



COMMUNITY BENEFITS MEETING: A'S STADIUM AT HOWARD TERMINAL



West Oakland Environmental
Indicators Project
in collaboration with
Pathways to Equity Fellows

Pathways to Equity: West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project

West Oakland, CA

Iteration / Testing / Pilot Program

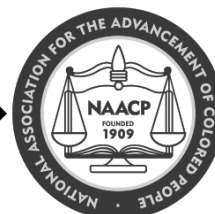
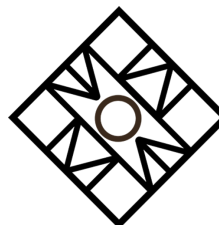
Started Winter 2018 / Ongoing

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NOMA-NAACP-SEED Awards

Based on common foundations and a shared vision, NOMA, NAACP, and the SEED Network announced the [2020 Awards for Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) (JEDI) in design, architecture, and land development. Seven projects were selected through a competitive process and by a distinguished jury. This case study profiles one of the winning projects.

About the National Organization of Minority Architects


The National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) mission is to champion diversity within the design professions by promoting the excellence, community engagement, and professional development of its members. NOMA is committed to creating a pipeline to the architecture profession to a more diverse spectrum of students and cultivate a more inclusive profession that reflects the communities served by design: all communities. As architects, we acknowledge that our professional duty is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public and as NOMA members, we seek to fulfill this duty by ensuring that we help to facilitate diverse teams that can optimally address the needs of increasingly more diverse communities. Our signature annual event is our national conference that attracts students and professionals from nearly every corner of the building industry to converge, exchange ideas, network and support one another professionally to create a better build environment for everyone.

About the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons. Environmental injustice, including the proliferation of climate change, has a disproportionate impact on communities of color and low-income communities. The NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program supports community leadership in addressing this human and civil rights issue. With the launch of the Centering Equity in the Sustainable Building Sector (CESBS) Initiative, the NAACP seeks to universalize access to safe, affordable, healthy, energy-efficient, regenerative, and resilient buildings for all people.

About the SEED Network

Established in 2005, the Social Economic Environmental Design (SEED) Network provides a common standard to guide, evaluate and measure the social, economic, and environmental impact of design. SEED is premised on the belief that design can play a vital role in the most critical issues that face communities and individuals, in crisis and in



everyday challenges. To accomplish this, the SEED process guides professionals to work alongside locals who know their community and its needs. This practice of “trusting the local” is increasingly recognized as a highly effective way to sustain the health and longevity of a place or a community as it develops.

Award Jury

Carl Anthony, Architect, author and urban / suburban / regional design strategist

Kim Dowdell AIA, NOMA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C, 2019-2020 National President of NOMA

Maya Henderson, Sustainability Professional

Christopher Lee, AIA, Architect, Mark Cavagneo Associates

Tiffany Mayhew, NOMA

Marquis Miller, Chief Diversity Officer, City of Chicago, Office of the Mayor

Jacqui Patterson, Senior Director of Environmental and Climate Justice at the NAACP

Paloma Pavel, President of Earth House Center

Laura Shipman, Director of Community Development and Planning, One Treasure Island

Jimmie Tucker FAIA NOMA LEED AP, Managing Principal, Self + Tucker Architects

Barbara Brown Wilson, Associate Professor, Author, University of Virginia

How would you know if a project supports JEDI?

Justice: “In all aspects of the development process is seeking FIRST to make right historical evidences of inequality through effective planning.”

Equity: “People receive the treatment that meets their individual needs.”

Diversity: “The leadership and community participation in the project represent the demographics of the region, with a preference for greater representation of those in the historic minority.”

Inclusion: “The culture of the project, including the design, programming, and interpersonal dynamics create a sense of belonging and celebration of both difference and universal human connections.”

To view even more reflections on the definitions of JEDI, visit [the summary](#) of survey responses from NOMA, NAACP, and SEED Network members.

Executive Summary

This project addresses issues of environmental justice with the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP) to start the process of creating a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) process in response to the proposed stadium and mixed use “Oakland A’s Waterfront Ballpark District at Howard Terminal” development, directly adjacent to the the West Oakland community. The goals of the Pathways to Equity phase of the project were to research CBA’s, create an engagement opportunity for input from the community, and through collaboration with the City of Oakland and the Oakland Athletics create a method by which the community of West Oakland has direct participation in the CBA process. WOEIP leveraged the design and planning skills of an interdisciplinary team to support a community-centered process for an equity-based CBA that focuses on the most vulnerable. The research document presented by the fellows in the April 13th 2019 community meeting spanned issues of Climate Change Resilience, Air Quality, Infrastructure, Affordable Housing, Arts and Culture, and Career Pathways.

This collaboration is a project of [Pathways to Equity](#), a leadership and team building training program with the ethos that uses a systems design approach to achieve equity as a foundation in all practices. Throughout this multi-year engagement with WOEIP, an interdisciplinary team of architects, designers and planners set aside their expectations of what a project “should” be, and respond to what it needs to be. This has included slowing the process to respond to the immediacy of needs presented from COVID-19.

Addressing root causes of environmental injustice in communities such as West Oakland is a marathon, not sprint. And those who are closest to the issues that face communities such as West Oakland are closest to the solutions. Disrupting systemic inequity takes time, and Pathways to Equity recognizes the need to slow down the design process in order to develop trust in a long term commitment of co-creation.



How does this project support JEDI?

Justice: The project worked to create a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) that gives the community a seat at the table to take into account the needs of the community. The process included learning about how systemic racism and generational trauma creates historically inequitable policies and practices that impact the environment, health and economic structures in under-resourced communities.

Equity: Equity is built into the CBA process itself. The team of fellows partnered with West Oakland Benefits for Equity (WOBE), an intergenerational group of residents, community leaders, businesspeople, workers, researchers and advocates. Together they have slowed down the development and approvals process that is inherently inequitable, positioning power and benefits for the developer,

Diversity: The team has relied on the knowledge and network of WOBE to reach out and welcome their community members from all walks of life to participate and amplify the work being done by holding open house meetings to encourage diverse participation.

Inclusion: Each WOBE meeting is facilitated to inform, inspire, elevate, and connect community members more deeply with each other. One small way to foster community connection is by doing round table introductions every single meeting, so each voice is spoken into the room, and everyone has a chance to speak from the beginning. This effort sometimes takes more time when considering the other agenda items, but the investment is worth it.

Who are the communities involved in and impacted by the project?

West Oakland is primarily an African American community with a population of distributed age, majority renter occupied, and a majority of residents with little or no college education. It is heavily impacted by systemic and racial oppression such as eminent domain of private property allowed by the Federal Housing Act of 1948 for the construction of “civic projects” that include the Federal Post Office, the Oakland Museum, I-580, I-880, and I-980 which have cut off mobility and access to resources leaving many communities living with lower standards across all qualities of life. Most notable is the enduring environmental injustices caused by the major highways that create a boundary of diesel emissions that have led to lower life expectancy and higher rates of asthma than in more affluent Oakland neighborhoods. The West Oakland zip codes are among the worst in Oakland for asthma-related hospitalizations, and African American children have had over ten times higher rate of asthma-related emergency department visits than white children. In addition 69% of residents are not able to afford the median rent on available housing units and almost 60% are rent burdened.

Project Stakeholders

Ms Margaret Gordon -
community leader and
WOEIP co-director

Brian Beveridge -
community leader and
WOEIP co-director

Taj Tashombe - Oakland A's
Community Liaison

Shalini Agrawal -
co-director, Pathways to
Equity

Garrett Jacobs - co-director,
Pathways to Equity
Pathways to Equity
Fellows:

Jillian Solomon -

transportation consultant

Alicia Parker - planner

Jessica Jobe Sea - architect

Gina Bugiada - designer

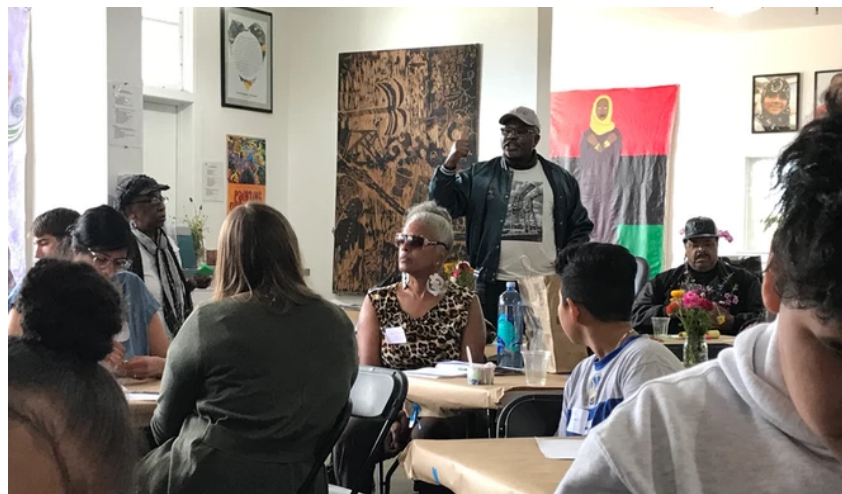
Lucia Castello - architect

How were each of these communities involved in the process and project?

WOEIP and the Pathways to Equity team met regularly to discuss what an equitable and inclusive CBA process would look like, while also correspondence with Taj Tashombe from the Oakland A's. For six months the team researched and discussed what an equity-based CBA would look like for a privately funded mega-development project. They assembled and summarized research of what other CBAs have included in the past, and additional items that could be included. Building off of WOEIP's experience with the Port of Oakland Army Base CBA, the team convened West Oakland community members for a meeting April 2019 to present the idea of a CBA for the new ballpark, educate the room about CBAs, present a vision for an equitable CBA process, and invited all the attendees to directly participate in the upcoming process.

This process revealed the need for deeper involvement from the local community leaders, and led to creation of the West Oakland Benefits for Equity (WOBE) by the Pathways to Equity fellows, now known as Equity Research Team (ERT). The process has been informed by WOEIP's collaborative engagement model, which supports community members within WOBE to see themselves as leaders, and that their lived experience is valuable expertise to be at the table where decisions are being made. ERT has provided a supporting role by organizing and facilitating monthly meetings which serves as a consistent forum for both

emerging and seasoned community leaders to come together and cross-pollinate their particular passions and areas of advocacy within the West Oakland community.





How does the project support...?

Justice

The Pathways to Equity (P2E) program provides professional development to ensure architects, designers, planners and other professionals that influence the built environment understand what it means to design with, and not for, communities. This fellowship program is a long term commitment to holding these professions accountable to the vulnerable and often traumatized communities that are most impacted by injustices in the built environment. Pathways to Equity aims to shift mindsets, reveal implicit biases and power dynamics, recognizing that design professionals are complicit in sustaining inequitable policies, planning and design that harm the most under-invested communities. Leading with listening, fellows gain skills, knowledge and self awareness to do so with respect and humility.


The P2E trainings set the foundation before the engagement began with WOEIP. This included learning the history of systemic racism that affected this community, understanding generational trauma, reflecting on power dynamics, holding space for vulnerable conversations, and building skills for community engagement, relationship-building and co-creation. Building on this foundation, fellows leveraged their professional skills to address environmental justice and co-create an equity-based Community Benefits Agreement process with the City of Oakland and the Oakland A's.



Equity

The power dynamic between the corporate giant, Oakland A's, and grassroots community organization WOEIP is inherently unequal from the onset. The Oakland A's is an organization flush with resources and power, with a team of legal advisors, real estate developers and financial investors on hand. WOEIP is a resident-led, community-based environmental justice organization dedicated to achieving its own vision for healthy neighborhoods through community engagement and data. The fellows leveled the playing field, and brought knowledge of land-use development language, planning and design processes (ex: permitting), professional skills (consulting, architecture, planning) with the goal of supporting and inspiring community members in West Oakland to participate in the equity based Community Benefits Agreement process to mitigate negative health, housing, infrastructure and cultural impacts while ensuring positive contributions to the community.

Ms. Margaret, a trusted leader in the community, has built decades of relationships through inclusive outreach and community-engaged participation. In addition, she brings her lived experience as an African American woman whose community in San Francisco was decimated due to eminent domain. Under her guidance and mentorship, the fellows organized a large community meeting to support transparent communication for developers, investors, residents, and municipal stakeholders to voice their concerns and needs related to the new development. With Ms. Margaret's mentorship, fellows gained an understanding of how the root causes of environmental injustice created by the planning and design of three major interstate highways were a direct result of policy, planning and design in her community.



The team extended their engagement with WOEIP after the conclusion of the fellowship program, and transitioned their efforts to the current team of fellows, who have recognized the value of Ms. Margaret's self-taught community organizing and coalition-building. The current team has been engaged in translating her experiential knowledge into a process to learn from.

Diversity

From before the project began, diversity was represented in content, facilitators, fellows and the community partner. P2E Fellows learned about systemic racism, trauma-informed design, power and privilege from a majority of facilitators of color. The facilitators included restorative justice healers, local indigenous speakers, equity designers, storytellers, artists and community organizers. The interdisciplinarity of the cohort represented industries from architecture, landscape architecture, art, public health, law, affordable housing and real estate investment. The all-woman team countered the dominant male representation in the industry, as well as showed interdisciplinarity with a transportation consultant, city planner, and architects, and racial diversity with an African American woman. The West Oakland community is predominantly African American.

Inclusion

Creating an inclusive learning experience is core to the learning journey of the Pathways to Equity fellows. Key practices of inclusion include power & privilege, active listening, power dynamics, community-engagement, relational practice and moving at the speed of trust. The racially diverse cohort brought varying perspectives of lived experiences, which were integral to the experience of restorative justice in making safe spaces. Fellows participated in affinity spaces to experience honest and vulnerable conversations related to lived experiences based on identity and intersectionality. By diversifying narratives and perspectives from the beginning of the program, fellows engaged in experiential learning to build relationships, and understand the value of trust before starting any project with the community partner. The community partner embraced the team and literally invited them to the table with key meetings with the Oakland A's. The team's ability to bridge between WOEIP and the Oakland A's was an invaluable asset to the community partner.

[Double-click & watch their story!](#)



**Ms. Margaret
Gordon**
Co-Director



**Brian
Beveridge**
Co-Director

"(Community) resilience can be understood as place-based cultural practice that defines how residents survive in neighborhoods that already look broken, yet function due to existing social networks, tacit knowledge, and local histories."
- Hector Fernando Burga



Project Journey

How did the project evolve in response to intentional JEDI strategies?

The team researched and discussed how to develop a Community Benefits Agreement process that centers equity and focuses on the most vulnerable. Over the course of six months they used the newly released data from the City of Oakland's department of Race and Equity as a basis for the CBA. This report provided the information needed to guide every conversation and item in the CBA back to focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable. They also worked with the City and the A's to develop a steering committee model that embedded specific requirements for

participation that would push inclusivity beyond who was normally at these sorts of tables. It elevated community members over lobbyists, moving from “slicing the pie” to taking steps to build a long term commitment and relationship to equity.

What are the critical measurements of the success or failure of the project?

Community participation is a strong indicator and critical measurement for the success of the process. For over two years, the process has been ongoing and collaboration continues between multiple stakeholders, moving from negotiation to consensus building, which disrupts the traditional power structure. Community members at WOBIE meetings continue to have a venue where their voices are heard. We are hopeful that the final CBA will include issues around equity centered on the most vulnerable, but only time will tell.

“Excellent justice foundation in intent and the design of this project! The gathering of expertise in support of community leadership to create the community benefits agreement is an important approach.”

NOMA-NAACP-SEED Jury Member

