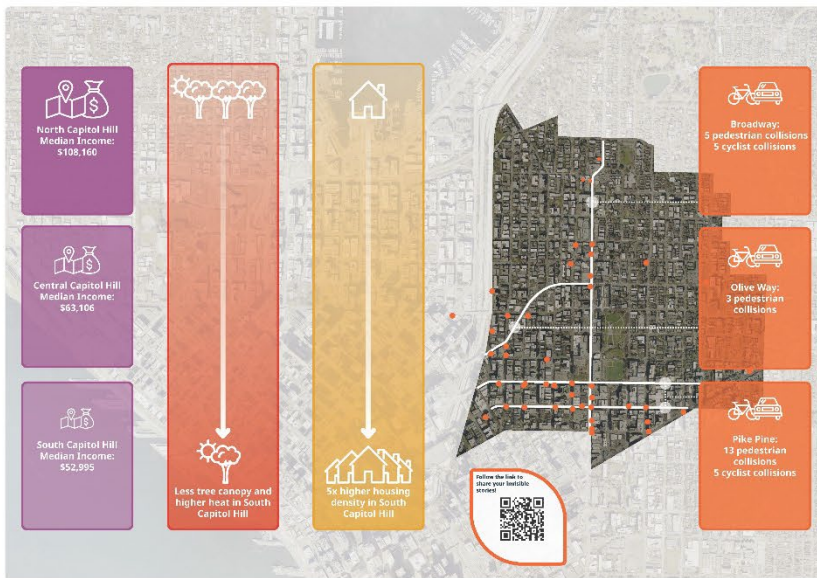
Through illumination, sidewalk enhancement, art and storytelling, accessible social services, pedestrian and bike networks, community gardens/wildlife habitat, and Green Stormwater Infrastructure, urban design can impact how public spaces feel.





# INVISIBLE SYSTEMS

While open spaces, streets, sidewalks, and the buildings that surround them affect our experience of public life, so do the invisible systems of resilience that support our needs. Mapping these systems showed many significant takeaways – here are a few.



**Median Income**  
Household income decreases by more than 50% moving south.  
\*2022 American Community Survey 5-year updated in April 2022

**Urban Heat + Tree Canopy**  
South Capitol Hill can be up to 23 degrees hotter than North Capitol Hill as tree canopy degrades by 13%.  
\*Lang, N., Jetz, W., Schindler, K., & Wegner, J. D. (2022). A high-resolution canopy height model of the Earth.  
\*Seattle and King County Heat Watch Report 2021

**Housing**  
80% of nearly 40k residents are renters. Housing density increases by nearly 5x (more than 450%) moving south.  
\*2022 American Community Survey 5-year updated in April 2022

**Collisions + Transit**  
Vehicle collisions with pedestrians and cyclists continue to be concentrated along Broadway, Olive Way, and the Pike-Pine corridor. Transit systems are inadequate for northern—and especially southern connections.  
\*City of Seattle, 2021 Open Data



Rain Point Mural Artist: Amol Srao  
Mural located on E Olive St. & 1st Ave.



# LISTENING TO COMMUNITY

Neighborhood assessments, community conversations, research, and other engagement activities provide insight into public life in Capitol Hill.

Copenhagen Study Trip	Public Life Studies	Community Forum	Event Outreach
<p>In 2019, the EcoDistrict hosted a delegation to Copenhagen to study public life, bringing back lessons and starting a community conversation.</p>	<p>With students from the University of Washington, the EcoDistrict conducted baseline studies on the quality of public spaces and the systems that support them.</p>	<p>In 2021, this community conversation helped to identify needs and solutions for public spaces in Capitol Hill.</p>	<p>Community engagement continued throughout 2022 at events and through individual interviews.</p>

### Community Resilience Mapping - Challenges

Safety	Environment	Social Connection	Education + Jobs	Demographics	Health + Human Services	Housing + Food
<p>People experience safety differently based on their identity and lived experience.</p>	<p>Climate change increases flooding, wildfires, and extreme heat events. Rats proliferate in warmer temperatures.</p>	<p>Networks build resilience to stress, loneliness, and other challenges.</p>	<p>Schools meet social and health needs beyond education, and opportunity must be accessible.</p>	<p>Public spaces carry the legacy of redlining and racial covenants.</p>	<p>Unmet needs show themselves in public spaces.</p>	<p>These basic human needs are at risk as costs rise.</p>

Research conducted by EcoDistrict from the University of Washington, College of Built Environments.



# COMMUNITY CONNECTION + WEALTH BUILDING

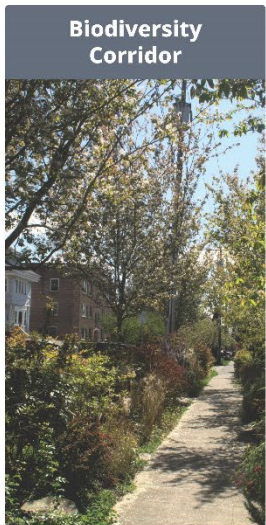
Through pilot projects and activations, Black-, Brown-, and Indigenous-owned small businesses, local artists, and renters benefit directly from Capitol Hill's public spaces.



Well-supported pop-up markets bring Black, Brown, and Indigenous retailers into new public spaces.



Rain-activated murals help connect imagination to the impacts of climate change.



Gardening in planting strips is a great way to expand bird habitat and connect existing open spaces.

### Community Resilience Mapping - Systems

Safety	Environment	Social Connection	Education + Jobs	Demographics	Health + Human Services	Housing + Food
Lack of lighting and wayfinding erode feelings of safety.	Heat islands and lack of transit to shelters increase vulnerability. Use of toxic rodenticides harms ecosystems.	Gathering spaces and convening organizations are inaccessible. Damaged sidewalks endanger people with disabilities.	Resources are distributed inequitably, and job training is at risk of being further reduced.	The Area Median Income (AMI) of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people is significantly lower than overall AMI.	The needs of low-income and unhoused people exceed available services. Providers lack coordination and support.	Lack of affordable and family-sized housing, barriers to development, and provider burnout strain the system.

Map created by students from the University of Washington, College of Public Health and Community Partnerships.



Rain Paint Mural Artist: Lourdes Jackson Mural located on E Howell St & Broadway Ave



# COMMUNITY POWER

Through relational work, advocacy, and action, liberated public spaces are co-created to ensure that everyone feels they belong in the neighborhood.

Policy Change	Placemaking Vision	Partnerships
<p>Address inequity in Area Median Income (AMI)</p> <p>Increase accessibility to permits for vending and activating public space</p> <p>Increase community participation in development process</p> <p>Contribute to Seattle Comprehensive and Transportation Plan updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-displacement strategies</li> <li>• Social service coordination</li> <li>• Transit justice</li> <li>• Affordable housing + tree protection</li> <li>• Free public amenities (bathrooms, cooling centers)</li> </ul> <p><b>What's missing? Add your comments and feedback here.</b></p>	<p>REVIVAL Market Street replicates across Seattle</p> <p>Nagle Place becomes welcoming, activated corridor</p> <p>Neighbor's Alley illuminates local businesses</p> <p>Biodiversity Corridor expands space for pollinators and people</p> <p>LID 1-5 connects Capitol Hill to Downtown Seattle</p> <p><b>How do we better support your favorite place? Add your own idea!</b></p>	<p>Capitol Hill Land Use Review Committee expands</p> <p>Neighborhood anchor institutions steward environmental justice</p> <p>Lowell Elementary School improves local food security</p> <p>Capitol Hill Arts District prevents artist displacement</p>

### Community Resilience Mapping - Opportunities

Safety	Environment	Social Connection	Education + Jobs	Demographics	Health + Human Services	Housing + Food
De-emphasize surveillance and increase activation and diversity of activities reflected in public spaces.	Increase tree canopy and improve reliable transit to shelters. Expand trash removal to reduce rodents.	Improve sidewalks and way-finding. Expand transit to increase access for those with less resources.	Support low-cost, higher ed and public schools serving low-income students with medical needs.	Study Area Median Income as a barrier to equitable community development.	Improve access for unhoused and low-income people; support providers with resources and rest.	Advocate for family-sized housing, reduce barriers to affordable housing applicants; study barriers to development.

Revised and updated by students from the University of Washington, College of Urban & Environmental Studies



Rain Point Mural Artist: Amol Scraf Mural located on E Olive St. & 11th Ave.