

# PORTLAND ZERO CITIES PROJECT REPORT



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# Executive Summary

Portland's Zero Cities Project was initiated by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) and the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) in 2017 with the intent to "help cities develop actionable and equitable roadmaps and strategies to achieve a zero net carbon building sector by 2050."<sup>1</sup> A net zero building is a building that creates or offsets as much energy as it consumes in a year. It effectively contributes no greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through its operations.

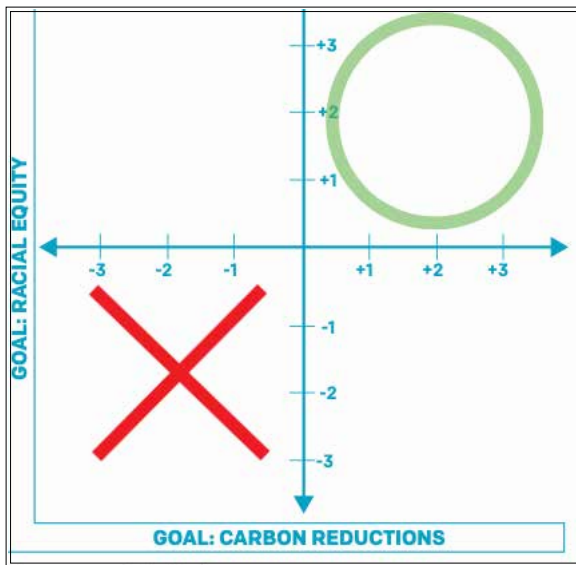


Figure 1. Race Forward Axis  
(Credit: Race Forward, 2019)

As more and more cities set goals to achieve 100 percent renewable energy and reduce emissions there is greater need to understand how buildings can contribute to or detract from these goals. The project sought to balance strategies on an axis of emission reductions against racial equity (Fig. 1), created by project partner Race Forward<sup>2</sup>, to define twin goals for successful solutions. An equitable roadmap to net zero emissions must address both old and new buildings. It also must ensure that the communities most impacted by redlining

and other racist housing or planning practices are prioritized for investments, and that these investments are designed to address other needs and opportunities for those communities.

In consideration of the Race Forward axis, any policy changes to improve Portland's building stock would not be without harm unless carefully considered and

1 <https://www.usdn.org/projects/zero-cities-project.html>

2 With support from Kapwa Consulting.

co-created with communities of color. Population and job growth, compounded by a racist history of planning and urban renewal, and more current, harmful projects like the expansion of the MAX Yellow line<sup>3</sup>, were contributing to widespread gentrification and displacement. This was particularly devastating to Black communities in Northeast who were pushed to East Portland. Now, economic vulnerability and displacement risk are exacerbated for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities as they are pushed out of Portland into East Multnomah County, Clackamas County, and Washington County.

Those same communities are also more likely to experience energy burden, paying more than six percent of their incomes towards energy bills. They are also more likely to live in older housing that lacks energy efficiency, weatherization, or renewable generation upgrades, and may pose health risks to residents. Moreover, they are more likely to be renters who lack the capital or power to be able to make the improvements that would help reduce their energy bills, and on a broader scale, contribute to Portland's building energy and climate goals.

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3 A regional light rail system.

## Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research is a model of community organizing that builds the capacity of people on the front line of a problem to take leadership in creating the change they want. It brings people together to:

- » Define for themselves what problems they face in their community
- » Find solutions or steps for addressing the problem through talking with and getting data from their peers
- » Implement those solutions through strategic and informed actions

BIPOC communities have the right to self-determine the strategies and solutions that they choose in response to challenges and opportunities they face. True change begins with the communities who have been most impacted by racist practices and policies. To put this principle into action, the Portland Zero Cities Project partners used participatory action research (PAR). Unlike traditional research, in which BIPOC communities are the subject, PAR positions community to define questions for exploration, select popular education tools as methods to answer those questions, identify the communities to engage in a process, and analyze the data collected through that process.

The Zero Cities Project consisted of several, partnered community-based organizations: Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Coalition of Communities of Color, Leaders Become Legends, Imagine Black (PAALF), OPAL, and Verde amplified the PAR model through several basic principles for the work:

- » **Demonstrate meaningful organizing:** Participants would build power and knowledge, and determine the outcomes of the project – not merely sign off on a pre-designed product as occurs in much community engagement.
- » **Value people for their time and expertise:** All activities would be stipended and partner organizations would receive pass-through money to participate. Simultaneously, processes and activities would be designed to be worth the investment of people’s time and accessibility accommodations would make that time more available.
- » **Give teeth to any outcomes:** Verde pushed for the process to culminate in a resolution or ordinance that would ensure that the Zero Cities Project was not just a plan or roadmap within the Climate Action Plan that sat on a shelf after it was complete and had no real impact.

Build off the 2018 Energy Justice Leadership Summit: Zero Cities presented an opportunity to re-engage with unfinished PAR work that drew from the Summit curriculum and partnerships, specifically through a lens of buildings and energy.

The work occurred in three phases:

## **1. Scoping, Outreach, and Curriculum Development**

## **2. Community Organizing, Leadership Development, and PAR Process**

## **3. Community Forum on Buildings an Energy and Data Gathering:**

- » Defining values communities hold, values they want the City to hold, and challenges and opportunities they face;
- » Holding a mock City Council hearing to develop policy strategies to address the split incentive;
- » Facilitating focus groups to discuss participants' experiences with housing and affordability;
- » Conducting an energy cost burden survey; and
- » Exploring community definitions of community-based renewable energy and ideas for community-based projects.





Throughout the Zero Cities Project, a number of key lessons were learned that can be passed on to other cities or community organizations endeavoring to do similar work. These lessons extend beyond data collection and inform values and principles for meaningful and transformative work. In order to bridge the gap between the City and community, the following principles must be held and exercised:

- » **Repair:** trust and address the issue of being heard in a proactive way.
- » **Listen:** Listen to community before action is taken to address issues before they come up and help people feel included for better futures to support better communities.
- » **Practice:** We need to walk the talk, especially around equity/diversity.
- » Apply the first two principles and ask whether we are repairing/listening and constantly putting that work into practice.

Other lessons included:

- » **Connect with New People:** Zero Cities work connected with fifty community members who were not necessarily attached to community-based organizations and thus brought a true community perspective. Accessibility resources like interpretation, childcare, and a reasonable stipend may have helped supplement this recruitment as well.
- » **Build Trust:** Community members shared their disappointment with past processes and expressed skepticism at the Zero Cities project and whether it could be meaningful because they had been let down or tokenized so many times before. It took thoughtful flexibility and willingness to give space for these concerns, and then show that they were heard and implemented throughout the process.

- » **Value Lived Experience:** In the Zero Cities work, the Portland team was interested in valuing lived experience as consulting, and attempting to get as close as possible to parity with other consultants.
- » **Facilitate Bilingual Spaces:** The buildings and energy training, the PAR process, and the community forum were all bilingual spaces in both participation and facilitation. In future work, the Portland team hopes to strive toward including interpretation and translation in more languages (interpretation and translation were needed and provided in Spanish and English only) to allow for meaningful participation from any community member. Interpretation and translation in more languages is recommended for future work.
- » **Create Spaces for Black, Brown, and Indigenous Communities:** The PAR Team decided that they wanted the community forum to be a BI-POC-only space in order to allow for community members to share openly and safely in ways that are not possible when power dynamics, especially those centered around white supremacy exist.
- » **Technical Expertise Is Valuable when Connected Directly to Community:** Too often in large policy or program processes, traditional technical experts are siloed from community experts and there is little opportunity for the two to share knowledge and expertise.
- » **Technical Terms Should Be Redefined:** More processes should be willing to redefine wonky language into more descriptive language that helps anyone understand a concept and how it is relevant or important. Putting terms into the context of people's experiences or daily lives can be valuable and help them to connect to and see themselves in solutions that are often described or defined exclusively.

» **Direct Invitations that Draw on Relationships Are Key to Recruitment:**

The PAR team were able to draw on their personal networks and skills as organizers in order to recruit fifty participants for a forum on a wonky subject during a busy time of year.

» **Resource Community Directly and Sufficiently:**

In contrast to a previous model where the City passes outside funding through to community for participation in a City process, direct funding enables community-based organizations to negotiate directly with funders and lead community engagement. The City then becomes a partner in community-led work rather than funder that can limit the work.

» **Reengage Participants:**

Too often, community participates in a process or workshop and then never hears from the City again or sees a final product that does not meaningfully reflect their feedback, needs, or contributions. In order to sufficiently defer to community, organizers must ensure that there are opportunities to reengage through information, future workshops, or continued efforts that extend beyond a process.



Taking these values into account, the community members who comprised the PAR Team to conduct the work decided to keep organizing. They established a name, Build/Shift: Building Communities, Shifting Power and a mission: We seek to build community across the Portland Metro Area, share knowledge and community wisdom, and shift political power to Black and Brown folx through leadership development and participatory policy-making. The work continues through opportunities to do participatory and community-led policy development, starting with minimum energy efficiency standards to reduce the costs of rental housing while improving the health and safety of tenants.

# What Is the Zero Cities Project?

**T**he Zero Cities Project was initiated by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) in 2017 with the intent to “help cities develop actionable and equitable roadmaps and strategies to achieve a zero net carbon building sector by 2050.”<sup>1</sup> As more and more cities set goals to achieve 100 percent renewable energy and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions there is greater need to understand how buildings can contribute to or detract from these goals.

Buildings produce carbon emissions directly through the consumption of fossil fuels and non-renewable electricity, and indirectly through their embodied carbon. Embedded carbon quantifies emissions that result from the production and transportation of materials and the actual construction of a building. Better supply chains, better construction equipment, and locally-sourced materials can reduce embodied carbon..

Behavior change or improved insulation, lighting, or heating and cooling (HVAC) systems can reduce operating emissions for a building by reducing energy use. A building also can generate its own renewable power (most commonly through solar energy) to offset the energy it uses, sell some of that energy back to a utility, or buy renewable energy certificates (RECs) from the market. A net zero building is a building that creates or offsets as much energy as it consumes in a year. It effectively contributes no emissions through its operations.

Often, net zero buildings are new construction, and even with incentives, are expensive to build. As such, they are not often accessible for working class people to live or work in. “Net zero” is also not a term that has meaning outside wonky energy spaces. An equitable roadmap to net zero emissions must address both old and new buildings. It also must ensure that the communities most impacted

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usdn.org/projects/zero-cities-project.html>

by redlining and other racist housing or planning practices are prioritized for investments, and that these investments are designed to address other needs and opportunities for those communities.

To help support cities and their community partners in building equitable roadmaps, USDN contracted with several organizations to provide specific expertise. Architecture 2030 conducted building stock analyses and provided additional technical expertise. New Buildings Institute provided a depth of knowledge about energy efficiency and other building improvements. Race Forward helped to define an equity framework and identify intersecting community issues. Resource Media provided messaging and communications support, and Movement Strategy Center provided facilitation and further equity support through an ecosystems map of local community-based organizations.

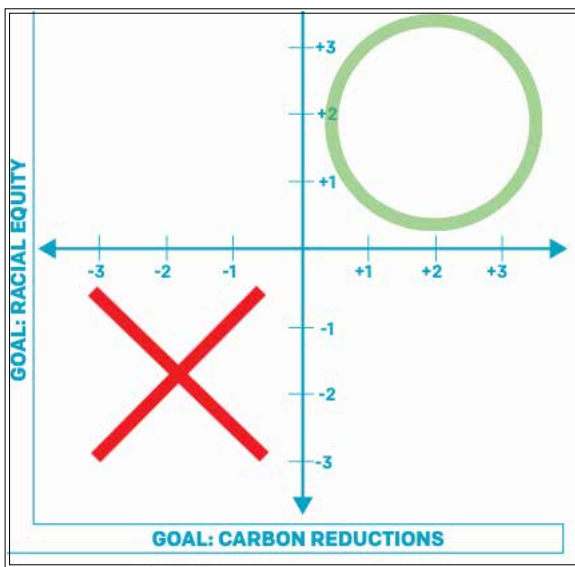


Figure 1. Race Forward Axis  
(Credit: Race Forward, 2019)

Of note in the resources produced by the Zero Cities consultants, the Equity Assessment Tool produced by Race Forward<sup>2</sup> defined seven arenas for equity metrics and an equity assessment matrix. The areas for exploration and analysis were: energy cost burden on BIPOC communities, economic prosperity (wealth, jobs, and business opportunities for BIPOC people), gentrification and displacement, substandard housing and exposure to health risks, geographic location and exposure to environmental risk, urban heat island effects, and community engagement.

The equity assessment matrix balanced racial equity on a y-axis against carbon reductions on an x-axis (Fig. 1). Strategies that achieved impact on equity metrics

<sup>2</sup> With support from Kapwa Consulting.

and also reduced carbon emissions were considered viable solutions; strategies that impacted carbon but not racial equity, like many traditional approaches, were not. This tool is foundational defining and visualizing an approach toward buildings and energy that leads with race through a framework of targeted universalism: by first addressing the needs, opportunities and past harms of BIPOC communities, emissions reductions will follow.

# Why Did Portland Become Involved in the Zero Cities Project?

In June 2018, the City of Portland (City) became one of twelve U.S. cities<sup>3</sup> to participate in the Zero Cities project. Coordinated by the City's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), this work supported goals established by Portland's Climate Action Plan and supplemental policy goals set forth through a 100 Percent Renewable Energy Resolution<sup>4</sup>, including reducing energy use of buildings 25 percent by 2030 and meeting all of Portland's community-wide energy needs with renewable energy by 2050.

The resolution also named that two percent of electricity generation would come from community-based sources by 2035 and 10 percent by 2050, but did not define what would constitute community-based renewable energy projects. In 2018, soon after the Zero Cities Project began, Portland joined eighteen other cities in a C40 Net Zero Buildings Declaration.<sup>5</sup> In doing so, it pledged to "enact regulations and/or planning policy to ensure new buildings operate at net zero carbon by 2030 and all buildings by 2050."<sup>6</sup>

Portland has a long way to go in order to reach its climate goals. In 2017, carbon emissions from Multnomah County totaled 7,702,200 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>7</sup> Figure 2 below depicts Multnomah County's sector-based carbon emissions breakdown. Emissions had increased 6% from 2016, attributable to a cold winter and increased transportation fuel use. Despite 26 years of climate planning and mitigation in Portland, local carbon emission reductions have plateaued since 2010 and may remain stagnant or increase due to population and job growth.

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3 The other eleven cities were: Boston, Boulder, Cambridge, MA, Grand Rapids in partnership with the Urban Core Collective, the City of Minneapolis in partnership with the Center for Earth Energy and Democracy, New York City, Phoenix, San Francisco in partnership with Emerald Cities and PODER, Washington DC in partnership with Empower, and the Seattle in partnership with a working group of neighborhood and community partners.

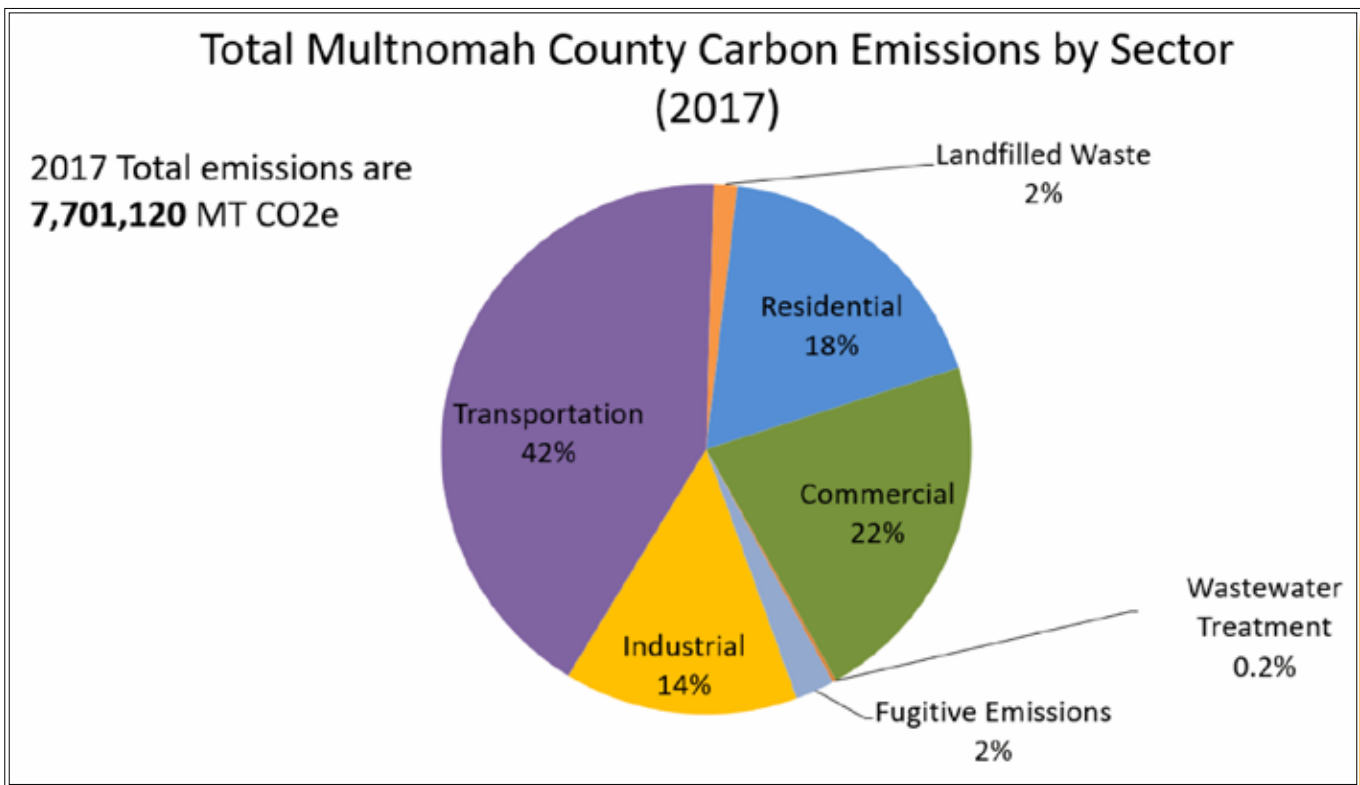
4 Resolution 32789: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/article/642811>

5 <https://www.c40.org/other/net-zero-carbon-buildings-declaration>

6 *Ibid.*

7 <https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2020-02/climate-data-report-final-31janupdate.pdf>





*Figure 2. Total Multnomah County Carbon Emissions by Sector.  
(Credit: Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 2019)*

Analysis (Fig. 3) from project partner, Architecture 2030, found that most building emissions will come from existing buildings, despite an increase in new construction over time. Even by 2050, new construction will only make up 22 percent of total building energy use with no additional policy or program interventions. Even as emissions were modeled to reduce over time in response to the State of Oregon’s Renewable Portfolio Standard, without additional action, there would be a slight uptick in building emissions – especially in new construction – between 2040 and 2050.

Any policy changes to improve Portland’s building stock would not be without harm unless carefully considered and co-created with community. Population and job growth, compounded by a racist history of planning, urban renewal, and more current, harmful projects like the expansion of the MAX Yellow line, were contributing to widespread gentrification and displacement. This was particularly devastating to Black communities in Northeast who were pushed to East

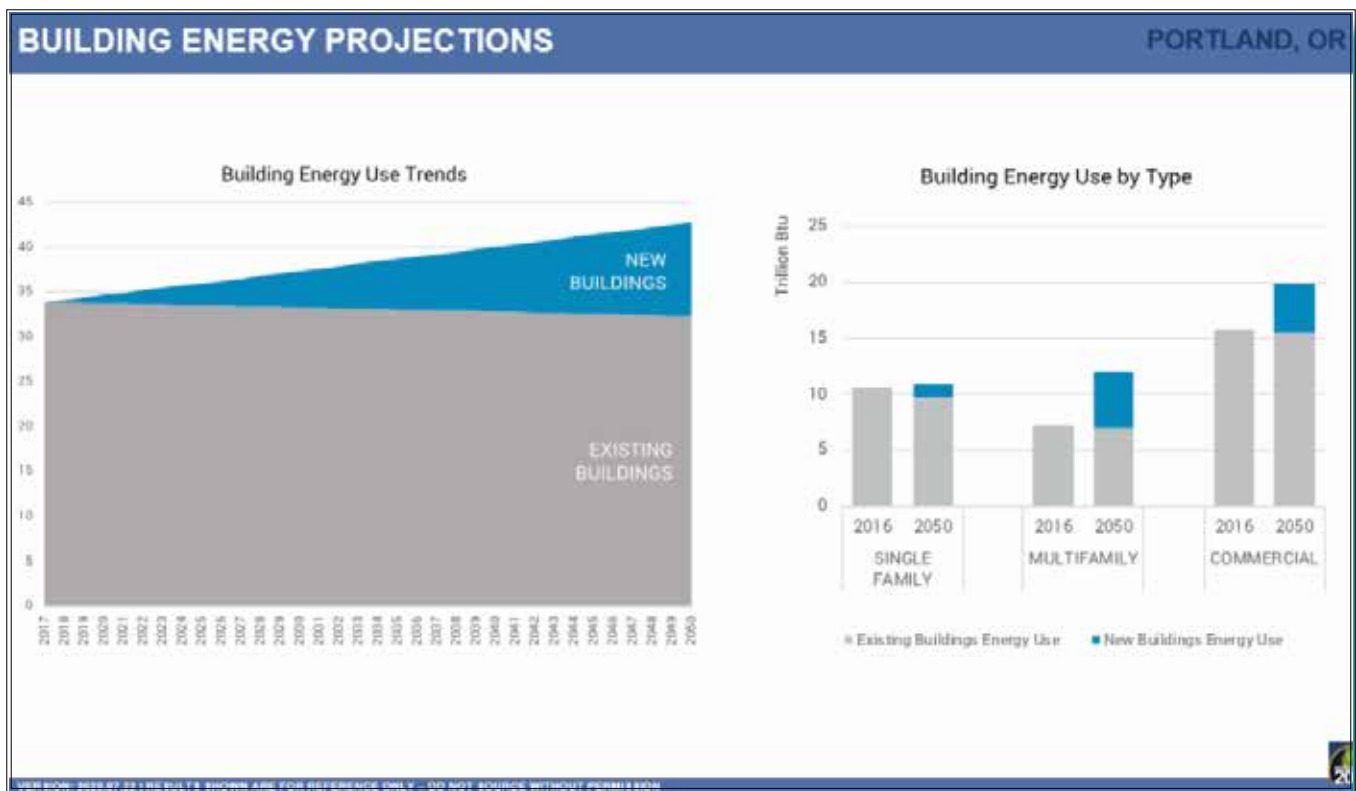


Figure 3. Building Energy Projections – Portland (Credit: Architecture 2030, 2020)

Portland. Now, economic vulnerability and displacement risk are exacerbated for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) communities as they are pushed into East Multnomah County, Clackamas County, and Washington County.

Those same communities are also more likely to experience energy burden, paying more than 6 percent of their incomes towards energy bills. They are also more likely to live in older housing that lack energy efficiency, weatherization, or generation upgrades, and may pose health risks to residents. Moreover, they are more likely to be renters who lack the capital or power to be able to make the improvements that would help reduce their energy bills, and on a broader scale, contribute to Portland’s climate and building energy goals.

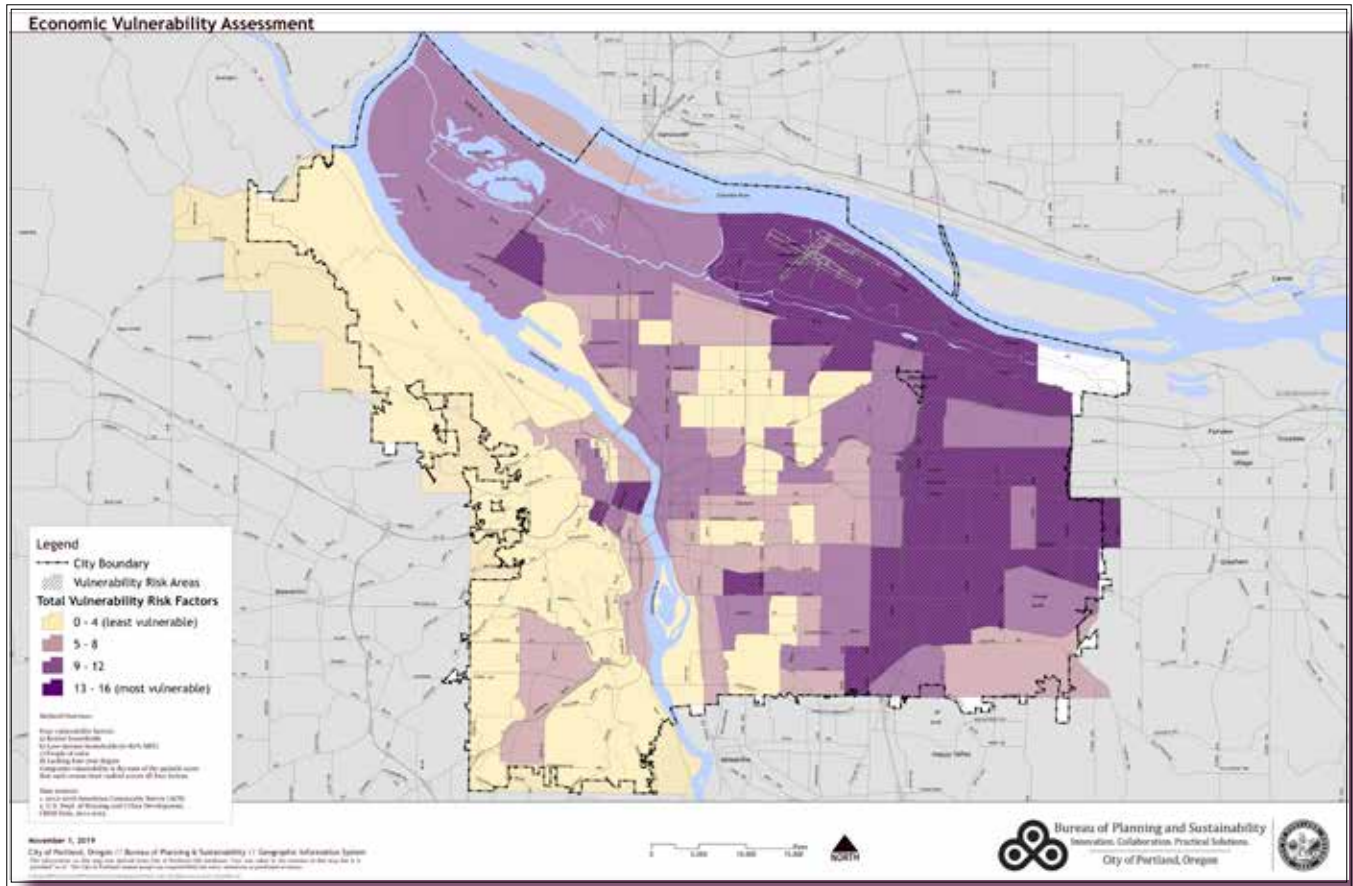


Figure 4. Economic Vulnerability Assessment (Credit: Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 2019)

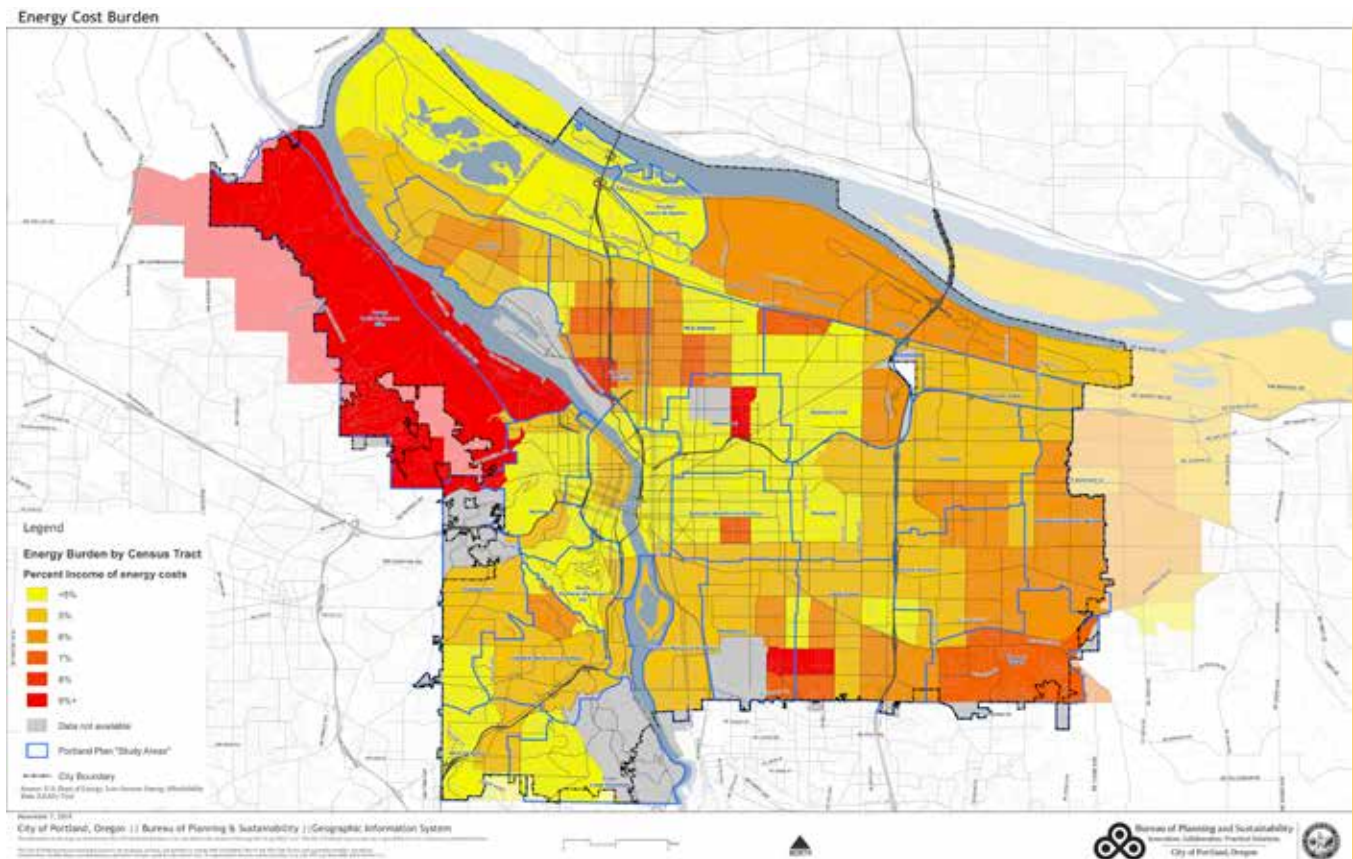


Figure 5: Energy Burden Assessment (Credit: Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 2019)

# How Was the Zero Cities Project Led By Community?

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Community has the right to self-determine the strategies and solutions that they choose in response to challenges and opportunities they face. Radical transformation cannot happen through the City alone or in partnership with mainstream, white-led energy and environmental advocates. These entities perpetuate white supremacy and engage BIPOC communities through processes in which those communities have little to no influence over the ultimate outcome. True change begins with the communities who have been most impacted by racist practices and policies.

Portland has increasingly seen BIPOC communities take leadership in climate and energy policy, most notably through the Portland Clean Energy and Community Benefits Fund (PCEF). This program was created through a community-led ballot initiative that passed with an overwhelming margin of victory, and despite initial skepticism from mainstream organizations. PCEF uses an increase in the City's business licensing fee for large corporations to fund energy, workforce, and regenerative agriculture projects -- the kinds of projects that will help to achieve the 2 percent and 10 percent community-based renewable energy goals laid out in the 100 Percent Renewable Energy Resolution.

Prior to launching the successful PCEF campaign, a number of community-based organizations that serve and represent BIPOC communities converged for an Energy Justice Summit in the Summer of 2018. Organized largely by the Coalition of Communities of Color in partnership with Movement Strategies Center, Local Clean Energy Alliance, and Partners for Collaborative Change, the Summit had the following goals:

- » **Develop transformational relationships**
- » **Build a collective understanding** of how energy impacts planning and building design.
- » **Define “building”** through a lens of how community interacts with structures and how buildings are experienced.
- » **Redefine “net zero”** through a lens of climate change mitigation and minimizing harm for frontline communities.
- » **Gain familiarity with the institutions** that influence how community interacts with buildings, how they are designed, and how they are built.

Black, Brown, and Indigenous community members associated with many organizations came together to learn about the energy system and to begin a participatory action research (PAR) process to develop a broad, community energy vision. Due to the constraints of the PCEF campaign, this was not able to come to fruition, but the seeds for future work were planted.

## Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research is a model of community organizing that builds the capacity of people on the front line of a problem to take leadership in creating the change they want. It brings people together to:

- » Define for themselves what problems they face in their community
- » Find solutions or steps for addressing the problem through talking with and getting data from their peers
- » Implement those solutions through strategic and informed actions

Unlike traditional research in which community is the subject of exploration, participatory action research (PAR) positions community to define questions for exploration, select popular education tools as methods to answer those questions, identify the communities to engage in a process, and analyze the data collected through that process. PAR is a model of community organizing that builds the capacity of people on the front line of a problem to take leadership in creating the change they want.

In the Zero Cities Project, the specific PAR methodology used was derived by Partners for Collaborative Change,<sup>8</sup> who helped design the process and curriculum. Their tool, *Coliberate: Community-Driven Climate Resilience Planning, A Participatory Action Research Curriculum*<sup>9</sup> is a good resource.

As part of its work on the Zero Cities Project, Movement Strategy Center conducted a social ecosystem map of Portland-based community organizations to



*Participants at the 2018 Energy Justice Summit, an event co-created with Multnomah County, Movement Strategies Center, Partners for Collaborative Change, and Local Clean Energy Alliance.*

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8 <http://www.collabchange.org/>

9 <https://www.collabchange.org/coliberate>

determine which ones were best positioned to partner with the City in work on buildings and energy. It identified Verde as a potential anchor partner and Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC), OPAL, Imagine Black (formerly the Portland African American Leadership Forum/PAALF), and the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) as other key collaborators. It is worth noting, that the analysis was not exhaustive and may have left out smaller or emerging organizations who had been less visibly active in climate and energy work in the Portland Metro Area.

Verde was approached by the City in January of 2019 to produce a scope of work to serve as the anchor partner for the Zero Cities Project. It did not intend to be a leader or a driver of the work, but to bring together other potential partners and facilitate a process through which community would meaningfully define the outcomes.

Verde has served communities for fifteen years through social enterprise, outreach or organizing, and advocacy. It began as a social enterprise to address disparities around access to green infrastructure. Simultaneously, it sought to create workforce opportunities and community stability through projects like rain gardens and the construction of Cully Park. It has expanded work to include housing and displacement through Living Cully, environmental leadership development through Liederer Verdes, and energy through the Living Cully Community Energy Plan,<sup>10</sup> the PCEF, and policy advocacy at the local, state, and regulatory levels.

In Verde's scope of work, it drew from previous efforts and past engagement with the City to design a process that would:

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10 <https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.livingcully.org%2Fincoming%2F2018%2F05%-2FLC-Community-Energy-Plan-FINAL-6.pdf>

- » **Demonstrate meaningful organizing:** participants would build power and knowledge, and determine the outcomes of the project -- not merely sign off on a pre-designed product as occurs in much community engagement.
- » **Value people for their time and expertise:** All activities would be stipended and partner organizations would receive pass-through money to participate. Simultaneously, processes and activities would be designed to be worth the investment of people's time and accessibility accommodations would make that time more available.
- » **Give teeth to any outcomes:** Verde pushed for the process to culminate in a resolution or ordinance that would ensure that the Zero Cities Project was not just a plan or roadmap within the Climate Action Plan that sat on a shelf after it was complete and had no real impact.
- » **Build off the 2018 Energy Justice Leadership Summit:** Zero Cities presented an opportunity to re-engage with unfinished PAR that drew from the Summit curriculum and partnerships, specifically through a lens of buildings and energy.

Verde designed the project in three phases:

- 1. Scoping, Outreach, and Curriculum Development (May – October, 2019):** It executed subcontractor agreements with OPAL, PAALF, and APANO through which they would recruit 2-3 community members to participate in a training around buildings and energy, review the curriculum development for this training, and then support an emerging PAR team who would host a forum for a larger group of community. At the forum, participants would share knowledge, build relationships, and learn about shared community experiences and strategies.



- » **OPAL Environmental Justice**<sup>11</sup> “builds power for Environmental Justice and Civil Rights in our communities, develops community members’ leadership skills, and motivates them to take action. It leads campaigns, impacts public processes, and wins victories in policy and procedure to achieve a safe and healthy environment where we live, work, learn, play, and pray.”
  
- » **Imagine Black (formerly Portland African American Leadership Forum/PAALF)**<sup>12</sup> “helps our Black community imagine the alternatives we deserve and build our civic participation and leadership to achieve those alternatives. PAALF envisions a world where people of African descent, enjoy the rights, resources and recognition to be a thriving, resilient and connected community.” It operates through a Black Queer Feminist lens, has been a leader in the movement in Oregon to defund and dismantle the police, and developed the People’s Plan,<sup>13</sup> an example of self-determined planning and policy development.
  
- » **Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)**<sup>14</sup> is the leading grassroots organization to support Asian and Pacific Islander Communities in Oregon. It does this through community organizing, culture work, leadership development, political advocacy, and place-based organizing and community development through the Jade District.
  
- » While it was not an initial partner, nor directly contracted, due to early capacity limitations during the project, the **Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC)**<sup>15</sup> also contributed staff time and support to the project. CCC “addresses the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities;

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11 <http://www.opalpdx.org/>

12 <https://www.paalf.org/>

13 <https://www.paalf.org/paalf-peoples-plan/read-paalf-peoples-plan>

14 <https://www.paalf.org/>

15 <https://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/>

and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.”

**2. Community Organizing, Leadership Development, and PAR Process (November – December, 2019):** Using the curriculum developed during the first phase, Verde and partner staff facilitated a bilingual training for twenty community leaders from their respective organizations. The training utilized popular education methods to teach participants about climate, energy, and buildings, and to encourage participants to think beyond the structure of a building. Participants were asked to consider who buildings interact with daily life and intersects with place, community, and movement. It evolved into an introduction to PAR and its methodologies and participants were invited to participate in a four week PAR process.

Twelve of the twenty community leaders elected to continue as the Zero Cities PAR Team on to generate research questions and develop a community forum through which they could be answered by other community members. An expert from the New Buildings Institute and City staff members also provided technical support in information and data gathering.

**3. Community Forum on Buildings and Energy and Data Gathering (December, 2019 – February, 2020):** On December 14, the PAR Team hosted a bilingual forum in order to present the information they learned in the training and answer research questions they co-developed through participatory methods. The forum was held at the June Key Delta Community Center, a Black-owned and operated community gathering space designed as a net zero energy building. Fifty community members participated in the forum. Activities included:

- » Defining values communities hold, values they want the City to hold, and challenges and opportunities they face;
- » Holding a mock City Council hearing to develop policy strategies to address the split incentive;
- » Facilitating focus groups to discuss participants' experiences with housing and affordability;
- » Conducting an energy cost burden survey; and
- » Exploring community definitions of community-based renewable energy and ideas for community-based projects.

Many community engagement processes do not give community a meaningful opportunity to influence or define outcomes and often shuffle results into a black box with no follow up or transparent explanation of how community feedback was utilized. Notably, engagement is different than organizing which is designed to build power and capacity for community. Organizing provides real avenues through which community can determine the direction of a policy, program, or strategy.

Facilitating Power and Movement Strategy Center's Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership tool<sup>16</sup> (Fig. 6) was used as a north star in project design. Many City processes occur at a consulting or involvement level -- community is present, and has an opportunity to share or suggest, but ultimately does not shape or decide. Portland's approach to Zero Cities strived toward collaboration and deference. The project intended to build toward a resolution or ordinance so that there was a clear and tangible product created by community and advanced by the City.

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16 <https://movementstrategy.org/directory/spectrum/>

## Facilitating Power and Movement Strategy Center Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership

The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership is a tool, created by Rosa Gonzáles with Facilitating Power in partnership with Movement Strategy Center. The tool draws from co-creative work with civic and community entities, including Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, Providence, Rhode Island, Washington, DC, and the Healthy Communities Initiative in Salinas, California. It is intended to support and be used by community-based organizations, local governments, philanthropic partners, and facilitative leaders.

The Spectrum is based in the idea that, “Thriving, diverse, equitable communities are possible through deep participation, particularly by communities commonly excluded from democratic voice & power. The stronger our local democracies, the more capacity we can unleash to address our toughest challenges, and the more capable we are of surviving and thriving through economic, ecological, and social crises.”



Figure 6. Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership.  
(Credit - Facilitating Power and Movement Strategy Center)

# Buildings and Energy Training

Over the course of September and October the community partner organizations worked with Partners for Collaborative Change, Local Clean Energy Alliance<sup>17</sup> and the City to develop a curriculum on buildings and energy that drew from elements of the previous Energy Justice Summit and could be utilized for the November training.

Activities that were repeated from the Energy Justice Summit included a visual and embodied demonstration of fossil fuel use over time and a pantomime of the electric grid in which everyone took a role from power plants, to the transmission system, to the distribution system. The latter was repeated for both a centralized (more transmission-leaning system) and a decentralized (which included more distributed energy resources and community control of energy).

New activities included: sociometric mapping and review of maps created by the City (previously shared in this report); an interactive reimagining of energy use in a home drawing from content developed by New Buildings Institute; a mock City Council hearing to demonstrate the differences between community-centric and carbon-centric solutions; and opportunities to develop collective poetry in common and a visualization activity to help participants dream the present and future they want to see.

Throughout the process, a challenge emerged with regard to the distrust that many community members feel toward the City and its engagement processes. The agenda shifted dramatically to hold space for these concerns and build trust. This proved to be a crucial step and a valuable lesson in meaningful and responsive organizing. Flexibility, slowing down, and focusing on relationships became paramount cornerstones for the Zero Cities project moving forward.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://localcleanenergy.org/>

# Participatory Action Research Process

After the training, twelve of the twenty community members elected to continue on in the PAR process through a series of five meetings. A question development activity during the training shaped the arc of the research process. Questions for community, the City, and experts were identified, and the community questions were categorized. *Appendix A* is a list of the research questions. Sessions focused on answering questions for the City and experts through guest presentations by Vinh Mason and Tony Lamb from the City and Amy Cortese from New Buildings Institute, and developing forum activities through which to answer the community questions.

Typically, PAR processes last several months to years, so the work was condensed significantly, presenting challenges around urgency and depth of exploration. Future PAR processes should occur more methodically and meaningfully, and cities seeking to partner in PAR processes should be willing to slow down timelines to better meet the pace of community work.

## Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research is a model of community organizing that builds the capacity of people on the front line of a problem to take leadership in creating the change they want. It brings people together to:

- » Define for themselves what problems they face in their community
- » Find solutions or steps for addressing the problem through talking with and getting data from their peers
- » Implement those solutions through strategic and informed actions

# Community Forum on Buildings And Energy

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The Community Forum on Buildings and Energy was hosted on December 14, 2019 at the June Key Delta Community Center, one of the first buildings in Portland designed to reach net zero energy, and an example of community redevelopment in a gentrified, but traditionally Black neighborhood in Portland. June Key Delta was

## June Key Delta Community Center



The June Key Delta Community Center is a “green” building project developed, owned, and operated by the Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The site is a renovation of a standard 1960’s gas station. It is a demonstration project highlighting how a small, nonprofit organization uses sustainable building practices to create a “living building.” It is also significant because it is located in the traditionally Black Piedmont neighborhood in NE Portland which

has been decimated by gentrification and new development. The June Key Delta Community Center is dedicated to the work of the late June Roe Runnells Key, a member of the Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc, and a respected educator in the Portland Public Schools system.

The June Key Delta Community Center is one of the most sustainable buildings in Portland. It is composed of cargo containers, salvage glass and recycled construction materials using 50 to 70 percent recycled technology. The project was one of two federal EPA grants awarded in Oregon in 2008 and has attracted local and national attention from governmental agencies that assisted with environmental testing, water retention processes, and landscape design, in part because it was a brownfield redevelopment site. Highlights of the design include:

- » The brown field was transformed into a productive urban garden.
- » Net-zero energy consumed through energy efficient design and a TK kw solar installation on the roof.
- » Stormwater is stored, processed to potable standards, and used onsite. Black water effluent are treated and infiltrated on site.
- » Only non-toxic, sensitively sourced and recycled materials were installed.
- » Equitable hiring and training opportunities were created throughout construction.

The June Key Delta Community Center not only led the way as one of the first grassroots and African American owned “living buildings.” Because of the professionally developed sustainable design, it is hoped that a wider range of stakeholders in future “green” projects will be inspired to follow the center’s lead.

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*Content adapted from [portlanddeltas.org](http://portlanddeltas.org)*



chosen as the site for the forum because it is an example of the future we want to see in buildings that reduce emissions and advance racial equity and justice.

The forum lasted over the course of a full day and included fifty participants. Interpretation was provided for monolingual Spanish-speakers, including the PAR team members who also facilitated in Spanish with English interpretation. Data collection centered around the following small group activities which will be described below along with the data that was collected.

**Policy Solutions Lab – Split Incentive:** Similar to an activity conducted during the training on buildings and energy, participants were presented with a basic understanding of the split incentive -- the idea that landlords are disincentivized to make energy upgrades or property improvements because they won't directly receive the energy bill savings or other benefits, or will raise rent to pay for such improvements – and then given the opportunity to propose their policy strategies for addressing this problem and ensuring healthy, safe, and energy saving homes for all tenants.

## The Split Incentive

The rental housing split incentive occurs when tenants pay energy bills, and landlords do not receive the direct energy cost savings of making energy improvements to their rental properties. When property owners do make improvements, it can lead to rent increases and displacement. This problem is of particular importance, because net zero building policy solutions to the split incentive could lead to further gentrification and displacement unless anti-displacement and community stability values are prioritized.

This area of exploration addresses both a key element of the Race Forward Equity Assessment tool, “Gentrification and Displacement”, and an equity problem facing BIPOC communities and low-income communities in Portland. This problem is of particular importance because it is possible that a roadmap to net zero buildings would lead to further gentrification and displacement unless anti-displacement and community stability values are placed first. Community partners made clear to the City that this was the primary priority in the project – before emissions reductions. People also shared experiences of how they were often afraid to talk to their landlord, especially if there was a concern that would result in rent going up.

Some of the policy ideas that were suggested included the following, and an underlying theme for all solutions was that rent control must be attached:

- » Rent control to assure stable rent when energy efficiency improvements are made;
- » Other cities are looking at building performance standards, but not thinking about how costs are passed on and how that could increase displacement;
- » Incentives to make upgrades and investments in energy efficiency possible without burdening renters; the reason for incentives is to keep costs low in addition to keeping rent low;
- » Accountability around ensuring that incentives are used properly;
- » Hold landlord/property owners to standards for housing quality/energy efficiency to help keep energy bills lower; and
- » Transparency: renters have a right-to-know their energy costs.

The PAR Team and the City analyzed the results of the Policy Solutions Lab and recommended the following policy ideas as a future City ordinance:

- » **Minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals** to lower utility bills
- » **Stable rent** when energy efficiency improvements are made
- » **Incentives to invest in clean energy** without burdening renters
- » **Renter Right-to-Know** energy cost burden information

**Housing and Displacement Focus Group:** The second station focused on learning people's experiences with housing, affordability, and displacement. Questions asked in this space are listed below and also included in *Appendix A*:

- » Do you think it's important for people to own their own homes?
- » Are you interested in different ways of living together, renting or owning a home?
  - » Are there barriers in place that have prevented you from living the way you would want?
- » What factors have influenced whether you moved or remained living at a place?
  - » Are there other costs besides housing, like childcare, that you are using to decide where to live?
- » Have your friends and family had to move?
  - » If so, did they stay in the same area or move somewhere else? If they moved, where did they move to?
  - » Where are your friends and family getting displaced or moved to?

- » If you rent, do you feel like you can go to your landlord with changes you want or need?
  - » How have you handled changes you wanted or needed in your building or home with your landlord?
- » If you rent: if your landlord had to make their building use less energy or generate its own energy, would you like there to be guidelines or agreements that they have to follow what would you want them to have to do first?
  - » What agreements would they have to make to keep rent from going up or people having to move?
    - » How can we ensure that these agreements are upheld?

The primary takeaways in a qualitative analysis of participant responses included:

- » Issues with landlords came up frequently and was often a reason for displacement, especially discrimination against BIPOC renters and people with disabilities.
  - » These issues are qualitative and harder to track than rents going up.
- » Homeownership was talked about less as property/assets and instead around more choice for what to do with the home.
  - » People asked the question of whether ownership should be the only way people can build wealth, or the only way to escape the exploitative rental market.
  - » People value non-traditional ways of living and think about the idea of a home less individualistically and more collectively.

**Community-Based Energy:** At this station, participants used a dot activity to define where a project would have to be located in order to be considered “community-based”: on their home, in their neighborhood (accessible by walking or biking), in their community (accessible by transit), in their city, in their county, in the state of Oregon. They also used poetry in common, an activity where people write a sentence and pass to the next person to write another, to further define and imagine community projects and vision.

Data unequivocally showed that people preferred a project to be located in their community in order to be community-based, a challenge for project development which often is determined by scoping out land or roof space for solar development. Green infrastructure and energy project priorities included community/shared solar (an alternative to net-metering where people offset their utility bills with shares of a larger, off-site solar project), more green spaces, and community gardens that service community grocery stores.

**Shared Values and New Questions:** Two sticky note activities allowed participants to generate new questions on building and energy they want to answer as well as values they hold in their communities (the roots of a tree), challenges and opportunities (the sap and trunk of a tree), and values they want the City to hold in its work (the fruit of a tree). Qualitative analysis and sorting of these responses determined that:

- » Even across diverse communities we have shared values.
- » People value having community and safe spaces to share community.
- » Collected data should be put into a living document; creating open dialog between City and community with regular check-ins

## Values Community Wishes the City Held

In order to bridge the gap between the City and community, the following principles must be held and exercised:

- » **Repair:** trust and address the issue of being heard in a proactive way.
- » **Listen:** Listen to community before action is taken to address issues before they come up and help people feel included and ensure better futures that support better communities.
- » **Practice:** We need to walk the talk, especially around equity/diversity.
- » Apply the first two principles and **ask whether we are repairing/listening and constantly putting that work into practice.**

**Energy Burden/Heating/Cooling Survey:** The PAR team designed a survey to answer questions about energy cost burden, including teaching participants how to calculate their own energy burden and asking them to place it on a blow up of an energy burden map for the City. Time was short due to a logistical challenge with lunch, compounded by technical difficulties with an online version of the survey. The PAR Team also determined that energy cost burden is a complicated topic that would warrant deeper exploration and decided to host a follow-up workshop (occurring in January of 2021 due to COVID delays).

## Engery Cost Burden Survey

The following questions were included in a proposed Energy Cost Burden Survey that is the basis for a February 2021 follow up workshop.

- » Is there a time of year when you pay more for utility bills and
- » Did it impact your budget decisions?
- » How did you address this?
- » Two years ago, there was a big fire near Portland that led to bad air quality for the surrounding areas. If you were living here at the time, were you impacted by the smoke?
- » When it's a really hot day, what do you do to stay cool?
- » How important is access to air-conditioning to you? and/or your community
- » When it's really cold outside, what do you do to stay warm?
- » How important is access to heating to you?
- » What do you need to save energy, lower your bill, or make decisions around energy? (pair with tips sheet)
- » What kind of fuel (natural gas, electricity, oil, propane, wood) do you use for cooking? What do you use to heat water? What do you use to heat and cool your home?
- » If you use any other fuel and the City could give you money to switch to electric would you? Why or why not?
- » What is your energy burden?/What is your rent burden?

# Lessons Learned

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Throughout the Zero Cities Project, a number of key lessons were learned that can be passed on to other cities or community organizations endeavoring to do similar work. These lessons extend beyond data collection and inform values and principles for meaningful and transformative work.

**Connect with New People:** The initial scope of participants in the buildings and energy training was derived from the membership of the community partner organizations, APANO, CCC, Imagine Black (PAALF), Leaders Become Legends, OPAL, and Verde. Recruitment for the forum was more expansive, however, and extended to the broader networks of the PAR team. As a result, the Zero Cities work connected with fifty community members who were not necessarily attached to community-based organizations and thus brought a true community perspective -- not just staff from community-based organizations, or already organized members. Accessibility resources like interpretation, childcare, meals and a reasonable stipend may have helped supplement this recruitment as well.

**Build Trust:** The value of trust cannot be underestimated in community organizing and this played out significantly during the buildings and energy training, as well as the community forum. Community members shared their disappointment with past processes and expressed skepticism at the Zero Cities Project and whether it could be meaningful because they had been let down or tokenized so many times before. It took thoughtful flexibility and willingness to give space for these concerns, and then show that they were heard and implemented throughout the process. It is key not to overpromise to community, but to fight hard in order to achieve their asks and needs, and to slow down processes as needed in order to move at the speed of trust.

**Value Lived Experience:** Too much research is overly quantitative and explains peoples' experiences back to them without allowing for self-determination or



power over the framing. Similarly, many projects value the expertise of well-paid consultants with expensive degrees, but when stipends are available they are pennies compared to the budget afforded to consultants. In the Zero Cities work, the Portland team was interested in valuing lived experience as consulting, and attempting to get as close as possible to parity with other consultants.

Another basic principle of community organizing that was demonstrated powerfully during the Portland Zero Cities project was to value people for their time and expertise at a generous rate. The PAR team received a rate of \$50/hour and community received a \$100 stipend for the day-long workshop (which, realistically was not sufficiently robust as payment).



**Facilitate Bilingual Spaces:** The buildings and energy training, the PAR process, and the community forum were all bilingual spaces in both participation and facilitation. In future work, the Portland team hopes to strive toward including interpretation and translation in more languages (interpretation and translation were needed and provided in Spanish and English only) to allow for meaningful participation from any community member. This reduces isolation and ensures that immigrant and refugee experiences are incorporated into ongoing policy and program conversations. Interpretation and translation in more languages is recommended for future work.

**Create Spaces for Black, Brown, and Indigenous Communities:** The PAR team decided that they wanted the community forum to be a BIPOC-only space in order to allow for community members to share openly and safely in ways that are not possible when power dynamics, especially those centered around white supremacy exist. To be meaningful, community-led work must be designed for those who have been most historically and presently harmed, but least able to benefit from technologies or improvements like net zero buildings.

**Technical Expertise Is Valuable when Connected Directly to Community:** One of the most engaging PAR Team meetings was the one in which Amy Cortese, a subject matter expert from New Buildings Institute, visited to answer technical questions. Community members valued the opportunity to do a deep dive, especially into the issue of continuous “vampire” energy plug-in loads, and disparities around energy use and energy bills. Too often in large policy or program processes, traditional technical experts are siloed from community experts and there is little opportunity for the two to share knowledge and expertise.

**Technical Terms Should Be Redefined:** One of the early findings in the Zero Cities Project was that “net zero” is not a useful or meaningful term for community. More processes should be willing to redefine wonky language into more descriptive language that helps anyone understand a concept and how it is relevant or important. It is often valuable and instructive to think about how to simplify and make more precise language, without talking down to people. Putting terms into the context of people’s experiences or daily lives can be valuable and help them to connect to and see themselves in solutions that are often described or defined exclusively.

**Direct Invitations that Draw on Relationships Are Key to Recruitment:** The PAR Team members were able to draw on their personal networks and skills as organizers in order to recruit fifty participants for a forum on a wonky subject during a busy time of year. Broad recruitment is not as valuable or impactful as personal messages that connect people to a project through a trusted relationship. This



is a basic principle of community organizing and messaging, but one that is worth highlighting here for its effectiveness.

**Resource Community Directly and Sufficiently:** In contrast to a previous model where the City passes outside funding through to community for participation in a City process, direct funding enables community-based organizations to negotiate directly with funders and lead community engagement. The City then becomes a partner in community-led work rather than funder that can limit the work.

In determining the budget for the Zero Cities Project, the Portland team negotiated up from the original \$25,000 amount offered by USDN to over \$45,000, but even then had to bring in \$15,000 additional dollars to account for increased stipends and accessibility resources. An ideal budget would have been closer to \$100,000 to support forum participants at a rate of \$25-50/hour. More recent work has found a need for onsite mental health support at a rate of \$120/hour, an additional and crucial expense. The bottom line is that meaningful community work is not cheap and funders and municipal partners should internalize this.

**Reengage Participants:** Too often, community participates in a process or workshop and then never hears from the City again or sees a final product that does not meaningfully reflect their feedback, needs, or contributions. In order to suffi-

ciently defer to community, organizers must ensure that there are opportunities to reengage through information, future workshops, or continued efforts that extend beyond a process. The next section will discuss how Zero Cities is reorienting into a bigger movement space called Build/Shift: Building Community, Shifting Power, one that is not defined by a single grant or project.

# Pivoting During COVID To Become Build/Shift

Initial plans had been to continue reengagement through an energy cost burden workshop in early Summer, developed through a PAR process that would occur over the Spring. The PAR Team and BPS also made a presentation on the Zero Cities Project to Portland City Council on February 26, 2020, and shared the successes and findings.

As with many spaces, organizing, and communities, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this timeline and established a need for new work that identified immediate community needs and surfaced strategies and opportunities to address these needs.

This pivot also included reframing and renaming the PAR team and organizing space to reflect broader movement work that could be possible in participatory policy and program development, and create a container to receive additional funding to support expanded work. The group began by visioning, “What do you want to have changed in the world after we come out of this crisis?” and continued in addressing, “How would you describe our group/space in terms of what it’s doing to achieve a different world?”



## “What Do you Want to Have Changed in the World after We Come out of this Crisis?”

The PAR Team visioned the world they wanted to live in post-COVID and expressed the following:

- » Reenvision how funders give community dollars.
- » Know the interconnectedness of safety, and the “ virus of inhumanity that we have to address.”
- » Name the importance of housing and folx not ending up on the street.
- » Identify who is going to be most harmed and financially impacted by the crisis and how to provide restitution and reparations. Move resources to women- and minority-owned businesses and BIPOC communities. Address reemployment and resiliency, tax relief, and targeted universal basic income/cash assistance.
- » Understand how emergency preparedness look post-virus and as a community.
- » Identify money-making opportunities that have sprouted up from the crisis and how they can be sustained and introduced to community.
- » Explore food justice, especially shifting access to nutritious foods and, making the case that housing and food are human rights -- this came up repeatedly in the training and forum data in addition to housing and renters rights.

## “What Do you Want to Have Changed in the World after We Come out of this Crisis?” — Continued

- » “One of the outcomes/best interventions around immediate relief in economic deprivation is to give people the ability to decide how to spend money. Government has to intervene with unrestricted resources when other systems fail. People who live with scarce resources have to be resourceful. We need normalization around what people deserve in terms of basics.”
- » “The gains we make need to stay in place”: the urgency of the pandemic continued, a moratorium on evictions and rent freeze, continued stimulus money or payments to families. “Resources should be given to people, no questions asked.”
- » “Make this moment a radical pivot for the mainstream attitude and mindset.”
- » “Community involvement, participation, and action is a big deal and resources should be dispersed in the right way to meet community needs. We can rally around these resources and resilient infrastructure (climate adaptation, energy use, more community places that could be converted into shelter-in-places or regional hospital centers).”
- » Create safe spaces virtually and in-person.
- » Buy up land and make regional community spaces that hold power and can be mobilized for quick response.
- » Increase participation of tribes and indigenous communities in our work and expand the umbrella to include other allies in government, and other community members.

## How Would You Describe our Group/Space in Terms of What it's Doing to Achieve a Different World?

In determining the name and mission for its work, the PAR Team shared their perspectives on achieving the future they visioned:

- » Awareness and education: bringing people together to get involved in what's going on, and inviting folx to inform the City of Portland about their needs.
- » Building bridges of information from bigger institutions like the County and the City in ways that are accessible.
- » Resonance: "education is important; a lot of people don't have this information but need to understand it and not just live their lives as consumers or robots."
- » Intersectionality between and with other issues stemming from energy justice, but broadening to address housing and other arenas.
- » Building Power: Power to the people
- » "Building relationships with other communities and with our communities".
- » Building capacity for community, building capacity and understanding to listen and learn.
- » "Shifting collective power through narrative organizing as storytellers, creatives, and educators."



## How Would You Describe our Group/Space in Terms of What it's Doing to Achieve a Different World? — Continued

- » Building the foundation from the grassroots up to “give people their voices and bring ideas from different communities together to learn from one another and build and develop relationships.”
- » Identifying community issues.
- » “This group is an opportunity for communities of color to be able to utilize their leadership skills while learning new skills, teaching skills. Sometimes it's hard to be able to use leadership skills and have them be valued.”
- » “This is a safe space to freely say how we feel and what we think and feel heard.”
- » “This group is action-oriented; we've accomplished a lot.”
- » Explicitly anti-racist

Themes that emerged in collective conversation centered around the different ways in which the PAR Team built power, capacity, and relationships, and amplified voices, information, and access. The team decided on the name “Build/Shift” to capture this purpose, and the tagline, “building communities, shifting power.”

The Build/Shift Team decided ultimately to host a series of forums on public health, community safety, housing and transportation, in addition to the energy

## The Build/Shift Mission



We seek to build community across the Portland Metro Area, share knowledge and community wisdom, and shift political power to Black and Brown folx through leadership development and participatory policy-making.

cost burden workshop. Work during COVID was slow, especially as high profile police violence, the resulting racial justice uprising, and a death connected to the PAR team drew energy from the work. Three online convenings were hosted in October: one on public health, one on housing and transportation, and one on community safety and the election. The energy cost burden workshop will be hosted in February of 2021.

**Public Health Convening:** The first forum focused on communities experiences of the COVID pandemic, health and climate, and air quality impacts from a

number of fires that destroyed forests and communities across Oregon. The PAR Team shared data from Multnomah County about the distribution of COVID cases and City of Portland data around climate in BIPOC communities.

**Housing and Transportation Convening:** Special guests from the Fair Housing Council of Oregon and Busriders Unite (OPAL Environmental Justice) joined participants to discuss experiences of renting and housing discrimination and moving during COVID.

**Community Safety and Election Convening:** The most attended convening was the one held right before the 2020 election. Forty community members met to discuss the recent racial justice uprisings, in particular with regard to tear gas deployment at protests that impacted Portland neighborhoods, related demands around defunding and dismantling the police, and the direct, lived experience with violence and COVID exposure for who lived East of 82nd Avenue, to where many BIPOC community members are being displaced — and now being displaced from to areas outside Portland. Finally, there was robust discussion about people’s fears with regard to the election and violence from overt white supremacists. Staff members from Portland City Council also participated to hear needs for resources to address the election and safety more broadly.

Participants identified BIPOC mental health as a priority, and follow up conversations with the Mayor’s office have led to attempts to move CARES Act (COVID relief) funding toward BIPOC mental health practitioners, and the development of a community-led, City and County resolution on BIPOC mental health, including requirements for on-site mental health resources as a part of City community engagement budgets. This work stemmed from a new Build/Shift practice of resourcing BIPOC mental health practitioners to participate in all community events in order to provide grounding during proceedings and also one-on-one or post-event support for anyone who felt harmed or triggered in the process.

# Next Steps

**Architecture 2030 Modeling:** As part of Portland’s Zero Cities Project, Architecture 2030 developed a zero carbon building sector policy roadmap based on inventorying Portland’s current building stock and then modeling its energy use and greenhouse gas emissions through 2050. The intent of this roadmap was to evaluate the carbon emission reduction impact of various policy pathways.

Prior to Architecture 2030’s modeling, the City of Portland maintained a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory informed by aggregate, annual utility data for three sectors: commercial, residential and industrial. Architecture 2030’s model enabled disaggregation of the residential and commercial building GHG emissions. For instance, Architecture 2030 adapted their initial model to analyze the potential impact of minimum energy efficiency standards for rental housing, a key recommendation from the Zero Cities Community Forum. As shown below (Fig. 6), GHG emissions from rental housing

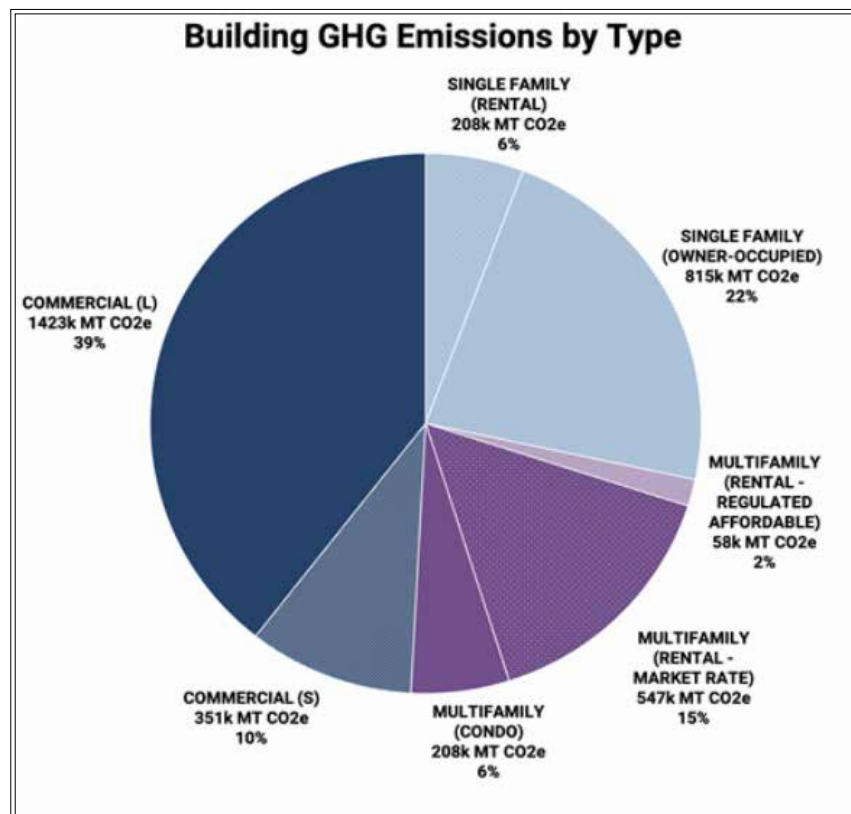


Figure 6. (Credit: Architecture 2030, 2019)

make up nearly half of the entire residential sector emissions. Considering that minimal energy efficiency investments into rental housing have been made due to the split incentive, this modeling suggests there is a significant opportunity to reduce the overall building sector GHG emissions by following the community's policy recommendation.

**City Energy Project:** The next phase of the Build/Shift work will build off the data collected at the forum, in particular from the Policy Solutions Lab on the Split Incentive. Participants wanted to hold landlords to standards for housing quality/energy efficiency to help keep energy bills lower that are supported by rent stability, have a right to know energy costs for rentals before moving in, and develop incentives to make upgrades and investments in energy efficiency possible without burdening renters. The PAR Team and the City analyzed the results of the Policy Solutions Lab and recommended the following policy ideas as a future City ordinance:

- » **Minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals** to lower utility bills
- » **Stable rent** when energy efficiency improvements are made
- » **Incentives to invest in clean energy** without burdening renters
- » **Renter Right-to-Know** energy cost burden information

The City, Verde, and Coalition of Communities of Color successfully applied for funding from the City Energy Project in order to carry out the community-led development of City ordinance to meet the aforementioned goals. This work brought in partners, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Institute for Market Transformation (IMT) to provide technical assistance, in particular around other jurisdictions' policies with regard to building performance standards, housing quality, and rent stability.

The PAR Team doubled in size from ten active members who participated over the course of 2020 to twenty, including reintegrating monolingual Spanish speakers and resuming bilingual meetings. In particular, new recruitment focused on strengthening existing organizational and community partnerships and addressing representation gaps around Indigenous and Pacific Islander communities.

The new team will develop three workshops in the Spring of 2021. The first will; provide education and capacity building, gather data around utility bills and utility burden, and the intersection with renters' experiences with housing. This will manifest as a merger of the Energy Cost Burden Survey and the Housing and Displacement Focus Groups from the December, 2019 Forum. The second and third workshops will focus on data analysis and policy development, and will be followed by additional stakeholder outreach to hone the policies.

## Portland City Energy Project Policy Values

- » Any policy that results from the City Energy Project Policy process must exercise the following values:
- » Prevent displacement but maximize investment and emissions reductions;
- » Prevent cultural gentrification caused by net zero buildings changing the character and resources of a neighborhood;
- » Be actionable and lead to transformational creation and distribution of energy efficiency improvements and community-based renewable resources;
- » Increase community wealth-building;
- » Center around housing affordability and rent stabilization;
- » Increase community well-being, and address health equity related COVID-19 concerns, outdoor air pollution, indoor air quality, heat waves, and urban heat islands;
- » Reduce the impacts of the climate crisis, as this crisis has disproportionate impacts for communities of color; and
- » Create space to value non-traditional ways of living and approach the idea of a "home" less individualistically and more collectively.

## Portland City Energy Project Values

- » All policies and programs must be developed through an anti-displacement lens not just of people/housing but resources, services, and businesses that serve the community;
- » Work must be a long-term, community-driven effort. This means the work is community-led (co-creative in nature and gives community the power to make decisions) and community-benefiting (there are tangible and meaningful outcomes that improve housing quality and affordability, energy affordability, and general quality of life);
- » Work should be founded in transformational and reparative relationships between and across communities, and between the City and community);
- » Work must be grounded in building trust;
- » Work must simultaneously inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and ultimately defer to community;
- » Work should help to build a collective understanding of building energy and climate justice policy development and capacity to organize around these elements;
- » This work must continue to balance the twin goals of racial equity and carbon emissions reductions.;
- » Through this process, community must have the power to define the terms of the conversation and the language that is used;
- » Work must value lived experience and balance it with technical expertise — this means redefining who a “consultant” is and valuing time accordingly;
- » Work must value community wisdom and connections and letting community speak to and for itself; and
- » All proceedings, such as meetings or forums, must endeavor to the best extent possible to meet accessibility needs, including interpretation/translation, food, child-care, technology access, and physically-accessible, transit-accessible locations.

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# Appendix A: PAR Research Questions Forum and Data Analysis

## Forum Questions

### **Cost Burden/Staying Cool in the Summer/Staying Warm in the Winter**

- » Is there a time of year when you pay more for utility bills and did it impact your budget decisions? How did you address this?
- » Two years ago, there was a big fire near Portland that led to bad air quality for the surrounding areas. If you were living here at the time, were you impacted by the smoke?
- » When it's a really hot day, what do you do to stay cool?
- » How important is access to air-conditioning to you? and/or your community
- » When it's really cold outside, what do you do to stay warm?
- » How important is access to heating to you?
- » Do you feel like where you live affects how much you're spending on rent?
- » What do you need to save energy, lower your bill, or make decisions around energy?
- » What kind of fuel (natural gas, electricity, oil, propane, wood) do you use for cooking? What do you use to heat water? What do you use to heat and cool your home?
- » If you use any other fuel and the City could give you money to switch to electric would you? Why or why not?

- » Should we allow new buildings to be built that use natural gas? Should we allow natural gas use in any buildings, old or new?

## **Housing/Displacement**

- » Do you think it's important for people to own their own homes?
- » Are you interested in different ways of living together, renting or owning a home?
- » Are there barriers in place that have prevented you from living the way you would want?
- » What factors have influenced whether you moved or remained living at a place?
- » Are there other costs besides housing, like childcare, that you are using to decide where to live?
- » Have your friends and family had to move?
- » If so, did they stay in the same area or move somewhere else? If they moved, where did they move to?
- » Where are your friends and family getting displaced or moved to?
- » If you rent, do you feel like you can go to your landlord with changes you want or need?
- » How have you handled changes you wanted or needed in your building or home with your landlord?
- » If you rent: if your landlord had to make their building use less energy or generate its own energy, would you like there to be guidelines or agreements that they have to follow what would you want them to have to do first?

- » What agreements would they have to make to keep rent from going up or people having to move?
- » How can we ensure that these agreements are upheld?

### **Defining “Community-Based Energy” and “Net Zero”**

- » How do you want to define community-based energy?
- » How do you want to define community-owned energy? What benefits would people receive?
- » Where could community-based/-owned renewable projects be located (On your home? In your neighborhood? Somewhere you could bike or take transit to reach? In the same city? In the same county? In the same state?)
- » At what point would you consider something to be no longer community-based?
- » What kind of green infrastructure renewable energy projects would you want to see?
- » What are your communities’ needs?
- » What changes would you like to see to help you and/or your community to stay in your homes/neighborhood?

### **Questions for Data Analysis and Policy Development**

#### **Accessibility of process**

- » What kinds of resources do you need to participate in shaping decision-making?
- » What knowledge and training do you need to get involved?

- » What barriers have you experienced that make it difficult to be involved with decision-making?
- » What kinds of resources do you need to ensure your priorities and concerns are represented in decision-making?
- » What kind of spaces and meeting structures work for you to be accessible, feel safe to participate, and likely to show up?
- » How can we get more youth involved?

### **Community-Based Energy**

- » Sometimes for-profit businesses get a credit on their taxes when they invest in a renewable energy project? Should this be allowed for community-based/-owned projects? What kinds of businesses could benefit?

### **Building Policies**

- » What policies should the City prioritize in 2020 for buildings that will advance the twin goals of racial equity and deep decarbonization?
- » What types of buildings should we address with new policies?: Residential? Single-family homes? Multi-family homes (like apartment buildings)? Commercial (businesses)? Industrial (places where things are made, stored, or moved)?

# Appendix B: Energy Cost Burden Survey Questions

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- » Is there a time of year when you pay more for utility bills and
- » Did it impact your budget decisions?
- » How did you address this?
- » Two years ago, there was a big fire near Portland that led to bad air quality for the surrounding areas. If you were living here at the time, were you impacted by the smoke?
- » When it's a really hot day, what do you do to stay cool?
- » How important is access to air-conditioning to you? and/or your community?
- » When it's really cold outside, what do you do to stay warm?
- » How important is access to heating to you?
- » What do you need to save energy, lower your bill, or make decisions around energy? (pair with tips sheet)
- » What kind of fuel (natural gas, electricity, oil, propane, wood) do you use for cooking? What do you use to heat water? What do you use to heat and cool your home?
- » If you use any other fuel and the City could give you money to switch to electric would you? Why or why not?
- » What is your energy burden?/What is your rent burden?