The Environmental Collaboratory

PHILADELPHIA CLIMATE JUSTICE COLLECTIVE TEMPLATE

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Prepared for the Philadelphia Climate Justice Collective (PCJC)

"Where are the neighborhoods of highest need and how do we put resources in those areas FIRST?"

Prepared by

STRATEGY *Arts*

Contributors:

Gwen Morris – Mantua Civic Association
De'Wayne Drummond – Mantua Civic Association
Jamile Tellez-Lieberman – Esperanza
Jerome Shabazz – OEEC
Rafael Alvarez Febo – Esperanza
Sabia Afroz – SEAMAAC
Thi Lam – SEAMAAC
Thoai Nguyen – SEAMAAC

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The Environmental Collaboratory

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Philadelphia Climate Justice Collective (PCJC) is a collaborative effort facilitated by The Environmental Collaboratory (TEC), comprising four community-based organizations (CBOs): Mantua Civic Association, Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC), Overbrook Environmental and Education Center, and Esperanza. PCJC's mission is to develop a community-driven environmental just climate transition plan.

Each CBO determined its focus area and priorities through community engagement strategies of its own choosing. Central to this project is a commitment to principles of engagement and data sovereignty, ensuring a genuinely community-led process and co-ownership of outcomes. The principles of engagement lay the foundation for a community-university partnership and the data sovereignty framework that ensures that information collected through the process is owned by the community and shared only with explicit consent.

Collaboratively, the PCJC identified priorities which have been translated into actionable recommendations in this report. These recommendations are grounded in socioeconomic, environmental justice and the systemic circumstance of each community, including strengths/assets, challenges, and the history of their projects and opportunities. While each community has unique strengths/assets and challenges, there are issues that cut across all communities including gentrification, historical redlining, and elevated levels of heat and air pollution and their associated impacts on health. These burdens highlight the environmental justice need to not just address these issues individually with an implied emphasis on communities adapting and investing in community leadership, but rather calling on decision makers to deliver universal changes to systemic challenges and giving voice to those having these burdens placed on them.

The recommendations distilled from the group fit into three categories including: address systemic conditions, integrated climate justice approach, and community leadership building. Some of the key recommendations are:

- **Establish Community Common Climate and Environmental Dashboard Measures for Neighborhood Activation** -The CBOs have identified the need for a common accountability mechanism for residents that is easily accessible and user-friendly for community members to understand climate and environmental issues to plainly demonstrate which neighborhoods are most impacted to gauge environmental impact on health and wellness. The CBOs have discussed the potential of a community administered dashboard to continue resident feedback and as a report card on progress in implementing the recommendations by local and state government as well as the CBO's.

- **Emphasize the Link Between Air Quality and Respiratory Health** -This recommendation would communicate and advance solutions regarding the connection between climate change, air quality and the health of individuals. For instance, climate change directly promotes and aggravates respiratory and cardiovascular disease by increasing exposure to risk factors related to higher temperatures and more extreme weather. D'Amato G, Cecchi L, D'Amato M, Annesi-Maesano I. Climate change and respiratory diseases. Eur Respir Rev. 2014 Jun;23(132):161-9. doi: 10.1183/09059180.00001714. PMID: 24881071; PMCID: PMC9487563.

- **Find High Heat Index Solutions that "Fit" and "Resonate" with a Given Community** - While residents are aware that they may live in high heat index neighborhoods, they are seeking both immediate and long-term solutions that fit within their community to combat the issue. Solutions that look only at the long-term impacts may miss addressing the more immediate needs of residents who cannot wait years to fix the problems they face. The connection needs to be made between what an increase in degrees may mean, and the actions necessary, to an individual's health or the health of the community overall. Connecting the acute (e.g. heat stroke) and longer-term issues (e.g. asthma and cardiovascular disease), especially if there are comorbidities, is an important piece of the work.

- **Focus Climate Solutions on Equity, Impact, and Justice** - This recommendation focuses on ensuring that all climate solutions are focused on communities with the highest vulnerability to climate change exacerbated by historical divestment and disparities. This approach would reverse the traditional method of developing society-wide solutions that assume equal benefit for everyone. Such solutions fail to address and invest in underlying inequities, ultimately perpetuating and worsening these disparities.

- **Recognize the Impact of Deteriorating Infrastructure on Environmental and Health Impacts on Disadvantaged Communities** – This recommendation is focused on addressing the fact that disadvantaged communities tend to be co-located with existing and former industrial and commercial infrastructure and are impacted from pollution and deterioration of such infrastructure. (E.g. , lead from water pipelines.

Supported by Waverly funds from the Waverley Street Foundation through their Climate Hubs, a model for community-driven climate solutions, each CBO, based on community resident consultation mechanisms chosen by each CBO alongside students, faculty, and an independent consultant, actively engaged in developing these recommendations, with the support of TEC staff, students, faculty, and an independent consultant. Moving forward, the focus will shift to translating these recommendations into broader policy, funding and implementation strategies and communication campaigns aimed at adoption local and state policymakers.

Shared Recommendations

The set of twelve common recommendations are included below and described in additional detail in the body of the report.

1. Establish Common Climate and Environmental Measures for Neighborhood Activation	**7. Recognize the Impact of Deteriorating Infrastructure on Environmental and Health impacts on Disadvantaged Communities (E.g. Water Pipeline)**
2. Launch Awareness Raising and Education Campaigns on Cumulative Environmental Impacts	**8. Build Intentional, Mutual Trust to Accomplish Environmental Justice Work**
3. Emphasize the Link Between Air Quality and Respiratory Health	**9. Invest in Lasting Solutions & Capacity Building**
4. Find High Heat Index Solutions that "Fit" and "Resonate" with a Given Community	**10. Create Research/Data Sharing, Ownership, and Action Agreements**
5. Focus Climate Solutions on Equity, Impact, and Justice	**11. Identify Advocates or Opportunities for Self-Advocacy**
6. Strengthen Education of Trash and Dumping as an Indicator of Environmental and Neighborhood 'Health'	**12. Communicate with Clear Language and Messaging**

The work of PCJC highlights the important role of participatory methods in fostering impactful community-university partnerships. Additionally, the initial phase of the initiative was designed to be 2 years to provide for an extended co-development and ideation phase compared to traditional university-led research. University and community partner efforts that co-create power sharing relationships during the start-up phase of their collaboration predict later success in sustaining impactful community-university partnerships.

INTRODUCTION

The following document shares overall recommendations and themes and individual responses from 4 members of the Philadelphia Climate Justice Collective (PCJC) supported by Drexel's Environmental Collaboratory. The four organizations included in this report are:

- Esperanza
- Mantua Civic Association
- SEAMAAC
- Overbrook Environmental Education Center

This document first presents common recommendations and themes that emerged from multiple organizations. In the tables below the comments in green italics are paraphrased quotes that came from interviews with the individual organizations. The tables also included the number of organizations who mentioned a comment that was included in the theme. The common recommendations and themes were shown to the four organizations of the PCJC once for feedback and then again for alignment. Adaptations have been made based on their input in this draft.

The common recommendations and themes have been assigned a primary area of impact that describes where the recommendations might be put to the greatest use. The three areas are:

- **Address Systemic Conditions** - Identifying and tackling the underlying, deeply rooted social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to inequalities and challenges. Policy – Associated with potential programmatic, practice, or legal interventions
- **Integrated Climate Justice Approach** - A framework that combines efforts to combat climate change with principles of social justice, ensuring that environmental policies and actions do not disproportionately neglect nor harm marginalized communities.
- **Community Leadership Building** - Developing the skills, knowledge, and capacity of future leaders within a community to take on leadership roles and drive systemic change. Following the common recommendations and themes, each organization has a summary template that shares their particular priorities, takeaways, and recommendations. Finally, an appendix section contains the raw data that was captured from the individual interviews.

Following the common recommendations and themes, each organization has a summary template that shares their particular priorities, lessons, and recommendations. Finally, an appendix section contains the raw data that was captured from the individual interviews. To create this document, Strategy Arts, Drexel's contracted partner, first defined a set of common questions along with members of the collective. Then, four individual members of the collective had two separate interviews with Strategy Arts to explore their responses to the common questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND THEMES

1. Establish Common Climate and Environmental Measures for Neighborhood Activation

Primary Area of Impact: Integrated Climate Justice Approach	Organizations Mentioned (2)
Community organizations mentioned a need for a common measure for residents to calculate or understand climate and environmental issues. Having access to these measures would help to plainly demonstrate which neighborhoods are most impacted. Additionally, there is likely to be a stronger push to address these issues if they are actually being measured and those measurements are publicly available. This could be an overall rating, as in a score card or, it could be a tangible measure that residents could capture themselves if tests were	 - *It should not be a mystery what the environmental status is* - *Teach residents to check the water quality and the PH levels*

widely available and easy to conduct. The purpose would be to help to point out disparities and assist in advocating for the places with the greatest need.

Specific Action(s)

- Create a neighborhood level scorecard to gauge environmental impact
- Create a community owned environmental dashboard that summarizes and visualizes data (potentially captures individual input).
- Teach people how to do water purification and testing at home.
- Create and publicize an online portal to track and visualize environmental data on a neighborhood level
- Generate immediate follow-up action based on common measurement
- Engage with council districts to drive "competition" for the healthiest district
- Hosting a series of public conversations to elevate the areas with greatest need
- Find opportunities to connect with Mayor Parker's Clean and Green policies

2. Launch Awareness Raising and Education Campaigns on Cumulative Environmental Impacts

Primary Area of Impact: Community Leadership Building	Organizations Mentioned (3)
There is a need to increase the community's overall awareness and recognition of environmental issues and their tangible impact on people's health. While people may have a general concern about the environment, the more visceral concern is for the health and quality of life of the people that live in a community. The campaigns may have greater impact if they capture and share the preexisting conditions of a given community and highlight the sources of pollution that may exist in a particular area (e.g. trucks, the built environment, fires, etc.)	• *We are thinking about some of the environmental stuff we never had in our heads* • *It might be easier to put the burden on people who do not know, so folks need to be able to advocate for themselves and their community*

Specific Action(s)

- Create educational events driven through trusted partners
- Launch campaigns created in the languages that are spoken within a specific community

3. Emphasize the Link Between Air Quality and Respiratory Health

Primary Area of Impact: Integrated Climate Justice Approach	Organizations Mentioned (3)
The community makes a strong connection between climate change, air quality and the health of individuals. The Canadian wildfire in the summer of 2023 and other fires in Philadelphia were both recognized as environmental and health concerns. One organization noted that a recommendation from the City to close windows during a crisis of poor air quality was poorly received in neighborhoods where concerns about heat and lack of air conditioning were already significant issues.	• *"What am I breathing?" "What are the kids breathing?"* • *Demolition becomes a real issue with the air that we breathe*

Specific Action(s)

- Share how traffic patterns and trucking (e.g. heavy diesel traffic) can impact the residents in communities that are the most exposed
- Find lasting solutions to address junkyard fires. The community is keenly aware of fires, especially those adjacent to schools

4. Find High Heat Index Solutions that "Fit" and "Resonate" with a Given Community

Primary Area of Impact: Address Systemic Conditions	Organizations Mentioned (3)
While residents are aware that they may live in high heat index neighborhoods they are seeking both immediate and long-term solutions that fit within their community in order to combat the issue. Solutions that look only at the long-term impacts may miss addressing the more immediate needs of residents who cannot wait years to fix the problems they face. Without serving both the emergent and immediate issues, programs risk creating a sense of being "out-of-touch" with communities that long-range solutions are being "not for them". Solutions need to resonate with the community. The connection needs to be made between what an increase in degrees may mean to an individual's health or the health of the community overall. Connecting the acute (e.g. heat stroke) and longer-term issues (e.g. asthma and cardiovascular disease), especially if there are comorbidities, is an important piece of the work. Additionally, a connection can be made between heat and other systemic issues like increases in overall violence.	• *There is a "Free tree program" but it requires clear titles [which is an] issue for our neighborhood* • *We [need] a policy to intervene on [the] heat crisis but also a longer term solution to lower temperatures. Look at both parts. [We need] cooling busses and to lower temperatures overall* • *[The City says] stay inside and close your windows, and we don't have AC. So the choice is breathe bad air or roast.*

Specific Action(s)

- Draw a connection between heat increase with short and long-term health outcomes for an individual
- Long-term solutions might include tree canopies and overall community greening to lower overall temperatures
- Short-term solutions might include in-home cooling initiatives that make an individual's residence cooler (Air-Conditions, weatherization, etc.)
- Extending the LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance) in the summer months and prevent water shut offs in communities with a high heat index

5. Focus Climate Solutions on Equity, Impact, and Justice

Primary Area of Impact: Integrated Climate Justice Approach	Organizations Mentioned (3)
Finding equitable solutions means actually prioritizing the areas that have the greatest need over other areas. A mental model shift is required to move climate change from an issue of personal responsibility to a system level issue that requires transformation. These changes may shift what has been seen as a predominantly white, academic, wealthy focus area into a place where all communities, and communities of color in particular, see a pathway to taking real, impactful action. Residents, particularly in communities of color, have unfairly been seen as uncaring while larger institutions have avoided scrutiny. Instead of just focusing on personal practices (e.g. recycling), high	• *Children do not have a place to play. Most of the parks are used for dogs and there is waste and litter everywhere* • *It is very easy for this to tip into an elite perspective because it is [often] led by academia or people in white neighborhoods*

need communities rightly view the allocation of additional resources going to wealthy, predominantly white areas of the city (e.g. dog parks) as an indication that they are not considered valuable or part of the solution. Moreover, true equitable results require focusing funding in the neighborhoods of historic disinvestment and disparities. This would reverse the traditional solutions modality of first developing a society wide solutions that assumes that all of society would equally benefit which fails to address and invest in the underlying inequities and thereby perpetuates and exacerbates these inequities

Specific Action(s)

- Establish the standards for higher need and the level of vulnerability for people and the environment in which they live
- Co-create climate solutions with the people who live in high need places
- Connect climate solutions to other systemic issues of poverty and safety

6. Strengthen Education of Trash and Dumping as an Indicator of Environmental and Neighborhood 'Health'

Primary Area of Impact: Address Systemic Conditions	Organizations Mentioned (4)
Trash and dumping is a highly visible indicator of the condition of a neighborhood. Whether it is from construction, neighbors, businesses, or from other sources, the community is keenly aware of the aesthetic impact of garbage and dumping. Communities do not always make the link between trash, environment, and health. However, they do recognize the immediate impact of visible trash on decreased walkability, increased vermin and lack of care about shared spaces from businesses, fellow residents, and the City.	• *The City does not do a good job educating people about violations...* • *Folks dumped trash all throughout the week.... Residents [were] throwing trash in business trash areas*

Specific Action(s)

- Add signage in different languages with clear graphics to communicate sanitation practices to different communities with different native languages and various levels of literacy
- Create awareness campaigns specific to new residents or a particular area

7. Recognize the Impact of Deteriorating Infrastructure on Environmental and Health impacts on Disadvantaged Communities (E.g. Water Pipeline)

Primary Area of Impact: Address Systemic Conditions	Organizations Mentioned (3)
People in impacted communities across Philadelphia are living in close proximity to aging industrial infrastructure. Now that infrastructure is being demolished, renovated, or left vacant, or in some cases, still in industrial use. Communities are recognizing the environmental and health impact of living in close proximity to these structures and the additional burdens they experience as a result of a deteriorating built environment. .	• *Industrialized zoning is in close proximity to homes* • *Demolition becomes a real issue with the air that we breathe*

Specific Action(s)

- Find opportunities for communities to share in neighborhood renovation instead of having communities feel the burden of construction while the neighborhood is gentrified for the benefit of others
- Publicize the impact of construction, demolition, etc. so residents are aware of what is happening
- Address zoning policies that allow for a disproportionate burden of environmental stress on a given community.
- Research and evaluate lead pipe replacement strategies

8. Build Intentional, Mutual Trust to Accomplish Environmental Justice Work

Primary Area of Impact: Community Leadership Building	Organizations Mentioned (3)
In order to connect with a community, individuals and organizations need to intentionally build trust with people who live within it. This may require long-term thinking or connecting with others who have already cultivated trust with residents (e.g. other family members). Moreover, trust should be based on a mutual respect for the relationship being constructed. If the institution is not invested in the perspective of the community or the community is unwilling to engage a shared perspective will be difficult to create. Organizations rooted in the community that already hold trust with residents are understandably reluctant about acting in ways that may damage their relationship with the community as it is likely a source of strength. This strength is difficult to create but can be easily broken by a poor partnership or attempted program. Moreover, the trusted value and history of community-based organizations must be recognized fully in funding and implementation of actions.	• *We engaged with grandkids of the people we are talking about* • *They don't want to be identified; I wish we could remove the fear.* • *We've built a culture and climate that inspires people to come to us about issues they don't agree with*

Specific Action(s)

- Identify and engage with the sources of trust in a specific community
- Recognize and reward trust and relationships as an asset
- Discover what a given community needs in order to participate and make a plan to provide that as part of the engagement

9. Invest in Lasting Solutions & Capacity Building

Primary Area of Impact: Community Leadership Building	Organizations Mentioned (3)
Environmental solutions require a long-term commitment and an investment in the individual residents in order to create sustainable, lasting change. Communities often see one-off projects and pilots aimed at testing or trying solutions that do not materialize into a substantial commitment to solve a problem. This has the impact of burning out community organizations and residents as they are over-piloted with efforts that do not produce outcomes that can be felt in the community. Investment can be monetary but can also be done through building the capacity of individuals who can be stewards of positive environmental shifts. Neighborhoods in Philadelphia, and specifically communities of color, have a history of solving problems collectively.	• *These efforts should find ways to get resources into community hands* • *Our neighbors with a weed-whacker are not the maintenance crew* • *Not always about the dollar, it is about information* • *Your funding isn't doing anything if you are doing this for photo ops. .*

This strength should be cultivated and leveraged as a source and mechanism for social change.

Therefore, investing in training and in cultivating experience to distill meaning from doing environmental justice work could build and activate the capacity within communities.

Specific Action(s)

- Bring the community into a project early in its conception so they have an impact on overall design
- Make sustainable investments that are not just a onetime infusion of capital or resources
- Consider how to sustain or impact the community meaningfully even in short-term pilots (e.g. Is this effort sustainable? What is the impact we have if we suddenly stop?)

10. Create Research/Data Sharing, Ownership, and Action Agreements

Primary Area of Impact: Community Leadership Building	Organizations Mentioned (3)
Communities mentioned a fatigue that has built up over years of being studied or researched without ever seeing the results of that work. There is a sense that the community is asked to share information in only one direction. This creates the sentiment that the community does not want to do research. One solution may be to intentionally do this kind of work with data sharing and shared ownership of information as a requirement (as the PCJC has). The mechanisms and processes for sharing data and research findings could be built into the design of any project. Additional transparency and intentionality may curb the misuse of information against the community. Providing guidelines to the use of publicly available data could be a further solution. Sharing results and even sharing the raw data shows a commitment to equity and disrupts past practices that have been extractive. While there are barriers and limits based on the project, transparency and treating the community as an equity partner could mend some of the historical mistrust of research.	• *If neighborhoods and communities are continually kept in the dark it does more harm than good* • *You learned about us and you didn't share it back* • *We expect that our lived experience is as valuable as scientific expertise*

Specific Action(s)

- Form data-sharing agreements with the community that gives them autonomy over their data
- Build in the mechanisms and explicit processes of research/data sharing during the design phase of a project
- Share results in a presentation, dashboard, or high level summary
- Name the community or a community organization as a partner in research

11. Identify Advocates or Opportunities for Self-Advocacy

Primary Area of Impact: Community Leadership Building	Organizations Mentioned (2)
Communities need the opportunity, skill, and capacity to be able to advocate for environmental justice issues. That need can manifest in an individual who can raise these issues to the place of action or by more clearly engaging with elected officials who can advocate on behalf of the community. However, without the understanding of the	• *[An advocate] made us aware that these conversations are options that we can have* • *We need to find a leader to take the initiative on climate issues*

issue, the opportunity to raise it, or the capacity to do it, it is difficult for communities to take action.

Creating a structure that ensures that the people sharing their voices know they have been heard may create stronger trust in a specific project or plan.

Specific Action(s)

- Create opportunities to raise issues in a public space
- There is a lack of overall resources and understanding of where to go and where to find information
- Connect a specific project or initiative with the City office or officials who are responsible

12. Communicate with Clear Language and Messaging

Primary Area of Impact: Community Leadership Building	Organizations Mentioned (3)
The environmental justice message can be bogged down in scientific jargon and might not connect with audiences looking for how an issue connects with them or their community. A language or translation barrier exacerbates the breakdown in communication as translation efforts might fail to adequately serve specific communities.	*Because not many people speak [a particular] language, [that community] tends not to get any resources or information they can use*

Specific Action(s)

- Invest in translation services that can communicate with the most impacted (not necessarily the largest) language cohorts
- Develop messaging that leads with community impact (health, quality of life, etc.) instead of overly academic language
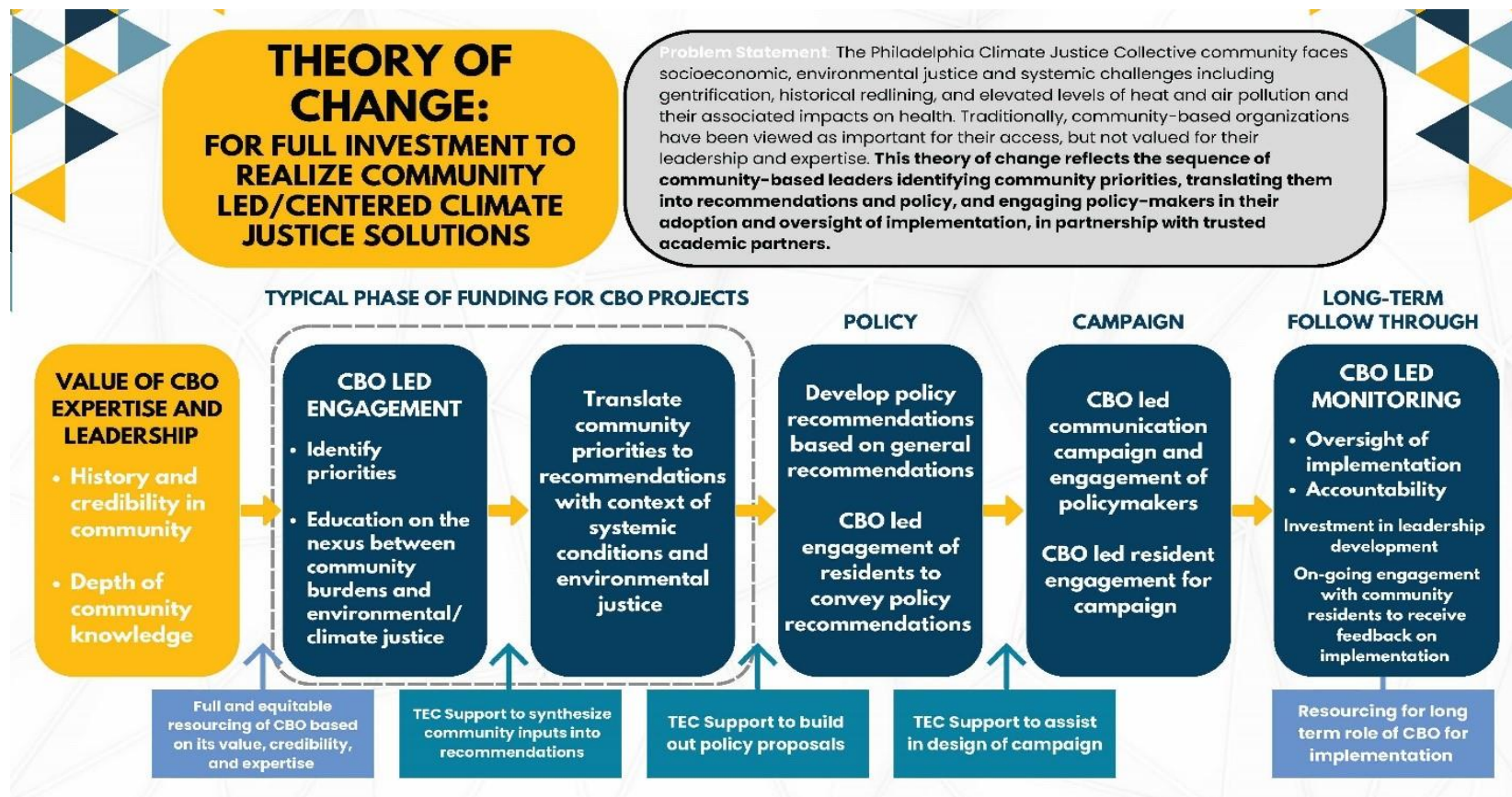
RECOMMENDATIONS AND THEMES CONTINUUM

The following chart shows the twelve common solutions and their primary and secondary areas of impact. While there is significant overlap between the recommendations and their areas of impact, there is also value in considering the primary impact area for each. In the chart below, the areas of primary impact are colored in more darkly than those of secondary impact.

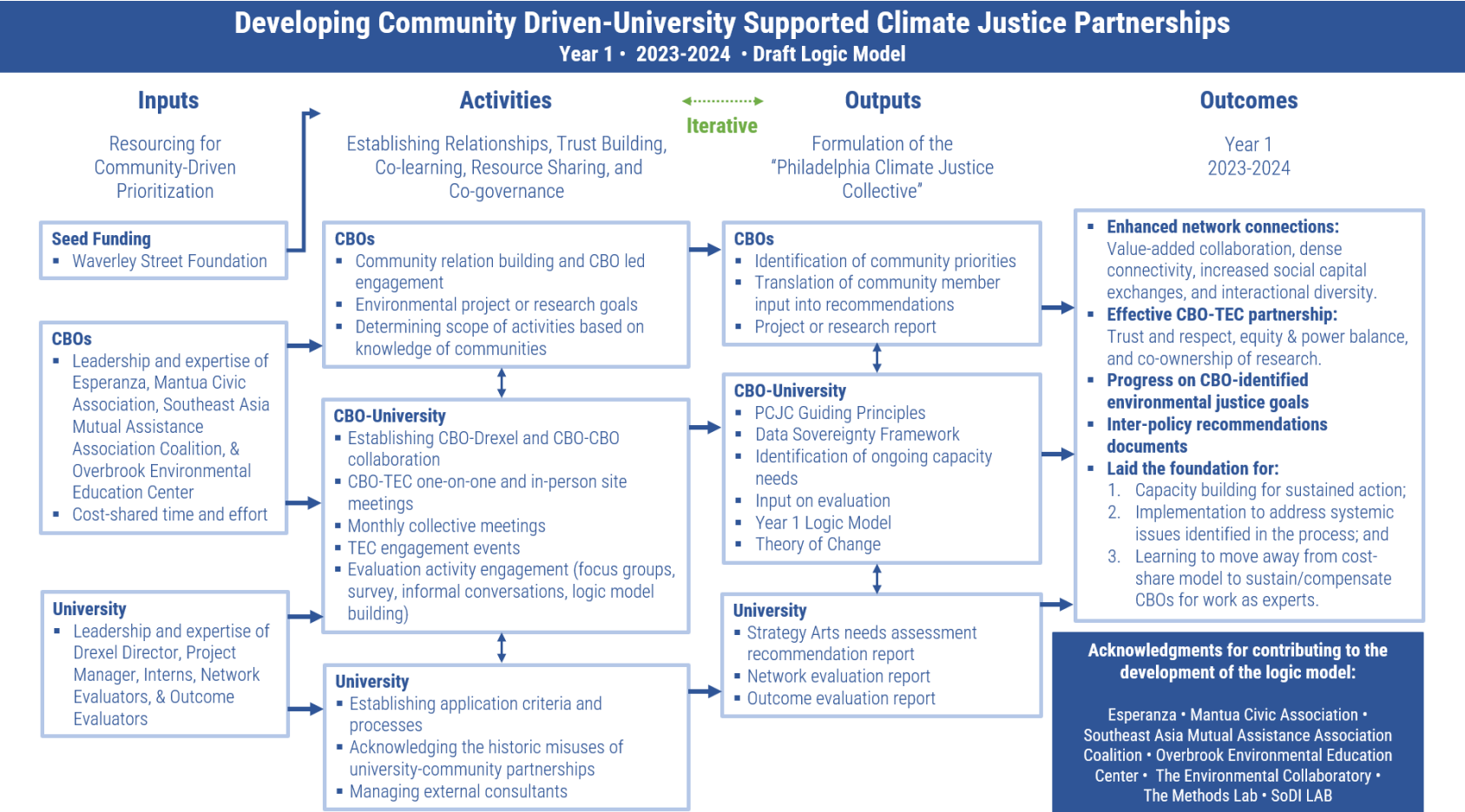| Recommendations	Address Systemic Conditions	Integrated Climate Justice Approach	Community Leadership Building
1. Establish Common Climate and Environmental Measures for Neighborhood Activation	secondary	primary	
2. Emphasize the Link Between Air Quality and Respiratory Health	secondary	primary	
3. Find High Heat Index Solutions that "Fit" and "Resonate" with a Given Community	primary		secondary
4. Focus Climate Solutions on Equity, Impact, and Justice		primary	secondary
5. Strengthen Education of Trash and Dumping as an Indicator of Environmental and Neighborhood 'Health'	primary	secondary	secondary
6. Recognize Areas of Deteriorating Industrial Infrastructure (E.g. Water Pipeline)	primary		
7. Launch Awareness Raising and Education Campaigns on Cumulative Environmental Impacts		secondary	primary
8. Build Intentional, Mutual Trust to Accomplish Environmental Justice Work		secondary	primary
9. Invest in Lasting Solutions & Capacity Building		secondary	primary
10. Create Research/Data Sharing, Ownership, and Action Agreements	secondary		primary
11. Identify Advocates or Opportunities for Self-Advocacy			primary
12. Communicate with Clear Language and Messaging		secondary	primary

PCJC: THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change below presents the sequence and full investment to drive climate justice solutions. It begins with fully valuing and investing in the expertise and history of leadership of authentic CBOs. The sequence of activities starts from leveraging the full investment to enable CBO led prioritization and recommendations with community residents with The Environmental Collaboratory providing support and expertise in data collection and analysis. This is the phase that foundations and government typically fund – albeit inadequately for the full staff time necessary to complete the task – CBOs given its mission of service to the community typically dedicate substantially more time that funding to ensure full engagement with residents. This phase would then be translated into policy, including funding, recommendations, communication to policymakers and, critically, important investment in long term follow through.

THEORY OF CHANGE:
FOR FULL INVESTMENT TO REALIZE COMMUNITY LED/CENTERED CLIMATE JUSTICE SOLUTIONS

Problem Statement: The Philadelphia Climate Justice Collective community faces socioeconomic, environmental justice and systemic challenges including gentrification, historical redlining, and elevated levels of heat and air pollution and their associated impacts on health. Traditionally, community-based organizations have been viewed as important for their access, but not valued for their leadership and expertise. **This theory of change reflects the sequence of community-based leaders identifying community priorities, translating them into recommendations and policy, and engaging policy-makers in their adoption and oversight of implementation, in partnership with trusted academic partners.**

TYPICAL PHASE OF FUNDING FOR CBO PROJECTS

POLICY **CAMPAIGN** **LONG-TERM FOLLOW THROUGH**

VALUE OF CBO EXPERTISE AND LEADERSHIP
- History and credibility in community
- Depth of community knowledge

CBO LED ENGAGEMENT
- Identify priorities
- Education on the nexus between community burdens and environmental/climate justice

Translate community priorities to recommendations with context of systemic conditions and environmental justice

Develop policy recommendations based on general recommendations

CBO led engagement of residents to convey policy recommendations

CBO led communication campaign and engagement of policymakers

CBO led resident engagement for campaign

CBO LED MONITORING
- Oversight of implementation
- Accountability

Investment in leadership development

On-going engagement with community residents to receive feedback on implementation

Full and equitable resourcing of CBO based on its value, credibility, and expertise

TEC Support to synthesize community inputs into recommendations

TEC Support to build out policy proposals

TEC Support to assist in design of campaign

Resourcing for long term role of CBO for implementation

PCJC: Logic Model

The logic model below was developed and revised with extensive input from the CBO's. Of particular note, is the explicit recognition of CBO leadership and expertise as a critical input to the process. While depicted linearly the activities to outputs is iterative.

Developing Community Driven-University Supported Climate Justice Partnerships
Year 1 • 2023-2024 • Draft Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Resourcing for Community-Driven Prioritization	Establishing Relationships, Trust Building, Co-learning, Resource Sharing, and Co-governance **Iterative**	Formulation of the "Philadelphia Climate Justice Collective"	Year 1 2023-2024

Seed Funding
- Waverley Street Foundation

CBOs
- Leadership and expertise of Esperanza, Mantua Civic Association, Southeast Asia Mutual Assistance Association Coalition, & Overbrook Environmental Education Center
- Cost-shared time and effort

University
- Leadership and expertise of Drexel Director, Project Manager, Interns, Network Evaluators, & Outcome Evaluators

CBOs
- Community relation building and CBO led engagement
- Environmental project or research goals
- Determining scope of activities based on knowledge of communities

CBO-University
- Establishing CBO-Drexel and CBO-CBO collaboration
- CBO-TEC one-on-one and in-person site meetings
- Monthly collective meetings
- TEC engagement events
- Evaluation activity engagement (focus groups, survey, informal conversations, logic model building)

University
- Establishing application criteria and processes
- Acknowledging the historic misuses of university-community partnerships
- Managing external consultants

CBOs
- Identification of community priorities
- Translation of community member input into recommendations
- Project or research report

CBO-University
- PCJC Guiding Principles
- Data Sovereignty Framework
- Identification of ongoing capacity needs
- Input on evaluation
- Year 1 Logic Model
- Theory of Change

University
- Strategy Arts needs assessment recommendation report
- Network evaluation report
- Outcome evaluation report

- **Enhanced network connections:** Value-added collaboration, dense connectivity, increased social capital exchanges, and interactional diversity.
- **Effective CBO-TEC partnership:** Trust and respect, equity & power balance, and co-ownership of research.
- **Progress on CBO-identified environmental justice goals**
- **Inter-policy recommendations documents**
- **Laid the foundation for:**
  1. Capacity building for sustained action;
  2. Implementation to address systemic issues identified in the process; and
  3. Learning to move away from cost-share model to sustain/compensate CBOs for work as experts.

Acknowledgments for contributing to the development of the logic model:

Esperanza • Mantua Civic Association • Southeast Asia Mutual Assistance Association Coalition • Overbrook Environmental Education Center • The Environmental Collaboratory • The Methods Lab • SoDI LAB

ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

The community thinks of itself in terms of neighborhoods (Juniata, Hunting Park). It is all urban, and generally lower income, neighborhoods of color. As victims of redlining, there is a history of being disenfranchised carried into today with external developers buying property and pushing residents further out. The community has a strong Puerto Rican and Dominican identity and is very bound by culture and country of origin while strongly identifying as being a proud part of Philadelphia.

Assets/strengths in your community

- The neighborhood can organize itself
  - People can come together to take things on in different ways
- Created strong organizations to serve the community
- We are invested in the community
- We are fighters and survivors

Challenges

- Gentrification
  - Redlining pushed Latinos here
  - It was an industrial neighborhood that is now residential
- Health conditions exacerbated by the environment and high heat index (e.g. asthma)

Priority Needs

- **Investment**: Broad, long-term investment and support it that thinks, "beyond the photo op"
  - Do not assume volunteers will just take this up
- **Multiple Strategies** – There is not one standard approach, you may need multiple strategies that deal with the physical limitations of a community

Invest in people to be the environmental champions

Community Issues and Climate/Environmental Justice

- Serve the emergent and long-term need simultaneously
- Do not just go from one crisis to another, expecting the community to adapt to and be "resilient" without calling on the powerful to change
- Recognize the conflict between higher vs lower income areas when it comes to environmental justice solutions.
  - Tree planting groups come in to plant trees and then put that maintenance onto residents who have other stresses and needs.
  - Not addressing this can create issues because the needs of the community is out of sync with the other environmental justice campaigns

It's addressing the tree canopy while we address the lack of AC in homes. …It's cooling buses and plans to lower temperature overall

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Objective: Strengthen community engagement around environmental justice at Esperanza and identify and develop key areas for environmental justice policy recommendations grounded in community realities and informed by community voices.

Description: The new Environmental Steering Committee (ESC), made up of community members and facilitated by Esperanza's Housing and Economic Development (EHED) division, came together to around environmental issues in Hunting Park.

Key Takeaways

1. People see trash as an environmental issue, however the linkage to health was not naturally emerging without guidance
2. Air quality is recognized as having a strong health and environmental connection
3. People see increased crime following overgrown, poorly maintained spaces
4. Construction projects bring noise, congestion, and road closures that impact neighborhood walkability

"What am I breathing?" "What are the kids breathing?"

RECOMMENDATIONS

Opportunities or recommendations to address priorities and needs

- We need organized, official, city-led support for these programs that function well within particular neighborhoods and can build resident capacity
- The City should think about equity and put resources into the areas of highest need
- Community voices should be honored and authentically included when doing environmental justice policy work to ensure the perspective does not become overly elite, academic, and rooted in white neighborhoods.
- Solutions should not solely put the responsibility on the community to adapt, rescue, or save itself
- Research and data access should be setup in a way that facilitates better sharing with the community

Barriers in advancing recommendations

- There is limited political will and an infrastructure that restricts progress
- As a nonprofit, we do not want to have our work driven by funders

ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Mantua is described as being an "ideally" located community in West Philadelphia with a walkable neighborhood situated next some of the city's finest institutions. Due to its proximity to Philadelphia universities, Mantua has a significant percentage of students, and an increasing numbers of student residents. People that live in this community tend to stay, with many residing in it since they were born and others being multi-generational residents. The community is graying which has created increased concerns of poverty especially for those living on only Social Security. While the community has faced challenges around drugs and violence, it is also known for its history of activism and the leaders that have emerged from this community.

Assets/strengths in your Community

- Access to major transportation routes
- Surrounded by some of iconic cultural institutions and Universities
- Pedestrian friendly and walkable
- People in Mantua are long-term homeowners and homes have been kept in the family

Challenges

- Issues around tangled titles that means opportunities (e.g. home repair programs) might be missed
- There is an overall graying of the neighborhood
- There are issues connecting the different ways that different generations get together and communicate
  - Students who live here won't be here beyond the 4-5 years

Priority Needs

- We struggle with keeping the community clean
- There are issues in communication and messaging that impacts everything we do
- Awareness raising for how environmental issues impact our health is needed for our residents especially for the generation beyond the youth
- Stabilizing a community with a high percentage of vacant buildings and lots.
  - Existing efforts are underway including programs like "Turn the Key" and a "Shared Equity Model" approach.

If you come out at night for a walk, you have to now compete with the vermin.

How do we connect with the folks who are 70-80 years old?

Community Issues and Climate/Environmental Justice

- Significant difference between demolition and renovation in terms of its environmental impact (e.g. Levels of greenhouse gasses, pollution, etc.)
- Overall heat island concerns
- 33rd and 34th street are being used as a main thoroughfare, adding pollution and noise from diesel trucks
- There is concern about the CSX train line that runs adjacent to Mantua and what a potential derailment can do as well as on-going diesel emissions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Objective: The goal of the Youth Ambassador Program is to provide a hands-on approach of engaging youth to work together in a meaningful way to shape their environment through land stewardship activities while utilizing the power of the arts to encourage creative expression to redefine what environmental justice looks like for the next generation.

Description: The Youth Ambassador Program is a creative, place-based arts and environmental justice program is designed to give students the opportunity to promote community stewardship of the 38th & Melon St Park.

Key Takeaways

1. The program created an opportunity for learning more about how demolition has an impact on health

2. We are more aware of how the diesel trucks that come through our neighborhood have unique health impacts

The environmental work brings us together, but the outcome is development of leadership skills

3. The Youth Ambassador Program has evolved to be more about youth leadership with a focus on prevention instead of intervention. Young people had the opportunities to build relationships and grow in terms of responsibility and skill. This had an overall positive impact on behavior.

   - The youth may have been further advanced in terms of the science, but the outcomes really impacted them as people.
   - While this is not an anti-violence initiative, the benefits have created positive social interactions for participants that may reduce violence in the community overall.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Opportunities or recommendations to address priorities and needs

- Awareness raising of environmental issues that directly impact Mantua
- We need to advocate or have advocates work with us to reach our council people and other elected officials to address these issues
- Help organizations build the capacity to do and sustain the work
- Incorporate green spaces broadly (including preservation) as a consideration along with new construction
- Address illegal dumping in long-term vacant, neglected spaces

Barriers in advancing recommendations

- Elected officials can be transient and may not be in office to support the long-term change needed
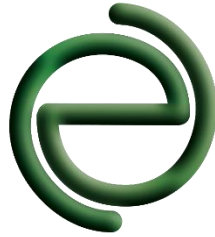
**OVERBROOK ENVIRONMENTAL
E D U C A T I O N   C E N T E R**

ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Overbook Environmental Education Center touches four zip codes in Western Philadelphia. Approximately 43,000 people live in its current area, and many are operating at or below the median income in Philadelphia. A disproportionate number of people in this community live next to aging industrial infrastructure with a high percentage of its buildings having conditions that might trigger health issues (e.g. lead service lines, lead paint).

Assets/strengths in your Community

- We are one of the proud, historically African American neighborhoods of Philadelphia
- The residents aspire for home ownership and good schools, stable employment
- Overbrook is a historic neighborhood and is situated in the northwest section of West Philadelphia.

Challenges

- Getting folks in the community who have other things on their mind to prioritize environmental justice work
  - "What about this mess in our neighborhood"
  - "What are you going to do about it"

Priority Needs

- Raise the environmental IQ of the average citizen, the non-scientist
- Reduce inequity of exposure so our community does not bear disproportionate amount of the burden while working to reduce absolute exposure

The work is at its best when we add a framework to make it just and fair for all citizens

Community Issues and Climate/Environmental Justice

- Environmental justice is the ability to have informed consent to the burdens being placed on you
  - If you look at it through an equity lens, the people who are most affected are not having the most say

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Objective: The Overbrook Community Science project is structured to support the US Environmental Protection Agencies' priorities for community projects that increase public understanding of the benefits of environmental stewardship through community collaboration on issues of climate and environmental sustainability, environmental education capacity building with our municipal and Commonwealth partners. In this project, the OCS will provide resources from the city and state, while educating stakeholders in non-formal settings on career development about environmental issues, and solutions.

Description:

1. *OCS Focus Groups* - The OCS project will also conduct focus groups to identify key behavior targets and better understand community perceptions of barriers and benefits of key behavioral targets. The Focus groups will be two-

fold: 1) With students from Penn and Drexel Universities and 2) with adult community residents to determine which behaviors, social determinants, and demographics will be targeted in the OCS campaign.

2. The Overbrook Resilient Equity & Capacity-building Hub (REACH). The Overbrook Resilient Equity & Capacity-Building Hub (REACH) project is the Overbrook center's community-based approach to climate and environmental adaptation. The REACH project is leveraged on the heels of the Overbrook Community Science Project and is designed to address multiple aspects of equitable community development and will be a "third place" destination and repository for community level environmental health data.

Key Takeaways

1. There were three primary target areas that emerged from this process through deliberating with the community. It started as five, but some were folded together

   - **Brownfields and Vacant Lots** -to the community, brownfield sites are just larger orphaned land

   - **Healthy Homes and Lead Exposure** - If you are concerned about lead it is because you are concerned about healthy homes

   Lead was the focus. It wasn't about mold and radon, it was ultimately about lead

   - **Air Quality in West Philadelphia –** Residents are aware of and concerned about issues of air quality

2. The underpinning of all of this work [environmental justice] is commiserate based on trust within the community

   Our process as its best is the ability to deconstruct this into: What is the issue? Why should you care? What can you do about it?

3. The basic strategy has been about providing education in advance. Overbrook has led with demonstrating knowledge and sharing information about the issues we are talking about.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Opportunities or recommendations to address priorities and needs

- Every neighborhood needs an environmental report card in order to show how environmental issues impact a given community.
- Policy that can create overlays "green zones, ecozones" can incentivize positive practices (e.g. greenspaces) or disincentivize negative practices (e.g. waste disposal) within a given area.

Barriers in advancing recommendations

- A lot of this is not a standalone issue, it is part of a system that has layers of issues.
- Hard to say that there isn't enough research being done. What is being done with the research is more critical.
- In general, there are two sorts of blockers: Those who are ignorant of the benefit and those who are disadvantaged by it.

ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Founded in 1984, SEAMAAC is primarily a direct service organization, that also uses community organizing and education as vehicles for social change and equity. Each year SEAMAAC serves more than 15,000 individuals from 52 countries of origin, representing 77 ethnic groups and speaking over 55 languages and dialects. In terms of demographics 80% reside in South Philadelphia, and 92% are low-income. Many in the immigrant/refugee community have limited proficiency in English. Although there is a strong identity linking people to their counties of origin, there is also a feeling of ownership of South Philadelphia, especially from the younger generation.

Assets/strengths in your community

- We serve people from different backgrounds. Our communities are unique and different from one another.

Challenges

- Water pollution and concern about the care of water
- Air pollution and allergies related to air pollution
- High heat index that is especially critical for the elderly

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Objective: Develop a relevant and viable community/environmental justice climate action implementation plan.

Description: SEAMAAC held four (4) community focus groups with four (4) linguistic communities represented in Southeast Philadelphia to identify impacts climate change. Each focus group had a minimum of 10 community members and was facilitated in the language of the selected community. The four (4) groups are described below and were selected in consultation with Drexel. SEAMAAC also administered surveys in English to community members living in Southeast Philadelphia. Following the focus groups, SEAMAAC collected more than 150 responses to a quantitative survey for this purpose.

Groups:

- Group 1 - Nepali People
- Group 2 - Chinese Elders
- Group 3 - Myanmar/Ethnic Karen (Half use Burmese and half use Karen language)
- Group 4 - African American

Key Takeaways

While all groups were unique with special needs and vulnerabilities, there were some common themes and issues that emerged from all groups.

1. **Trash and Alleyways:** Proper disposal of trash is a priority, as it can emit odors and negatively impact health, especially for those working underground.
2. **Infrastructure:** Aging pipe and sewage systems and outdated infrastructure, such as old electric grids and train tracks, need attention.
3. **Clean Water:** Residents are concerned about the quality of drinking water, mentioning recent news about water contamination.
4. **Environmental Pollution and Climate Change Impact**: Air pollution, soil pollution, less harvest due to changes in weather patterns, including hotter summers, less snow, and increased windiness, are noted

RECOMMENDATIONS

Opportunities or recommendations to address priorities and needs

- **Educational Campaigns:** Conduct individual educational sessions and create videos to raise awareness on issues like cost-effective water filtration.
- **Water Quality Checks:** Encourage community participation, unity, and collective action to address environmental challenges.
- **Trash Collection Improvement:** Suggestions include more frequent and thorough trash collection, noise reduction strategies, and encouraging cycling to reduce pollution.

Folks dumped trash all throughout the week…Residents throwing trash in business trash areas…because of language barriers outreach and education was difficult

- **Green Infrastructure:** Creating more green spaces, planting trees, and building eco-friendly infrastructure that aligns with the specific need of a given community (e.g. ensuring children have a place to play, a neighborhood is walkable, improved garden space)
- **Enforcement of Existing Laws:** Calls for stricter enforcement of environmental laws, including more inspectors, to address issues like air and water pollution.
- **Individualized Information**: Create individualized, tailored workshops with small groups that encourage community participation, unity, and collective action to address environmental challenges.
- **Government Action:** Advocate for stronger governmental policies, including stricter regulations on environmental issues.
- **Community Involvement:** Encourage community participation, unity, and collective action to address environmental challenges.

Barriers in advancing recommendations

- **Language Barriers**: Most of the respondents mentioned that they face language barriers in accessing resources.
- **Lack of Leadership:** Some feel there is a lack of leaders advocating for the community's interests. This can be especially true for communities that are small and have high language barriers. Residents cite a concern about only the rich having a say in what happens in the City leading to an overall feeling that nothing can be done to make changes.

There is a feeling of "we cannot do anything"

- **Economic Barriers:** Economic challenges, including the cost of installing air conditioning and central units, pose barriers to addressing environmental issues.

There is no community advocate for their community

- **Access to Trusted Information**: There's a need for better access to reliable information and awareness about environmental challenges and solutions. Many community members do not know where to go for information, and if they do there are different levels of trust with few overlapping sources

- **Corporate Interests:** There is a sense that government is more inclined to listen to corporations (e.g. the pharmaceutical industry or big developers) because of the economics at play. This leads to the overall prioritization of profits over environmental and public health.

APPENDIX

RECOMMENDATIONS AND THEMES INTERSECTION

The recommendations have three primary areas of impact: addressing systemic conditions, integrating climate justice approaches, and community leadership building. Within each of these areas of impact outcomes will be identified and tracked as: **Research/Data** that addresses information sharing between the community, institutions, and others: **Policy** associated with potential programmatic, practice, or legal interventions; **Communication** which speaks to how information or education is disseminated including the language, terminology, and narratives used; and **Health/Wellness** which connects environmental issues and the health and wellness of individuals or an overall neighborhood

The following graph further visualizes the interconnectedness of the recommendations and where they might map onto the four areas.
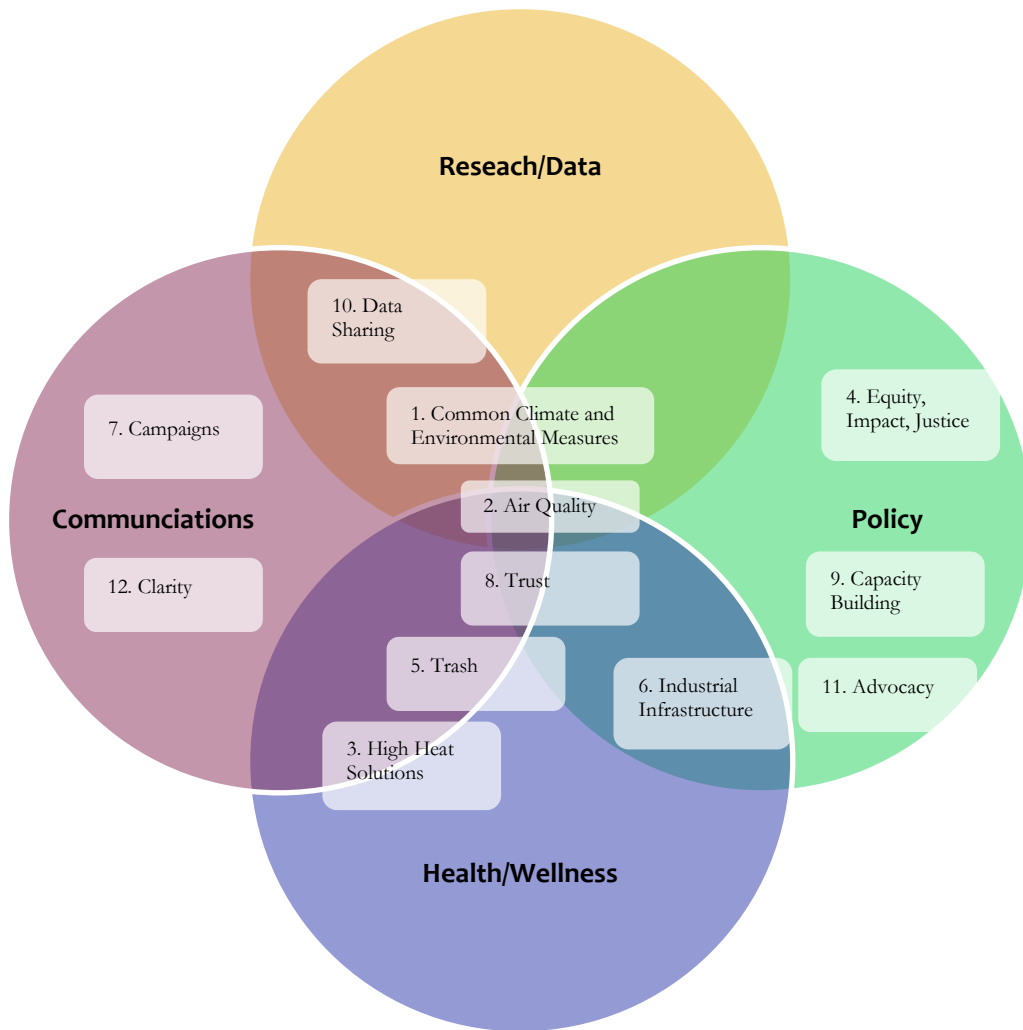
The following appendix contains minimally edited raw data from individual interviews with the four CBOs that were a part of this project.

ESPERANZA

ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Describe the community you work in

Location

- We think about ourselves in terms of neighborhoods
  - Hunting Park, Juniata (North Philly)

Makeup

- All urban, lower income, neighborhoods of color
- Esperanza serves primarily Latinos, but any an all people in the neighborhoods
  - We see a lack of specialization with the Latino community and a lack of specialized resources

History

- Oppressed and disenfranchised neighborhood
  - Victim of redlining
- Everything is kind of mixed used and that creates the environmental issues
  - Creates housing issues
- External developers trying to buy up property and push people farther out
- Trying to own as much of the neighborhood as possible and keep people in their homes
  - As gentrification happens how do we keep people here

Demographics

- Large number of African Americans
  - Philadelphia is a majority Black City
- Majority who live here are Dominican and Puerto Rican folks
- We are seeing a slow trickle of more central American folks
- There is a small Palestinian community

Identity

- Puerto Rican and Dominican identity is very strong
  - Woven into the fabric of the neighborhood
- Very much bound by culture and county of origin, but also defined by the culture of being part of Philadelphia
- Very proud neighborhood
- Share a lot of challenges - and experience them to a much higher degree

What comes to mind as key assets/strengths in your community?

Organized: The neighborhood has the ability to organize itself (and Esperanza helps do this more efficiently)

- Neighborhood groups (grassroots groups)
  - Cadres of people that come together to take on things in different ways
  - Take on things
- Established organizations like Esperanza, HACE, etc.

Invested: We are invested in this community (people see it as theirs)

Fighters & Survivors: We are community of fighters and survivors

- We can oppose and support things well
- We see this is zoning meetings

What challenges does your community face?

Gentrification

- Redlining that pushed Latinos here
- It was an industrial neighborhood that is now residential

Health conditions exacerbated by the environment

- High heat index (one of the highest in the city)
  - Very low tree canopy and greening
  - Health conditions like asthma that gets trigged by heat

What are the specific priorities/needs in your community?

Broad, long-term investment and support it that thinks, "beyond the photo op"

- Think long-term about solutions that go beyond "the photo op"
  - If you want to get community on board, approach from development and antipoverty
- Taking a long term approach, and investing over multiple years
  - Not funding one-off projects
- Invest in people
  - This work is hard, and it doesn't happen over night
  - Not ethically a good ask to assume volunteers will just take this up
  - Invest in people to be the environmental champions

Weatherization, AC Units - Cost efficient homes

Multiple Strategies: There is not one standard approach, you may need multiple strategies that deal with the physical limitations of a community

How does your community see a connection between these issues to increased climate risk and environmental justice?

Serve the emergent and the long-term needs at the same time

- We need to do "both, and"
  - It's addressing the tree canopy while we address the lack of AC in homes

Bridge all environmental work with community voices

Do not just go from one crisis to another, expecting the community to adapt to and be "resilient" without calling on the powerful to change

- Sometimes calling a community "resilient" feels like it is telling people to adapt to the way things are
  - The change shouldn't all be on the community
  - What part do we all have to play in the larger global issues
  - What are our acceptable boundaries to push people to do more?
- E.g. Canadian Wildfires
  - "Stay inside and close your windows, and we don't have AC"
  - So the choice is breath bad air or roast
  - Buy air purifiers
- E.g. During COVID - cutting off water
- You can't feel good about any decision that they make

Challenge as a CBO - Not cause harm and have the community mined for data or a "pilot location"

Recognize the conflict between higher vs lower income areas when it comes to environmental justice solutions

- Confect between higher income vs lower income areas
  - The higher income areas priorities do not align
  - Example: Tree planting - groups come in, to plant trees and then put that maintenance onto residents
    - Can create issue because the needs of the community is out of sync with the other environmental justice campaigns
  - What works for wealthy whiter areas, may not work here
- How do we disrupt that cycle?

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

Confirm existing project summary

Objective: To strengthen community engagement around environmental justice at Esperanza in order to identify and develop key areas for environmental justice policy recommendations grounded in community realities and informed by community voices.

List of Deliverables or Narrative: 1) Participation in monthly Environmental Collaboratory meetings; 2) sharing input about best practices for community mobilization and outreach around environmental issues; 3) invigorated community engagement around environmental justice issues in Hunting Park through the new Environmental Steering Committee (ESC) made up of community members and facilitated by Esperanza's Housing and Economic Development (EHED) division.

- The narrative and summary are still relevant
- We are currently meeting virtually
  - Might start convening folks in person during better weather
  - Always packed
- About 10-15 people there each time. Have met 5-6 times as of now (Feb 2024)
  - People rotate in and out
  - Started in summer '23
  - A lot of discussion to make sure it was within our capacity
    - We were able to start knowing that all the paperwork will get done
    - May impact a smaller organization

What were the key learnings that emerged from your project?

1. People see trash as an environmental issue, however the linkage to health was not naturally emerging without guidance

- Litter, dumping, crowded alleyways
  - Not always a part of the mainstream narrative
- In the community's mind, environmental stuff and health are bucketed in separate spaces
  - It is not a distinction that you tend to make
- We need to guide this a little, but once they do it becomes a framing they always think about

2. Air quality is recognized as having a strong health and environmental connection

- Canadian wildfires were connected to the environment
- Junkyard fires were a hot topic with all of the smoke
  - This was connected to health
  - "What am I breathing?" "What are the kids breathing?"

3. People see increased crime following overgrown, poorly maintained spaces

- Overgrown parks
- They see those connections

4. Construction projects bring noise, congestion, and road closures that impact neighborhood walkability

- Debris going into yards
- Noise
- Walkability if roads are closed
- More congested streets
  - Issues with parking

What are the limitations of the project you conducted?

How can we keep people engaged?

- We've been convening the steering committee for a few months
  - Keeping people engaged over time is an important priority
  - The community is very willing to hear these issue, but the regular meetings can be a challenge
    - What are we offering back?

Where do we go from here now?

- How do we prioritize these issue and determine what action we take?
- Is this group able to take on a life of its own?
  - Self-sustainable
- Do we have the time and space to empower them to drive themselves and have legs of their own
  - Informal

How did you address those concerns?

We are thinking of how it can be "fun" thinking creatively

- Example, in the winter things are a little bit slower - might be more going on in the spring

RECOMMENDATIONS

What opportunities or recommendations do you have that might address your priorities and needs?

1. We need organized, official, city-led support for these programs that function well within particular neighborhoods and can build resident capacity

- Support and build programs that function well in our neighborhood
  - These programs and studies should meet a tangible need in a timely way
- These efforts should find ways to get resources into community hands

- We report so much, and a small parentage is actually done
- Our neighbors with a weed-whacker are not the maintenance crew
- Make a sustainable investment in building capacity
  - More than a onetime thing

2. The City should think about equity and put resources into the areas of highest need

- Where are the neighborhoods of highest need and how do we put resources in those areas FIRST
- The city wants to talk about equity. It has some examples of doing this well.
  - PDPH does a good job thinking about this
  - The Tree plan was a good example
    - Equity focused
    - Get the right kinds of trees available
  - Mayor put a moratorium on water shut offs for families with high needs
    - The number of people without water is shattering

3. Community voices should be honored and authentically included when doing environmental justice policy work to ensure the perspective does not become overly elite, academic, and rooted in white neighborhoods.

- It is very easy for this to tip into an elite perspective because it is lead by academia or people in white neighborhoods
- Ensure that the city and state include this
- You may end up doing more harm than good
  - Dog parks when there aren't enough parks for people
  - We see people talking about parks for their dogs when there is a need in our community for kids and people
    - Dog parks are approved immediately
    - People parks take forever
  - The message is the dogs are more important than the children
- Thinking about the community early on in the conception of a project
  - Sometimes it can be performative to "include us in the work"

4. Solutions should not solely put the responsibility on the community to adapt, rescue, or save itself

- Teaching communities how to adapt or survive forgives the people responsible for the burden
- Do not look at this from an emergency response perspective
  - This work is hard and takes time and resources and can exhaust folks
    - We don't have to lead everything by ourselves
- We want policy that can help communities be resilient as these are decades long problems
  - We can just teach how to deal with the challenge
- We have a policy to intervene on heat crisis but a longer term solution to lower temperatures

- Cooling busses and lowering temperature overall
- Look at both parts

5. Research and data access should be setup in a way that facilitates better sharing with the community

- You came in and studied us and now you left
  - You learned about us and you didn't share it back
  - Power about research data that put our communities at the bottom
    - If neighborhoods and communities are continually kept in the dark it does more harm than good
- It creates a sentiment that the community hates research
  - It is a burden and then it becomes suspect
- We need access to the raw data (could be deidentified)
  - Even if we can't use it to the highest level, we still have it
  - We can build the capacity to access it
  - Some trusted institutions can do something with it
  - Who owns the data can be tricky
    - There are different incentive structures here
- Can we get a dashboard back that spells it out from a community perspective?
- Very rarely is there ever share back part of the report
- For academics, they are under so much pressure to not do things differently
  - They want to publish and doing community works makes it slow
- Positive example: Beat the heat
  - Tracking outcomes and building more sustainable deliverables
  - Getting resources in community hands

Where do you see barriers in advancing your recommendations (examples: policy, infrastructure, funding, more detailed research)?

There is limited political will and an infrastructure that restricts progress

- Funding related to this being delivered to the community directly
- They want the community to come to them
  - Policy makers
  - Fill out this application, be eligible for this and that
- This infrastructure is created by people, but is it created for people
  - Funding infrastructure
  - The way legislation is done
  - Operational infrastructure

As a nonprofit, we do not want to have our work driven by funders

- We do not want to be driven by that
  - We want to circumvent this
- Sometimes it means we need to walk away from money

SUPPORT

For your project, what specific support would be most helpful to you?

Thought partnership for how we keep people engaged over a long period of time

- We want to the group to become its own thing (not just convened by Esperanza)
  - What are the boundaries for the group
  - We don't want to push them too fast
  - Or not be able and or not willing to
- They are donating their time on top of the other things they are doing in their lives
- We do not need help in doing the organizing, but we do want help in planning for the future
  - Coalition building

MANTUA CIVIC ASSOCIATION

ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Describe the community you work in

Location

- Mantua is an ideal location in the City of Philadelphia

Makeup

History

- History of activism
  - For years, it has been important to this community
  - Wonderful leaders
- Community has faced challenges around drugs and violence
  - We come together to address it

Demographics

- I see significant percentage of students, and an increasing numbers of student residents
- In terms of race: African American, Caucasian, Increasing Asian folks
- Increasing working class

- Professional population
  - Provisions made for real estate tax exemption
- Graying community
  - People living on Social Security alone, which would put them at the poverty line

Identity

- Residents love their community
- People that live in this community since the time it was born
- Something about this neighborhood that people don't leave

What comes to mind as key assets/strengths in your community?

We have access to major transportation routes

Mantua is surrounded by some of iconic cultural institutions and Universities

Mantua is a pedestrian friendly, walkable community

- I can walk from one end of Mantua to the other

People are long-term homeowners and have kept family homes

- People are in the same houses they were born in
  - Ward Leader has been in the same house for 77 years
- Heirs keep their parents' properties
  - Many of the families keep the houses
    - Heirs have started to sell or lease their properties in the last 8-9 years
      They may have moved away, and they no longer see themselves as living in the house

What challenges does your community face?

We have issues around tangled titles that means opportunities for home repair programs might be missed

- Opportunities for home repair programs might be missed
- This becomes an issue especially as the population ages
- This continues to be an issue, as people don't understand the things they need to do upfront
  - Estate planning
  - Whatever creates the whole probate stuff, people tend to avoid
  - People we think "own" a house, but it is actually the mothers or grandmother's house

There is an overall graying of the neighborhood

- "Where is everybody"
  - The neighbors you once had are no longer here

- I've never met so many old people in one community
- Our challenge has always been the middle aged group who will be here for the next 20-30 to preserve the community they live in
- Older residents are reliable and participate
  - The language we use becomes important to recruit

There are issues connecting the different ways that different generations get together and communicate

- Students who live here won't be here beyond the 4-5 years
  - We understand
  - They are excited to help and there are roles they can play
    - Community cleanups not board meetings
- Don't have the same needs

What are the specific priorities/needs in your community?

We struggle with keeping the community clean

- If you come out at night for a walk, you have to now compete with the vermin
- Looking at trash distracts from what the community could look like
  - Debris in the City (everywhere) is a problem
- Generally, in the community there is an issue with storing and disposing of trash
- The City does not do a good job educating people about violations, etc.
- Trash cans appearing at the front of the property
  - Attracts racoons, etc.
- Corrals might still attract animals, etc.
- People need to put their trash in the backyards

We have issues in communication and messaging

- Paper flyers don't do it
- Impacts all of the things that we are trying to do

Awareness raising for the residents in the community that may impact our health

Noise issues coming from younger folks

- Coming from parties, exacerbates the trash issue

How does your community see a connection between these issues to increased climate risk and environmental justice?

There is a significant difference between demolition and renovation in terms of its environmental impact

- Demolition becomes a real issue with the air that we breath
  - A plot of vacant land with old oil tanks, that dust could impact the community
- They did not talk about prevention, but they did talk about the possibility given the age of what was previously there
- This ancient stuff since the 20s and 30s there are contaminants that get out there when they excavate
  - It takes people aback
  - There are some steps, but people didn't know about that
  - Came up in a community meeting

There are overall heat island concerns

- Greenery can make it cooler overall
- Academy of Natural Science has helped here
- "Free tree program" but it requires clear titles

33rd and 34th street are being used as a main thoroughfare adding pollution and noise

- 34th is especially bad
  - Folks tend to go faster than this
- Loud vehicles
- Cause pollution and particulates etc.
- Were our streets designed for this type of traffic?
  - What is happening underneath
- People think of it as a shortcut

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

Confirm existing project summary [provided in individual meetings]

The Youth Ambassador Program is a creative, place-based arts and environmental justice program is designed to give students the opportunity to promote community stewardship of the 38th & Melon St Park. The goal of the program is to provide a hands-on approach of engaging youth to work together in a meaningful way to shape their environment through land stewardship activities while utilizing the power of the arts to encourage creative expression to redefine what environmental justice looks like for the next generation.

- About
  - Youth Ambassadors are paid a weekly stipend for their participation and leadership in the program. By presenting the program as an employment opportunity to the youth, especially for middle school-aged

students with limited means of gaining meaningful employment. The project also focuses on cultivating important 21st century workplace skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and exposure to diverse career pathways. Through this program Youth Ambassadors help bridge the communication between the community and its residents to encourage the positive use of public space. In addition, Youth Ambassadors will support students in engaging parents and community members in environmental justice discussions and to understand priority community issues.

- Over the last year, the Academy and Mantua Civic Association, Jefferson University and Philadelphia Contemporary built a curriculum integrating arts and environmental justice to co-teach Youth Ambassadors about the social and environmental issues faced in historically divested urban communities. Through a variety of educational sessions focused on the arts and sciences, the Youth Ambassadors will learn and develop creative community engagement activities to be held at the Melon Street Pocket Park. In addition to artistic, social, and environmental justice, and community engagement, this collaborative program will support social emotional learning, leadership skills, and environmental stewardship.

- Background

  - The Park was founded in 2019, when the Mantua community came together to work with Kim Douglas, Director of Jefferson University's Landscape Architecture Department, to transform a vacant lot located at the corner of 38th and Melon Streets. The community recognized that the park provided an opportunity to inspire a group of young people to participate in the care of their neighborhood and embrace the notion of civic and environmental responsibility.

  - Mantua Civic Association partnered with Philadelphia Contemporary to create and lead a creative, place-based curriculum focused on art and environmental justice and centered at the community-built pocket park. The Youth Ambassador program was developed in 2020 and piloted in 2021 with two teaching artists. The Academy joined the program in 2022 to strengthen the program by providing expertise in environmental justice. The Youth Ambassador program is designed to focus on civic engagement (Mantua Civic Association), the arts (Philadelphia Contemporary), environmental justice (the Academy) and centered on the stewardship of a pocket park created by Thomas Jefferson University. It is through the partnership of all these organizations that the program is realized.

Revision

- Young people are enjoying the more "kinetic" aspects of the program
  - Must appeal to the boys in this
    - They enjoy working with their hands
- We are going to have someone come in from Women and Natural Sciences
- January-Feb exploring a little bit and shift gears
  - We want to use a variety of approaches
    - Dwayne did a cool thing on communication (following instructions)
    - Find places where people naturally fit
      Not just lectures

Update

- Partners were shifting form Philadelphia Contemporary and Jefferson (started with a $5K grant)
  - Those things were really clicking
  - As we began to engage with the collective, we were really impressed with the way we could work with large Universities. Mathy understood how to work in a more supportive role
    - Really encouraged
  - Really important nuance that has shifted

- All of our partners work together

  They have crossed paths

  Positive experience

  - Philadelphia Contemporary did not step off abruptly

  - More of an expansion of focus

- We don't have a lot of resources, staff, or capacity

  - We are volunteer

  - The shift with Youth allows us to engage a younger swath of the population

- We now have a better group of young people involved

  - The young folks have the science in their heads

  - We are thinking about some of the environmental stuff we never had in our heads

- The group spent some time talking about heat islands

- Natural Sciences has helped us focus on some of the greening work

- Primary work of Jefferson was to transform a lot and to work on the pollinator trail

  - Mantua Peace Garden

    - How you can take very few resources and transform vacant lots into work you can expand

  - Merged that into this work

  - Now if has more of an environmental impact

- Demolishing homes has been done with very little attention

  - Funeral for a home (2012)

  - Turned to: Funeralizing homes

    - Aunt and nieces talking about the lives they had in the house

    - NOLA style second line

  - The developer who rebuilt that lot gave MCA the place we work out of at no cost

  - Important that some of the displacement conversations were respected

    - They respect the history

    - Developer focused his efforts

    - George Bantel

      WPRE

  - Most communities have event space

What were the key learnings that emerged from your project?

1. In the Youth Program we have learned more about how demolition has an impact on health

- The heating systems left in the ground is leaking into the soil

  - We had no idea the amount of demolition that happens in the community and the amount of oil burners

- In the Youth Program, they did not realize the impact it had on their health

  - Most of the abandoned properties are above 35th Street

2. In the process of looking at the Mantua Transformation Plan: We are Mantua (10 Years Later). Sharing an update with the community and creating a report card on how we've done

- Wonderful blueprint for community and neighborhood improvement
- We need to do a cliffs notes version to the community
- Able to see the scope of the work and the long-term accomplishments
- Our own report card on how we've done

3. We are learning about how diesel trucks have unique health impacts

- How do the diesel trucks that come through our neighborhood impact us

4. The Youth Ambassador Program has evolved to be more about youth leadership with a focus on prevention instead of intervention

- The environmental work brings us together, but the outcome is development of leadership skills
- This group is more about youth leadership
  - Looking more at prevention vs intervention
  - Engage this group in positive community work so we don't have to 'fix' them
  - We don't describe it as anti-violence, but it can be because they positive relationships they form with adults accomplish that aim
- They now recognize the safety intersection of vacant lots, etc.
- DB4 - Late teens early adults that predated the existing youth ambassador program
  - Involved in creating their own roadmap
  - Primarily about safety
  - Understanding gang territory
    - Anti-gang/anti-violence
- We've been doing this now for three years without tension that emerged between these kids
  - Whatever the purpose is the driver
- Opportunity to come together in a space that feels safe in group decision making
  - Builds a culture and climate that has inspires people to come to us about issues they don't agree with

Other

- We still meet with Lucy Kermen
  - Been meeting with them for years to bring together the university and the community to discuss common issues

What are the limitations of the project you conducted?

How do we get younger families involved

Is engaging on environmental justice a challenge for politicians

- Dealing with public officials can be a challenge

How did you address those concerns?

We are using a variety of approaches to make sure we are engaging people

- From building bee houses to build air conditioners we have engaged on environmental topics to bring in other leadership skills
- Get initials on the rock in the garden
- We grew this, we take care of our environment

Maybe we have to use the sexy language (about violence) to get the attention

- We have avoided it. Not sure if that is intentional or not

RECOMMENDATIONS

What opportunities or recommendations do you have that might address your priorities and needs?

1. Awareness raising of environmental issues that directly impact Mantua

- Get the overall community sensitive and ready to engage
- The youth is connected to this work
  - Either because of our influence or the school
- What are the environmental risk factors that emerged from living close the PECO station
  - We don't know
- How does the diesel fuel of trucks impact the health of the community

2. Advocate to our council people and other elected to address these issues

- We need 'bulldogs' who have mutual respect (e.g. Mathy)
  - Acknowledging with the bravery to say it
- He made us aware that these conversations are options that we can have
- Opportunities to raise issues in a public space
  - Why call it a "forum"
    - A word that resonates with academia not the community

3. Help organizations build the capacity to do the work and sustain the work

- How can we leverage resources from the organizations/institutions that have it?
  - If we want to work on a proposal, can we get some help in building that information out

- Not always about the dollar, it is about information

Where do you see barriers in advancing your recommendations (examples: policy, infrastructure, funding, more detailed research)?

A little bit of everything that gets in the way

Elected officials can be transient and may not be in office to support the long-term change needed.

Council people can be transient, come in and out

- Have a good relationship with Jamie Gauthier
- She's not new to Mantua, but without the deep, deep history

SUPPORT

For your project, what specific support would be most helpful to you?

Connecting with resources that could allow us to sustain over time

- Researching and connecting dots in a way that will allow us to reach broader constituencies

Collecting data on outcomes

- This is work we don't have internally

We don't have any longitudinal data

- Parent surveys
- We do have a logic model sort of piece
  - To do some more ongoing issues

We want the youth response

OVERBROOK ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Describe the community you work in

Location

- Touches the following zip codes in West Philadelphia (19139, 19151, 19131, 19104)
  - 19139, 51, 31, 04
  - Census Tracks Include 111, 115
- Nothing in our mission that stops us from going larger, but we are focused on West Philadelphia

- Go all the way to Mantua

Makeup

- Primary constituents are operating at or below the median income in Philadelphia
  - Working class community
- Approximately 43,000 people

History

- What will make the information around public health pop out is looking at the epidemiology of the area
- When you look at health conditions, neighbors may not understand the complex issues, but they understand the impact
- People are living next to aging Industrial infrastructure
  - High probability of lead paint in homes
  - Lead service lines
  - 89% buildings have the conditions that might trigger health issues

Demographics

- 14% of the residents have asthma (11% is common in Philly)
- 6% higher cancer rates

Identity

- Identify as an environmental justice community
- Low wealth community living in old infrastructure with high exposure to environmental issues
  - Transitional neighborhood
  - On Lancaster Ave. it is a state highway
    - Lots of traffic
  - Community that is high poverty
- Lack of wealth and wealth access and commercial development, poor academic attainment, has created stress
  - Needs resources
- High number of mixed use exposure is taking place in this area
  - Industrialized zoning is in close proximity to homes

What comes to mind as key assets/strengths in your community?

We are one of the proud neighborhoods of Philadelphia

- People grow up and stay with the community
  - Not transient (just come for a while and go)
  - Multiple generations stay within the community

The residents aspire for home ownership and stable work

- Opportunities for people who came to West Philadelphia

Overbrook Highschool "school on the hill"

What challenges does your community face?

The co-productive work was difficult to focus the community on with an explicit focus on this neighborhood

- Getting folks in the community who have other things on their mind to prioritize this
    - Make it sexy to talk about water and air quality
- "What about this mess in our neighborhood"
    - "What are you going to do about it"
    - You are going to leave us here with this mess

What are the specific priorities/needs in your community?

Raise the environmental IQ of the average citizen, the non-scientist

- Frame environmentalism as a quality of life issue
- The new normal to think about cause and effect
- It might be easier to put the burden on people who do not know, so folks need to be able to advocate for themselves and their community

Create a better distribution of exposure so our community doesn't have a disproportionate amount of the burden

- Our environmental burdens are a biproduct of our productivity
    - But there is a consequence that we do not address strategically
    - The work is at its best when we add a framework to make it just and fair for all citizens

How does your community see a connection between these issues to increased climate risk and environmental justice?

If you look at it through an equity lens, how do the people who are most effective have the most say

- Environmental justice is the ability to have informed consent to the burdens being placed on you
    - One of the freeing aspects of it

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

Confirm existing project summary [provided in individual meetings]

About

- The Overbrook Community Science project is structured to support the US Environmental Protection Agencies' priorities for community projects that increase public understanding of the benefits of environmental stewardship through community collaboration on issues of climate and environmental sustainability, environmental education capacity building with our municipal and Commonwealth partners. In this project, the OCS will provide resources from the city and state, while educating stakeholders in non-formal settings on career development about environmental issues, and solutions
- Status: For all of this, we were going to do this anyway.
  - Volume should not weigh into our moral logic
    - Very sensitive to that
    - Funds didn't allow us or stop us from doing this.
  - Form the equity side of that we operate with a level of sovereignty

1. The Overbrook Community Science (OCS) Focus Groups

- Summary: The OCS project will also conduct focus groups to identify key behavior targets and better understand community perceptions of barriers and benefits of key behavioral targets. The Focus groups will be two-fold: 1) With students from Penn and Drexel Universities and 2) with adult community residents to determine which behaviors, social determinants, and demographics will be targeted in the OCS campaign.
- Status
  - Completed the focus groups
  - Hired the Methods Lab to do some work for us in the focus group project
  - Leveraged mutual grants
  - Combination of student and volunteer stakeholders throughout both conversations

2. The Overbrook Resilient Equity & Capacity-building Hub (REACH).

- Summary: The Overbrook Resilient Equity & Capacity-Building Hub (REACH) project is the Overbrook center's community-based approach to climate and environmental adaptation. The REACH project is leveraged on the heels of the Overbrook Community Science Project and is designed to address multiple aspects of equitable community development and will be a "third place" destination and repository for community level environmental health data.
- Status
  - Creating community advisory group in the hub of neighbors, community leaders, political leaders
  - The advisory group has the ability to recommend people to the focus groups (Project 1)
  - There is a looser affiliation because the administrative structure is via Overbrook
    - Facilitator is part of Overbrook
    - Leaders are part of Overbook
    - Concern and risk in adding politics or too many roles and structure because it can cause issues
      I assigned this to myself "Like a block captain"
      Bigger issue with agencies and government folks and they have "indigenous power"

But in our CAB they are one person one vote with a level authority structure

They are there from a community structure

Outcomes: The outcomes of both projects will establish six (6) objectives:

- 1) Develop a replicable pilot to fulfil community-identified needs for adapting to burdensome climate and environmental exposures,
- 2) Support community-led air protection efforts that include the installation of air monitors, in approximately 42 homes
- 3) Increase lead safety practices with 50 families and 30 disadvantaged renovators in the Overbrook / Wynnefield section of Philadelphia by providing training to minimize lead exposure risks in pre-1978 built homes
- 4) Inventory vacant lots in the West Philadelphia to recommend best practices for future use, create employment and reduce exposures to lead and other metals, and to promote a healthier use of parcels for community benefit
- 5) Develop a community-based outreach and training on environmental justice and "brownfield to greenfield" strategies for the Overbrook neighborhood and,
- 6) Establish a community-based Hub that educates community members and provides resources that provides relief during environmental and/or climate influenced events.

What were the key learnings that emerged from your project?

1. Three primary target areas emerged from this process through deliberating with the community. It started as five, but some were folded together

- Brownfields and Vacant Lots
  - Talking about them separately did not make sense. It is the same
    - Brownfield sites are just larger orphaned land
    - The interpretation is that of a non-scientist
  - Identify and explain what a brownfield is
    - Get the public perspective on how they can be repurposed and reused
  - Vacant lots
    - How do community members this about what to do
- Healthy Homes and Lead Exposure
  - Define what a healthy home is
  - Focus on lead exposure
    - If you are concerned about lead it is because you are concerned about healthy homes
    - Lead was the focus. It wasn't about mold and radon, it was ultimately about lead
- Do more on air quality in West Philadelphia

2. The underpinning of all of this is commiserate based on trust within the community

- We've earned some real serious trust
- Engaged with grandkids of the people we are talking about

3. Basic strategy has been about providing education in advance, so we've demonstrated what we are talking about

- We brought the people in to explain our process
- Brought in the engineers to break it down to people and explain it
- When you define the leadership role, we can be a coach and a collaborator
  - Our process at its best is the ability to deconstruct this
    - What is the issue
    - Why should you care
    - What can you do about it
  - People have experiential knowledge

What are the limitations of the project you conducted?

People don't know what they don't know

People have real serious reasons not to trust people

- How many promises have been broken
- People walk around thinking that they (others) just don't care
  - "you say this, but you'll actually do this"
- So dismayed, that once they see a 'tree' this is part of displacement
  - Skepticism is baked in
  - New generation has the same biases past down
    - Institutional "not like"

The big instructions need the CBOs as the entryway to the community

- This can be an issue as they never build their own trust and just 'borrow' from the CBOs

Visible trash has to do with the absence of environmental literacy

- Litter Mitigation Crew at Overbrook
- 9.2 tons of trash off the street
- We have a lot of opinions about trash
- More so it is the absence of environmental literacy
  - Causes are culture and education
    - Apathy is in the spectrum
  - Once we found out about the system of it
  - Get beyond the benign and the ascetic into it is a big deal
  - We are doing the interpretive work
    - We go right to the epidemiology of the community and then connect back into the conditions
    - Did you realize that the trash does this?
    - Seeing the trash as a system of influence in a way that creates a habitat for poor health

How did you address those concerns?

We went beyond just knowing if there is a problem and went to creating the solutions

- How much of our land have we been able to rezone?

We need to create the social architecture to actually get something done here

How do you build trust? By providing results.

- Really improve the spaces we are working in

Too much of a gap between people's aspirations and what change can actually occur

RECOMMENDATIONS

What opportunities or recommendations do you have that might address your priorities and needs?

1. Every neighborhood needs an environmental report card

- It should not be a mystery what the environmental status is
  - Our work should be knowing this
- Inventory the community and determine vulnerability, priority and remedy
- It could just be a competition between council members "I want the cleanest neighborhood"
- Environmental work can be very local

2. Policy that can create overlays "green zones, ecozones"

- More of a legislative policy
- We also need to do something quicker than that
- If we know where the burdens are, we can then do something about it
- A lot of it is about zoning
  - In the 2035 plan we have a large amount of industrial zoning that is fence lined against residential property
    - Zoning permits it
- Green zone overlay would say you can't add that industrial project in this neighborhoods
- Add in system of incentives and disincentives
  - Reduce heavy vehicular use
  - Add in green spaces
- Green zones and ecozones is a response to cumulative impact
  - If you have 20 folks doing the same poor practice it is multiplied
    - Every individual agency might be operating legally, but as a collective it is creating poor outcomes
  - You need to measure total burden
    - The real measure is outcome on your health

Where do you see barriers in advancing your recommendations (examples: policy, infrastructure, funding, more detailed research)?

A lot of this isn't stand-alone issues, it is part of a system

- Storming is part of the model

Hard to say that there isn't enough research

- So much has been spent here
- Who is driving the research?
  - Who is the PI
  - Who is driving the priorities
- There is a business of making sense of all of this to both the offender and the offended
  - Ability to unlearn and relearn
- Putting more research into this, is more important
  - You need to know why you are in this predicament and how to save yourself
  - Can't wait for people to save you
- How do we redirect and who do we coproduce knowledge with
- Using the term "Community Consultant" instead of CBO
  - Neighborhood organization feels so nebulous
    - Marginalizing the role that people play
  - Federal push to make the Community Consultant "The Lead"
    - Time out, you are working for us
    - It is all about cast and who is better
  - If you are competent and capable, you should be able to contribute to all parts of a process
    - People expect that from you, but don't give it to you
  - We expect that our lived experience is as valuable as scientific expertise
  - Ligaments that can tie this together

Two sorts of blockers

- Those ignorant of the benefit
- Those disadvantaged by the benefit
  - Need to create incentives that even if it is a temporary disadvantage, you are subsidized
  - Whole industries adjust
  - If your business model is disadvantaged, you fight against it

SUPPORT

For your project, what specific support would be most helpful to you?

HUD - Thriving Communities Technical Assistance (TCTA)

- Priority is to help grow capacity by way of education and technical assistance to better help them in grant writing
- 17 total awards
  - Overbrook (Region 3)
  - Spoke and Hub Model
- Part of our responsibility is to convene an educational activity
  - Group could create and convene a symposium
  - 3 benefits (classes on grant writing, competency experts (who can help them understand environmental issues), creating a sense of community
    - Peer to peer activity
    - Tabling and sharing about projects
    - Bus tours to neighborhoods
    - Grant Writing is broken down into
      Fiscal
      Structure
      Writing
      What about the folks that don't have professionals to do that work
  - In April we would know if we have the funds to pull this together

Looking for personnel

- Environmental staff
  - Coordinators
  - Educators
- Grant writers

Greenzone Zoning Research

- What are the incentives and disincentives?
- How could that be pushed as a legislative pilot?

SEAMAAC

ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Describe the community you work in

Location

- Southeast Philadelphia Southeast Philadelphia
- 7th Street Commercial Corridor

Makeup

- Lower economic status

History

Demographics

- 65% of our clients identify as Asian, 80% reside in South Philadelphia, and 92% are low-income.
- Many of our clients have limited English proficiency.

Identity

- Mostly Asian
- Residents of South Philadelphia
- Feeling of ownership of South Philadelphia especially in the younger generation
  - Older generation feels more ownership

What comes to mind as key assets/strengths in your community?

Different communities with unique challenges and strengths

- We serve people from different backgrounds. Our communities are unique and different from one another

What challenges does your community face?

Water pollution

- Concerns about care of water

Air pollution

- A lot of allergy issues
- Related to air pollution

High heat Index

- Especially important around the elderly people

What are the specific priorities/needs in your community?

Not asked as it was answered in other questions

How does your community see a connection between these issues to increased climate risk and environmental justice?

Not asked as it was answered in other questions

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

Confirm existing project summary

SEAMAAC proposes to partner with Drexel University's Environmental Collaboratory in its work on Environmental Justice Climate Transition Plan Review. SEAMAAC proposes the following deliverables: [from the proposal]

- Provide guidance and coordination to, and analysis of communities living in Southeast Philadelphia in monthly Collaboratory meetings and special work groups as needed.
- Hold three (3) community focus groups with three (3) linguistic communities represented in Southeast Philadelphia to identify impacts climate change. Each focus group will have a minimum of 10 community members and will be facilitated in the language of the selected community. The three (3) languages will be determined in consultation with Drexel.
- Administer 100 surveys in English to community members living in Southeast Philadelphia.
- Support Drexel University in providing current information and community-specific analysis regarding the impact to communities from climate change.
- In partnership with Drexel University and CBO partners, develop a relevant and viable community/environmental justice climate action implementation plan.
- Update
  - About half of the data has been collected

Group 1 - Nepali People

- Location: 7th Street Commercial Corridor | Mifflin Square
- A translator met with the group
  - 1.5 hour focus group
- Targeted the gardeners to understand the impact of climate change on the ground
  - Grow more greenspace and add more community gardens
- Unique quality
  - Special program to support immigrant group
  - Nepali and Bhutani group share the same language

Group 2 Chinese Elders

- Teaches Arts and Crafts

Group 3 Burmese/Karen - Half use Burmese language and half use Karen language

- Because not many people speak this language, they tend to not get any resources or information they can use
- This group has a high need for access to services, but because of their small size they are seldom prioritized over other groups

Group 4 African American

- All unique
- Specific needs and vulneraries

What were the key learnings that emerged from your project?

1. There are common concerns that exist across all of the groups

- Clean Water
- Trash in Alleyways
- Infrastructure
- Climate Change Impact
- Noise pollution
- Concerns about Climate change - the variability of weather
  - Inconsistency and lack of cultivation

What are the limitations of the project you conducted?

Language/Vocabulary

- Limited vocabulary when talking about the issues as whole
- We provide support in different languages, but there are ones that we miss
  - Missing the subtly
- Huge number of Chinese people
- Huge number of Arabic speakers
- 8 languages that were major areas of need in South Philly
  - Spanish
  - Arabic
  - Indonesian
  - Chinese
  - Nepali
  - But you will exclude the ones with the highest need (e.g. Burmese/Karen)

Wanting to dig in more

- When you talk to them, I wish we could ask more
- Any way I can help them?
- Time was a limitation

Cultivating more trust

- During the icebreaker, it helps them, but they are vulnerable and have trust issues
  - They don't want to be identified
  - Wish I could remove the fear

If you do sustainable research, you need the ability to overcome limitations

How did you address those concerns?

Allowing participants to use fake names (aliases)

Participants do not have to share identifying information like birthdate, etc.

We do not take or share pictures (no photos)

RECOMMENDATIONS

What opportunities or recommendations do you have that might address your priorities and needs?

1. Find opportunities to teach people how to do purification efforts at home

- Check the water quality and the PH levels

2. Address illegal dumping and trash with awareness and education campaigns

- In home countries, pickup was at night not in the morning, which helped reduce congestion
- Community leaders responsible for talking to the people if folks have trash issues
- They had trash dumped by their homes
  - Folks that dumped trash all throughout the week
  - Residents throwing trash in business trash areas
  - Because of language barriers reaching out was difficult

3. Build green infrastructure that aligns with where the community sees a need

- Children do not have a place to play
  - Most of the parks are used for dogs and there is waste and litter everywhere
  - Always illegal dumping issues in the park
- Walkability
  - No green space for walks does that
- Community gardens
  - Culturally appropriate vegetables
  - They want more garden space

4. Focus on the enforcement and communication of existing laws

- There are calls for enforcement
- It can be done in multiple ways
  - Educational sessions in multiple languages (same with signage) to address concerns about low literacy
- They may not know exactly who does what, but they did mention the EPA and the police
  - Streets and sanitation department
- No language support for 311

5. There is a lack of overall resources and understanding where to go and where to find information

- Public awareness campaign
- Signage with infographics
- Multiple languages

6. Find a leader to take the initiative on climate issues

7. Where can there be follow up measures to show what has been learned

Other

- Why the priority of Electric cars when you could repair the existing system not just promote the electric vehicles because they are not affordable to people in this community
- More vocal with bikes as a solution

Where do you see barriers in advancing your recommendations (examples: policy, infrastructure, funding, more detailed research)?

Lack of leadership

- There is no community advocate for their community
- Because they have a busy life, they don't know who is going to be there
- Generation gap between elderly and young

Economic Barriers

Access to information

- They do not know where to go
  - If they don't know about something
- They don't trust the information they see
  - Trusted
    - Trust religious organization from their community
    - They trust organizations who use their language
      Who they have had relationships for many years

- They tend to trust schools as schools connect with children and they trust the children
- Nepali (tend to trust the government)
- Less trust
  - Police (African American)
  - Government Organizations (Chinese Group)
  - Burmese ethnic Karen (gov't)
  - Elon Musk
  - Pharmaceutical industry

Corporate interests

- Pharmaceutical industry
- Government is more inclined to listen to corporation
- Mention Gentrification
  - They need to leave south Philadelphia
  - Stadium being built in Chinatown
    - This will cause more problems

How can the community participate in building solutions?

- The feeling of "we cannot do anything"
- Advocacy

SUPPORT

For your project, what specific support would be most helpful to you?

Additional time

Mapping the recommendations to the solutions

- This impacts participation

Address the feeling that "We gave away information and something was done"

- The community wanted to see things happening as a result of feedback
- Simultaneously providing feedback and seeing changes

If there was a tool available to translate content into other languages from a data prep and language perspective

- Early on to create a questionnaire

Big issue with specific demographics around trust who were not interested in talking at all

- Found a trusted 3rd party from the community