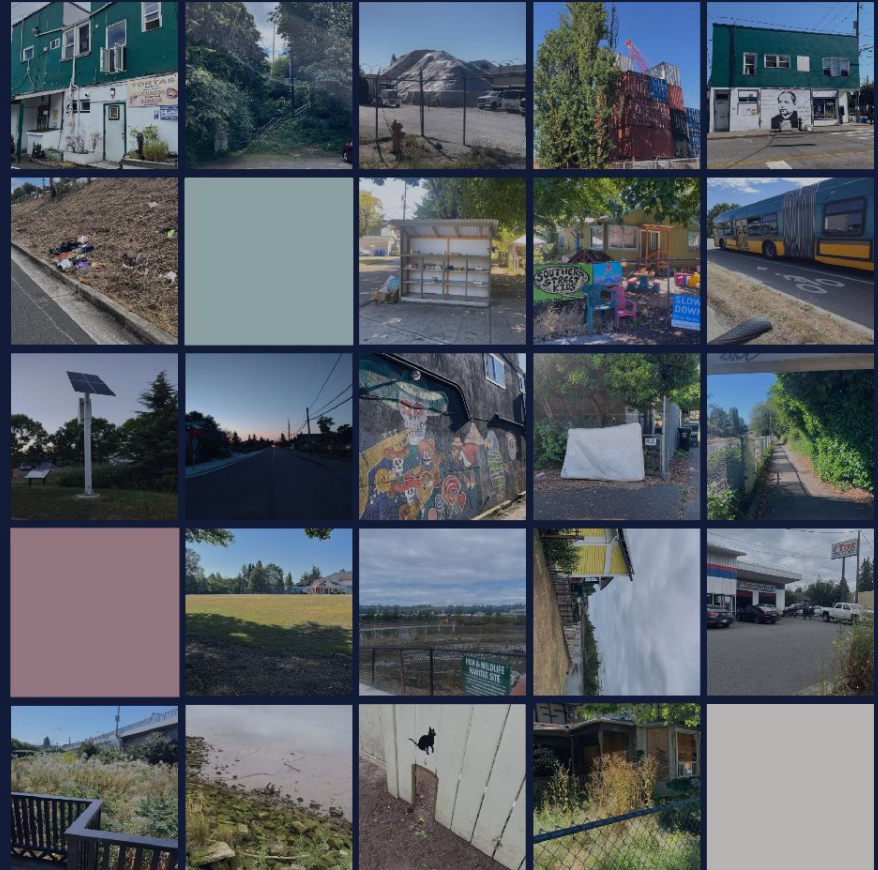


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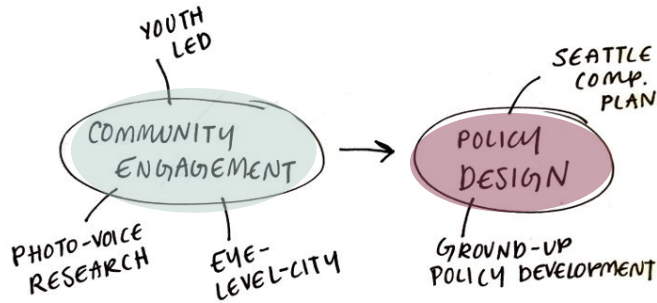
# SOUTH PARK YOUTH VISION PROJECT

A VISIONARY PROJECT BETWEEN THE DUWAMISH VALLEY  
SUSTAINABILITY ASSOCIATION + THE CITY OF SEATTLE



# Contents

- 1 About the Project
- 2 Process
- 3 Community Insights
- 4 Engagement to Policy Design
- 5 Policy Recommendations
- 6 Lessons & Takeaways



*\*There are no rankings in the information provided below. Any list that includes numerical order is strictly for organizational reasons.*



## Youth Leaders



Joanne  
Ly



Maria  
Perez



Sebastian  
Hernandez

## DVSA Staff



Alexandra  
Burgos



Jorge  
Arturo Lara



Leila  
Jackson

This work would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of:

**Aja Hazelhoff** (Office of Planning and Community Development)

**Lizzie Moll** (Seattle Department of Transportation)

**Adrienne Hampton** (Duwamish River Community Coalition)

**Clara Cheeves** (Self)

**Sofie Burgos-Thorsen** (Gehl Architects)

**Nina Cecilie Højholdt** (Gehl Architects)

**Cesar Lopez** (Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association - DVSA)

**Jackie Donovan** (DVSA)

**Edwin Hernandez** (DVSA)

**Kaleb Germinaro** (Estelita's Library, UW)

**Marcus Henderson** (Sawhorse Revolution)

**Derrick McDonald** (Sawhorse Revolution)

**Em Piro** (S2)

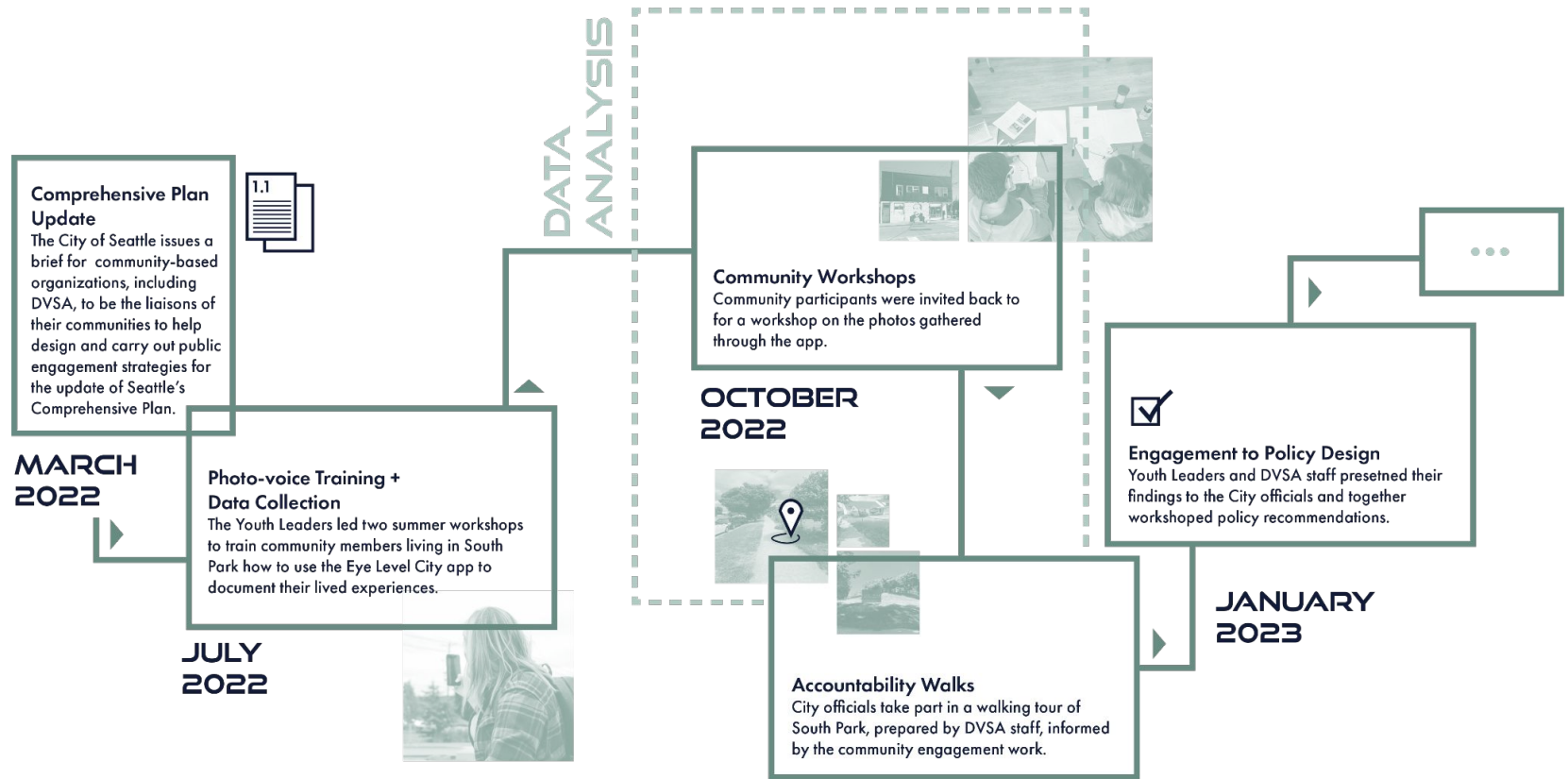
**Natalie Garcia** (S2)

**Nancy Rottle** (Green Futures Lab)

# **SOUTH PARK YOUTH VISION P R O J E C T**

The South Park Youth Vision Project is an interdisciplinary, community-based research project based in Seattle, Washington, with a focus on the neighborhood of South Park. Our goal is to understand the complexities of the South Park community's needs and challenges through the lived experience of community members, and co-create policy strategies for meaningful local change.

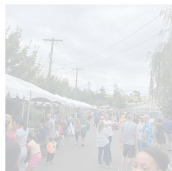
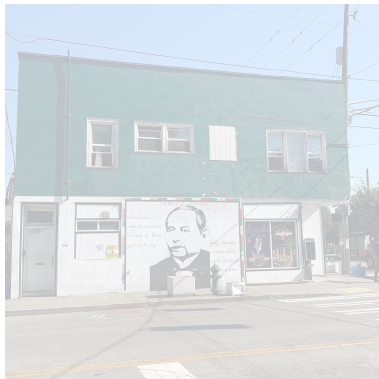
The project centers three POC youth as leaders of community engagement strategies and policy design efforts, with the ambition of elevating them as future community leaders. With the value of upholding the labor and visions of existing community organizations in South Park, we aim to prioritize community autonomy in our project outcomes.



Project timeline for the South Park Youth Vision Project.  
Image credit: Leila Jackson, Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association.

1

# About the Project



## About the Project

**1.1** Centering South Park

**1.2** Project Origins

**1.3** Expanded Scope

**1.4** Defining Project Values



# 1.1 Centering South Park

**“There is a juxtaposition with a lot of what we experience in South Park,** there are positives and negatives in every corner. We enjoy our community, but you see the disparity in the landscape”

## South Park & the Duwamish Valley

The Duwamish Valley is the land of the first people of Seattle, the dx̣w̓dəw̓ʔabš (Duwamish) People, in what we now know as Seattle, Washington. Today, the Duwamish Valley is an industrial landscape that surrounds the urban neighborhood of South Park, the home of a vibrant and diverse community.

A history of environmental injustices continue to impact South Park residents, including the legacy of redlining, the pollution and contamination associated with the industrialized river valley and associated health concerns.

Grassroots efforts have been at the forefront of addressing and preparing for the ongoing impacts of climate change, in the Duwamish Valley and we hope to center and elevate this critical work in the South Park Youth Vision Project.



*The Duwamish River Valley. Image retrieved from: <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/articles/2021-04-climate-health-equity-resilience-district-concept-gathers-momentum-in-seattle>*

## 1.2 Project Origins

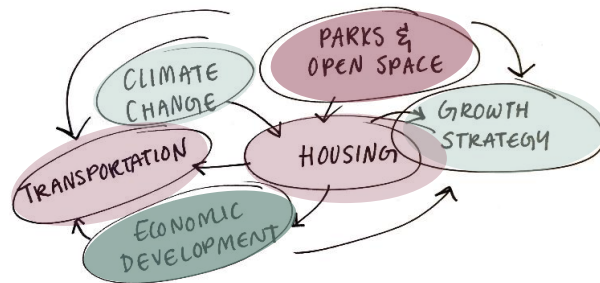
### The City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan Update

The Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association (DVSA), was one of six community-based organizations (CBO) to be selected by the City of Seattle to help design and carry out public engagement strategies for strategies for the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan Update, and the Seattle Transportation Plan – funded by OPCD and SDOT, respectively.

DVSA was chosen as a partnership for our ability and commitment to center the voices of BIPOC community members, that have been historically underrepresented.

These insights are crucial as the City updates its vision for how to invest in these communities.

The original project scope from the City was to conduct a survey based off of the six issue briefs extracted from the Comprehensive Plan: Climate Change, Transportation, Parks and Open Space, Housing, Economic Development, and Growth Strategy. However, following conversations with other CBO partners and with the Youth Leaders, it became clear that our engagement scope needed to expand beyond surveys in order to better support the South Park community, and to prioritize equitable engagement and data collection practices.



*The Comprehensive Plan included policy issue briefs developed by the City of Seattle on the following topics:*

## Community generated data: agency + capturing nuance

Alongside other CBOs, there was a concern as to what the City would do with the potentially sensitive data gathered from community surveys. As a team, we wanted to elevate how data is political, personal, and vulnerable. We firmly believe that **communities participating in data collection engagement strategies, should have agency over the data that they generate and what information is shared with the city.**

*As coordinators of the community engagement work, how would protect each community's data, but also, how do we not perpetuate more harm?*

Second, one of the Youth Leaders, a resident of South Park with years of experience doing community-based work, expressed that surveys simply don't work in their neighborhood. Over recent years, the community has seen so many groups come and go with surveys and no follow through. However well intentioned, these **extractive practices have led to a lack of trust, from the community members towards outside organizations and City officials.**

We also wanted to avoid the rather binary thinking surveys often provide. South Park is a complex neighborhood, and many sentiments, good, bad, and in between, for the neighborhood can exist at once.

Through conversations with Sofie Burgos-Thorsen, an Industrial PhD at Gehl Architects discussing data equity and using storytelling as a way to capture complex data, we decided that the Eye Level City app, an open sourced app made for these very reasons, was the best platform to capture the nuances, and host community generated and analyzed data.

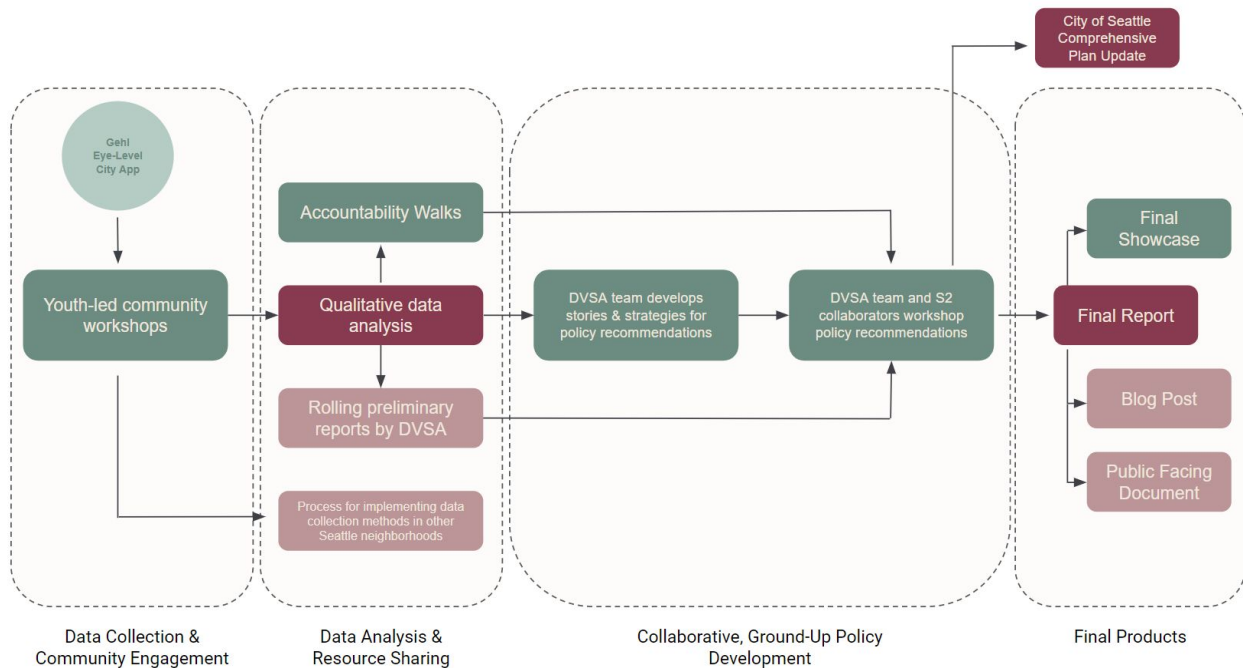
With the app and with guidance from Sofie on how to use the app's data to facilitate community workshops, we were able to decide how to share what information would be shared with the City in an equitable way, and **piece together a narrative that more accurately represents the community of South Park.**

## 1.3 Expanded Scope

### From engagement to policy design

With these values in mind, our scope expanded to include (1) new methods for research & data analysis with the help of the Eye Level City app, (2) resource sharing with organizations doing similar work, and (3) a ground-up policy design framework.

In order to meet our goals of meaningful engagement, with accountability as a core value, we explored possibilities of inserting our engagement work into a longer-term policy-making process. This involved creating opportunities for the Youth Leaders to work more directly with City officials to communicate findings.



*Overall scope of the South Park Youth Vision Project*

# 1.4 Defining Project Values

## Defining values in community engagement

As the scope of the project expanded with the use of the Eye Level City app, it became important to define our engagement values as a team.

These were the five principles that had influenced how the community engagement work had shifted up to this point, and what we hoped to center in our work moving forward: (1) Accountability at the center of the work; (2) Research as celebratory; (3) Seeking leadership from the community; (4) Taking an interdisciplinary approach; and (5) Building community and sharing resources.



*Five values that influenced the community engagement strategy of the South Park Youth Vision Project.*



# Defining Values

in community  
engagement

1

## **Accountability at the center of the work**

The Duwamish Valley has seen its fair share of advocates enter their communities and extract their knowledge with little to no accountability. This project should respect community autonomy, empower local efforts, and result in tangible action that responds to the shared knowledge.

2

## **Research as celebratory**

This project is not about showcasing communal trauma. This project should uplift, preserve and celebrate the community in tandem with bringing to light the pressing issues of South Park.

3

## **Seeking leadership from the community**

South Park residents are the experts and researchers. This project centers 3 youth from the neighborhood to lead community engagement efforts and act as liaisons with policy-makers.

# 4

## Taking an interdisciplinary approach

In addition to our community participants, we center knowledge from a range of disciplines and perspectives to inform our work.

# 5

## Building community & sharing resources

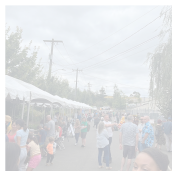
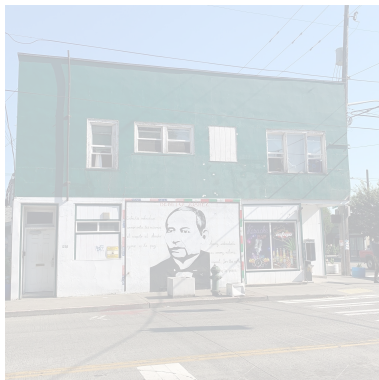
Coalition building has been an essential component of this work, as resource- and knowledge-sharing has largely shaped the direction of our scope.



*Constellation of the stakeholders that have influenced our work.*

# 2

## Methodology



## Process

**2.1** Methodology

**2.2** Data Collection

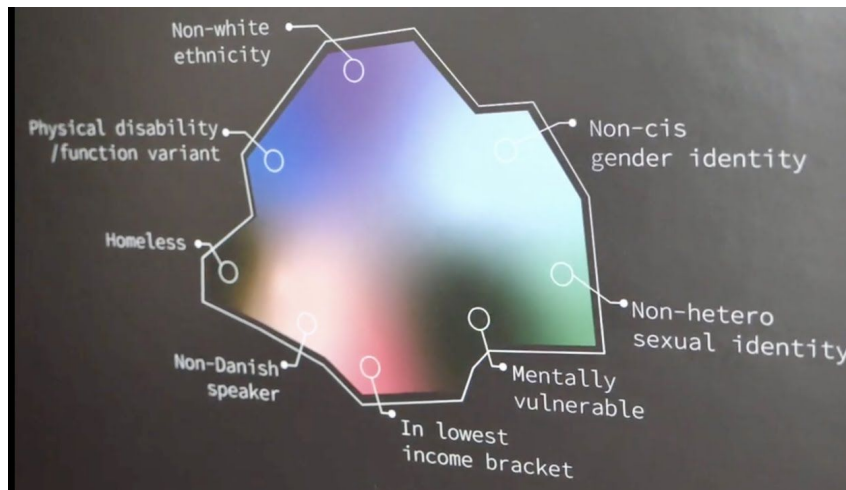
**2.3** Data Analysis

## 2.1 Methodology

### Photovoice as a powerful methodology

Photovoice is a visual research methodology that puts cameras into the participants' hands to help them to document, reflect upon and communicate issues of concern. This method allows the participants to not only generate data, but also invites them to be researchers and analysts in the process.

The Eye Level City app, used in our project, builds on this methodology through the development of a digital tool, that delivers photo “tasks” to participants and collects GIS data tied to their images and walking routes.



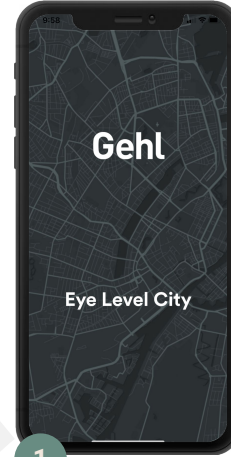
[The Urban Belonging Project](#) that uses the same digital methods to explore place attachment for diverse groups of people in Copenhagen DK, served as a critical source of inspiration for our work.



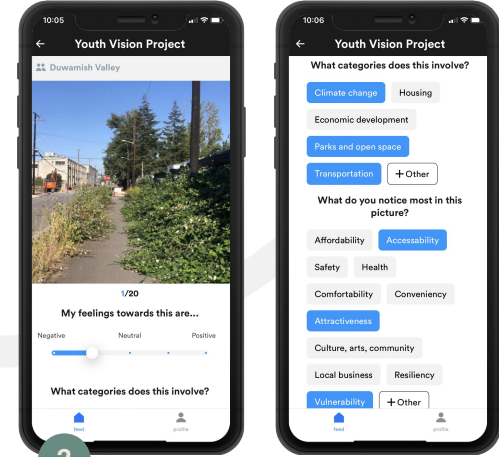
## Eye level city in the Duwamish Valley

Through a collaboration with Gehl Architects, an urban design consulting firm based in Copenhagen, DK, DVSA was granted access to the Eye Level City app, an app-based, photovoice research tool that prompts users to take photos of their daily lives and routes. The app captures both image and GIS data.

The DVSA team, including the Youth Leaders developed a photo prompt, with the intent that users could share what changes they would like to see in their community, whilst still elevating and celebrating the positive aspects of the neighborhood.



Go on a walk in your neighborhood and take photos driven by the prompt.



Annotate photos you take and respond to photos taken by other community members. Annotations respond to the policy issue briefs developed by the City of Seattle: **Climate Change, Economic Development, Housing, Parks & Open Space, Transportation.**

## Show us the Duwamish Valley through your lens and capture what is meaningful to you.

What would you like to *improve*, and what would you like to *preserve* in your community?

## 2.2 Data Collection

### Photovoice for Community Engagement

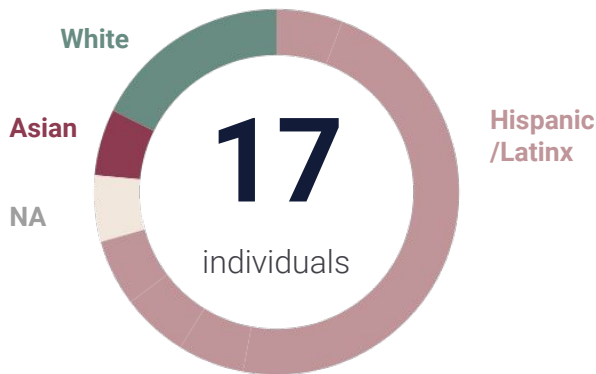
After being trained by Gehl collaborator, Sofie Burgos-Thorsen, the Youth Leaders led two summer workshops to train youth and adult community members living in South Park on how to use the Eye Level City app.

The first workshop was centered around other youth in the community (ages 13-18), and the second invited adult community members. Each of the workshops was tailored with these target groups in mind, so that different engagement strategies could be applied.

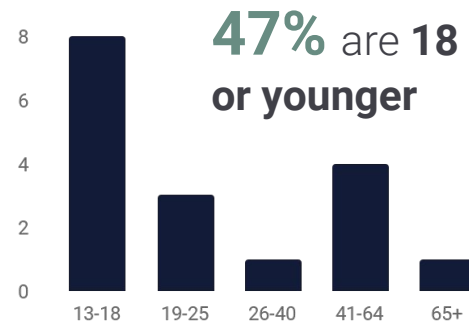


## Summary of participants

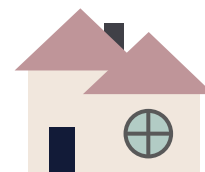
Across two summer workshops, 17 individuals participated in the South Park Youth Vision Project, including Youth Leaders who represent both facilitators and participants. Of those participants 47% are considered youth as individuals who are 18 and younger. The vast majority of participants came from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds with Hispanic/Latinx communities as the most represented. The majority of participants were long-term residents of South Park with 59% having lived in South Park for over 10 years.



**82%** come from **underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds**



**47%** are **18 or younger**



**59%** have lived in South Park for **10+ years**



*Youth Leader, Maria Perez, training other South Park Youth on how to use the Eye Level City app.*

**The youth mentioned how their favorite photos taken that day were the ones that showed the positive aspects of the neighborhood,** rather than simply the negative.

## Youth Workshop

On Saturday, July 16th, the Youth Leaders led their first workshop to train youth living in South Park on how to engage with the Eye Level City app. Seven youth between the ages of 13 and 18 attended, with an average age of 15. The vast majority of them identified themselves as Latinx and residents of South Park for a minimum of 2 years.

Together the youth leaders gave an overview of the app interface, including the walks and annotation tasks. Youth Leaders allowed time for the participants to demo the app functions, before leading a 30-minute walk guided by the Youth Leaders and DVSA staff. The youth were instructed to take a minimum of 10 photos on the work that responded to the photo prompt.

Upon returning to the library, the Youth Leaders led a reaction round session, which the youth participants completed independently, and a group discussion around the experience of the workshop and the project as a whole.

Some of the youth mentioned how their favorite photos taken that day were the ones that showed the positive aspects of the neighborhood, rather than simply the negative. They also noted how the process itself, or the “tasks” helped them notice new things within their own communities that could be improved. One question initiated a conversation on feelings and perceptions of safety throughout the neighborhood.



*Youth Leader, Sebastian Hernandez, training South Park community members on how to use the Eye Level City app.*

The group mentioned an **appreciation for photos that reflected the reality of community development work in South Park**

## Adult Workshop

One week following the youth-centered workshop, the Youth Leaders led their second workshop centered around adult community stakeholders. Workshop participants included seven South Park residents whose ages ranged between 24 and 65 with the average age being 44. One of the seven participants who wasn't able to attend the July 23rd workshop, was trained prior by DVSA staff and was able to complete the photo tasks on their own.

All of the participants in the workshop were long-term residents of the South Park neighborhood for an average of 18 years. Four of the participants self-identified as female, and three as male. Four of the participants had self-identified as Latinx (including those of Ecuadorian, Chilean and Mexican descent). The remaining participants identified themselves as white or caucasian.

Participants included organizers who were involved with the community through their work with the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition (DRCC) and the Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association (DVSA). Also included were educators (at a high-school level), parents, local politicians and an employee of the Port of Seattle.

The workshop took a similar format as the first with a few adaptations. Distinct from the first workshop, the participants were asked to complete their 30-minutes walks independently before returning to the HUB for a group discussion led by the Youth Leaders. Similar to the youth, the group mentioned an appreciation for photos that showed the positive aspects of the community, particularly those that reflected the reality of community development work in South Park.



## Discussion questions

- What is something you would like to see in the future for the Duwamish Valley community?
- Why do you think it's important to tell the story of South Park community from different perspectives?
- What is something you saw during your walk that captured your attention?
- Do you think the Duwamish Valley and Georgetown can improve their safety?
- What's something about the app you think could be improved?

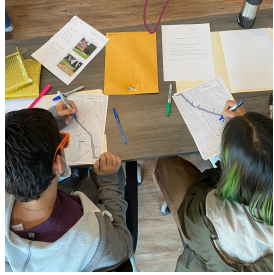
One participant shared their excitement for the project's ability to capture a common vision for a resilient neighborhood and shared it was easier to visualize that in pictures, than in words.

The conversation, often circulated around the threat of gentrification. Another participant, explained how, "many residents of the community do not have an ownership stake, and how those who do own many homes and businesses, do not have a personal stake, because they live outside of the neighborhood. This paradox", he said, "is embedded into the threat of displacement that comes with improving the neighborhood and inviting investment."

Similarly to the youth, the adults were given the task of performing 2 more independent walks on their own time using the Eye Level City app.

Participants were informed that later they would be invited back to a secondary workshop in the fall. At these community workshops, community members were welcome to view their own photos in conversation with the perspectives of other participants and expand on their insights through a series of organized activities and exercises.

"I enjoyed hearing perspectives from other participants and **finding commonalities**"



"I would just think of **future uses of the pictures for community benefit!**"



"I think **people typically understand their world through storytelling.**"

"**I liked talking one-on-one with a neighbor**"

*Feedback from Expanding Insights Workshop. Images of community members completing exercises.*

## Expanding Insights Workshop

In July, the Youth Leaders were trained again by Sofie Burgos-Thorsen on how to prepare workshop exercises that centered the photos captured by the Eye Level City app. Many of the exercises were inspired by those used in the Urban Belonging project which employed a similar methodology. The goal of these exercises was to use the photos to generate conversations and mapping exercises that told a more complete story of the neighborhood.

The beginning of the fall of 2022, was spent preparing materials for a workshop in early October, where the Youth Leaders led a secondary workshop for adult and youth participants together.

For this workshop, guest facilitators, Jackie and Cesar were invited to assist with notetaking and translating. Nine of 14 participants who attended the summer workshops attended, including four youth and five adult community members. Participants who could not attend the workshop were invited to participate in a much smaller secondary workshop held a couple weeks later, facilitated by DVSA staff.

The workshop exercises included storytelling and image captioning, spatial mapping, collaging, and intergenerational discussions between youth and adult participants.

## Exercise 1: Storytelling

The first exercise of the Expanding Insights Workshop, was "Storytelling" where we asked participants to take turns verbally sharing the stories behind the photos they took with another community member. They were asked to select photos that generated positive reactions, as well as some that generated negative reactions. The other participant carefully listened to their partner and captioned the photos from them.

For this exercise adult and youth participants were paired up. Afterwards, the group came together for a larger discussion about common themes and takeaways.


Partner A: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner B: \_\_\_\_\_

EXERCISE 1 | STORYTELLING

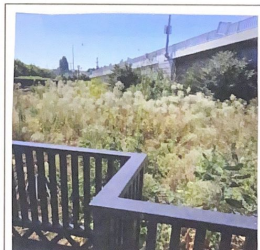
TITLE Plaza de Tristeza

CAPTION  
Sampark Plaza is dirty, there are animals, homeless people, basura.



TITLE Rain Garden

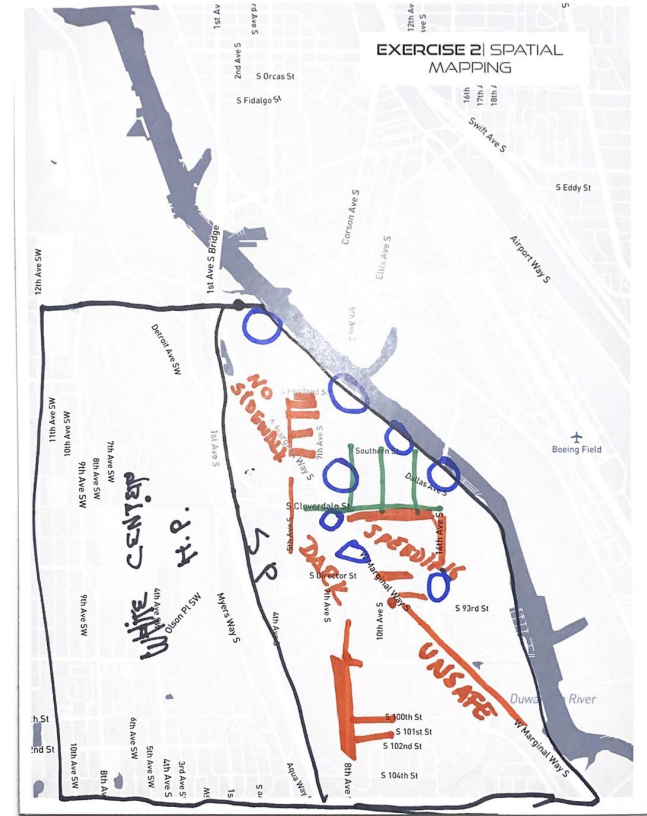
CAPTION  
The rain garden has been forgotten! And there are also homeless people who live there. No maintenance from city.



## Exercise 2: Spatial Mapping

The next exercise the participants were asked to use different colors to annotate maps of South Park. These annotations included

- Their perception of South Park (where does it begin and end, what is included and excluded)
- Areas where they frequent or go regularly
- Areas and routes that generate a positive reaction
- Areas and routes that generate a negative reaction



### Exercise 3: A Collective Vision

In the final exercise of the workshop, together the participants collaged their photos onto a matrix with the prompt:

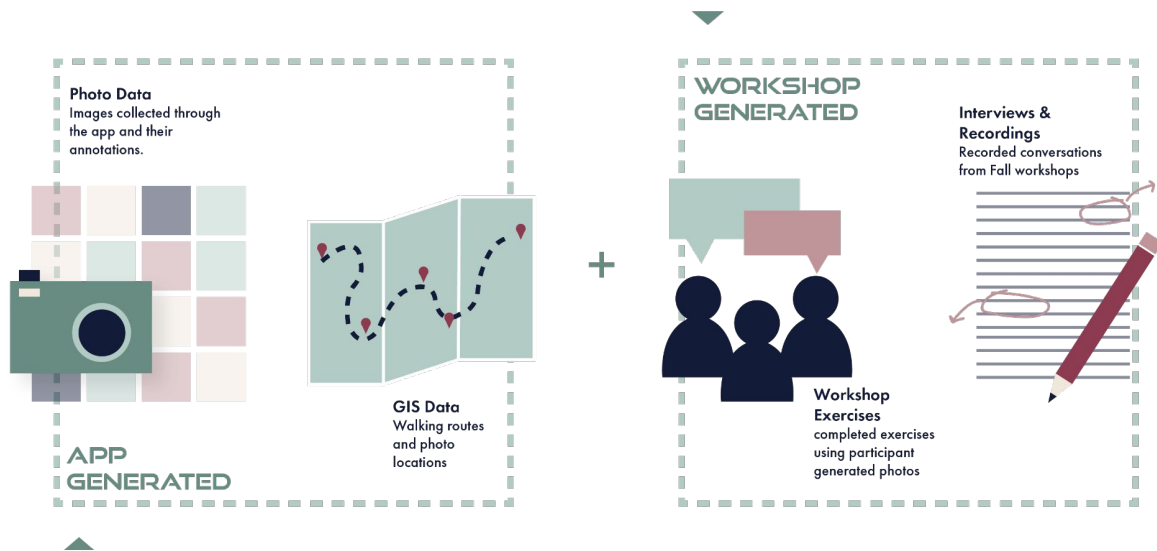
“What is your vision for the future of the Duwamish Valley? What would you like to change and preserve?”

The matrix was divided into 4 quadrants (Positive, Negative, Past and Future). And the participants were asked to caption their placements with sticky notes.



**What is your vision for the future of the Duwamish Valley**  
What would you like to *change* and *preserve*?

## 2.3 Data Analysis



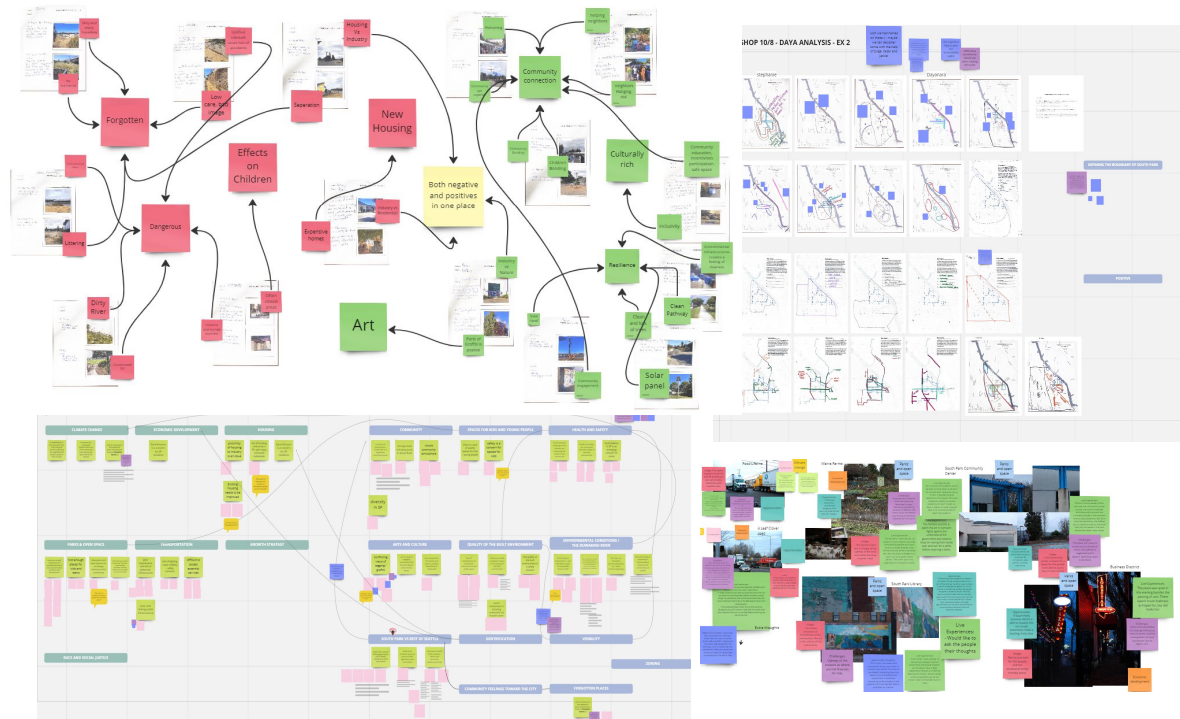
### Interconnected approaches

Data analysis was two-fold; involving an analysis of the image and GIS data collected by the Eye Level City App, and the qualitative insights from the Expanding Insights Workshop in the fall. The workshop exercises were collected and analyzed by the DVSA staff and Youth Leaders.

Recorded interviews and conversations at these workshops also served as a critical tool for data analysis.

*Summary of sources for data analysis.*



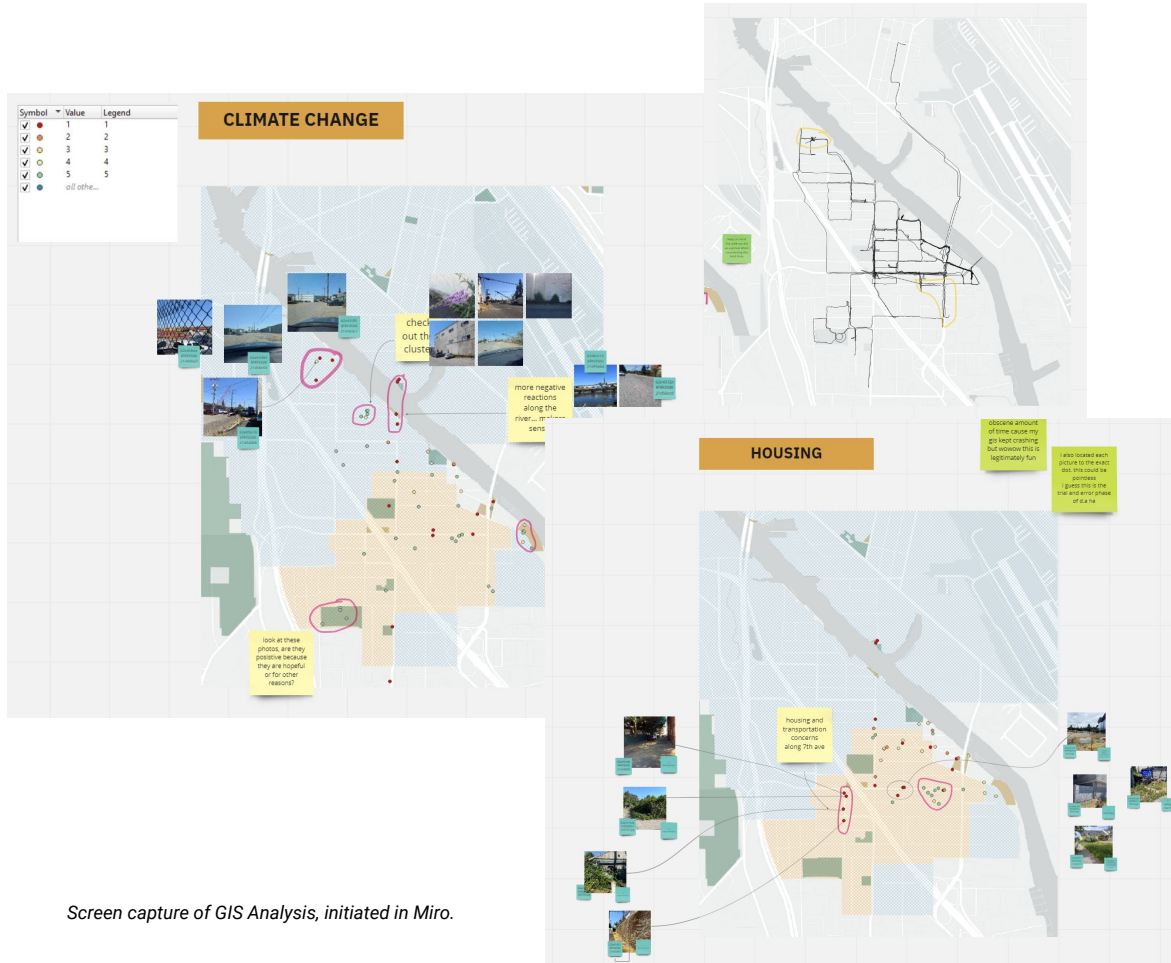


Screen capture of data analysis process from DVSA team and Youth Leaders, initiated in Miro, an online collaborative platform.

## Analyzing the data

**Workshop Data |** Miro was used as a accessible digital tool for organizing and synthesizing the workshop generated data into insights. Both DVSA staff and the Youth Leaders worked in miro to group quotes and discussion points into themes relating to the issue briefs and more. The Youth Leaders were invaluable in the data analysis process as they were able to connect their lived experiences to the collected data for a more holistic analysis.

In terms of methodology of analysis, image captioning was coded, as well as recorded conversations that were first transcribed through Otter.ai. We also drew some conclusions through the similarities and differences across the spatial mapping exercise.



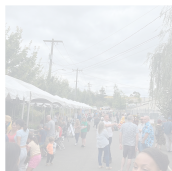
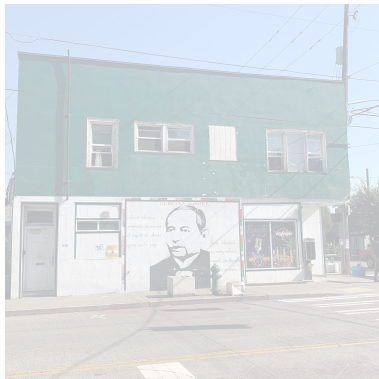
Screen capture of GIS Analysis, initiated in Miro.

**App Data** | The data collected directly from the Eye Level City app included participant generated photographs GIS data of walking routes and image locations. Using QGIS, we analyzed the photos and their locations by annotations and positive & negative reactions. This data was essential for finding challenge and opportunity zones in South Park, as well as organizing a walking tour of South Park for City Officials.



3

## Community Insights

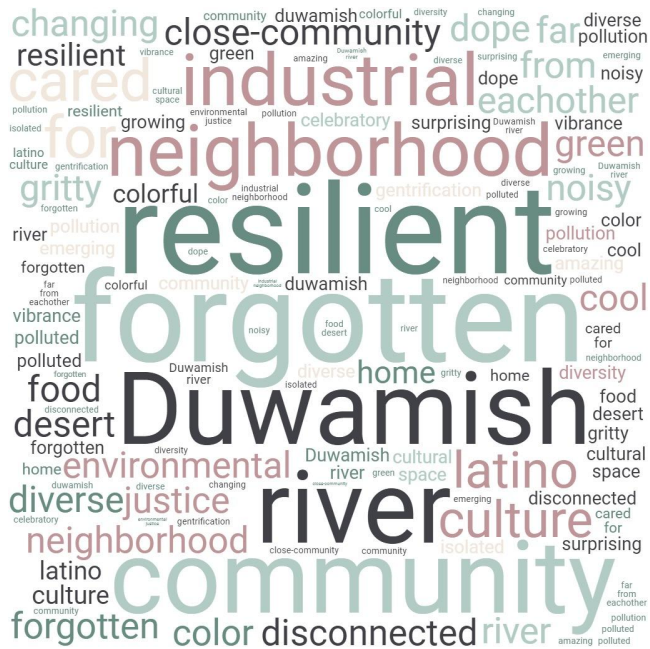


## Community Insights

### 3.1 Key Insights

### 3.2 Issue Brief Insights

### 3.1 Key Insights



What are **5 words that describe** South Park?

## What we heard

Through the data analysis process, four key insights began to emerge representing the most recurring themes and sentiments heard throughout our community engagement process.

These themes generated key questions that helped to inform our policy strategies as we entered the next phase of collaborative, ground-up policy design. Through these insights we were able to further understand the complexities of community members to South Park and how these feelings do not exist in a binary.

# 1

## Feelings of negligence & forgottenness

South Park residents feel forgotten by the city of Seattle, especially when compared to other Seattle communities in the north. This has resulted in distrust in the city to take care of the needs of the community.

*How can we build trust within the community? **How can we prioritize the needs of South Park residents at a larger city-wide scale?***

# 2

## Strong social infrastructure

South Park is a community that cares, and that has cultivated meaningful social infrastructure and support where and when municipal support has lacked.

*How can we uplift and protect the valuable community efforts that have emerged out of necessity? **What role should policy play** in a context where hyperlocal social infrastructure is a significant community asset?*

# 3

## Beyond the issue briefs

The issue briefs fail to illustrate the interconnectedness and diversity of issues and opportunities in South Park.

***How might solutions be multi-scalar and collaborative?** - giving agency to the local community to develop and implement solutions, whilst offering impactful municipal support.*

# 4

## Disconnectedness

South Park residents feel disconnected from the Duwamish River, almost all the participants did not consider the river part of the neighborhood. Also, because of the highway cutting through the neighborhood, there is a disconnect between N. SP and S. SP.

***How can we reconnect the community to their natural surrounding** and with each other?*

## 3.2 Issue Brief Insights

### Back to the Briefs

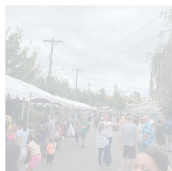
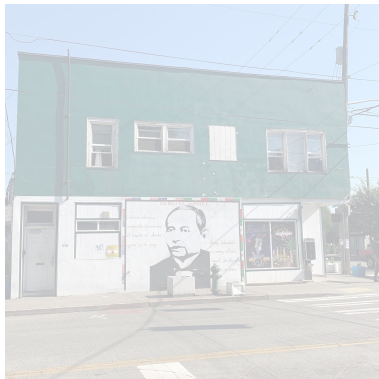
In addition to the key insights, we synthesized our data analysis as it responded to the issue briefs provided by the City, and a couple additional topics that emerged throughout the engagement process. These additional themes included Community Empowerment, and Health and Safety.

See the **Appendix** for a summary of what the community said through their photos and workshop insights regarding the following themes:

1. Climate Change
2. Economic Development
3. Housing
4. Parks & Open Space
5. Transportation
6. Community Empowerment
7. Health and Safety



# 4 Engagement to Policy Design



## Engagement to Policy Design

**4.1** Accountability Walks

**4.2** Policy Workshop

## 4.1 Accountability Walks

### Accountability Walks

As our team prepared to move from engagement to policy design work, we wanted to share the data we collected around the lived experience of South Park with policy makers in a sensitive and authentic way. For this reason, the Accountability Walks were developed.

The Accountability Walks were intended to directly engage policy-makers with the insights gathered through community engagement work. These self-guided walks were a tool for ensuring accountability by the City of Seattle in their decision making processes. These walks were been specifically prepared for the representatives of SDOT and OPCD.



*Jorge (DVSA) meeting with SDOT and OPCD Walk participants to hand out walking tour guides, before they embark on their self-guided walks. Image credit: Jorge Arturo Lara*

For our team, **accountability looks like:**

- Tangible municipal action that directly responds to the requests made by the local community are a results of these walks
- A desire from policy-makers to experience and thoughtfully engage with community insights first-hand
- Community partners are authentically engaged throughout the policy design process (from gathering insights in the community engagement process to drafting policy).

The walks were meant to prelude a policy-making workshop later that month. There, City officials would have the opportunity to reflect on this experience, and work with the Youth Leaders to ideate on where policy change and strategy could be impactful in their community.

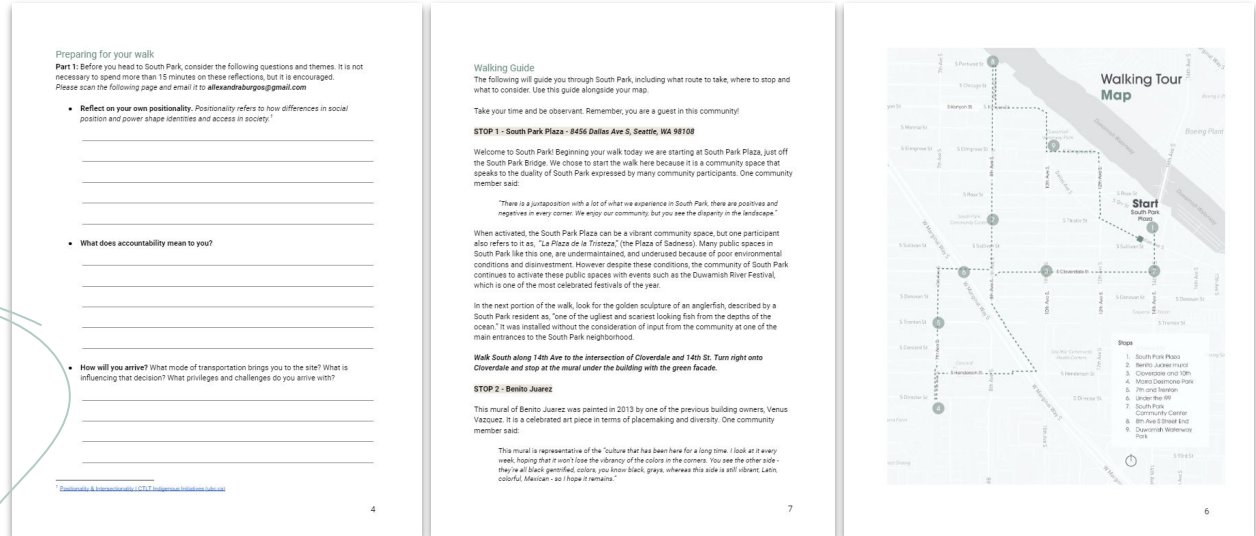


The walk packet included:

1. A pre-walk reflection exercise
2. Walking guide with quotes, and photos from the community members
3. A map of 9 stops along the route

"There was so much thought and intentionality put into that guide, and the resulting walk was **incredibly powerful**. I've visited South Park probably more than any other neighborhood in Seattle, and **yesterday I felt like I was there for the first time.**"

- Aja Hazelhoff



## 4.2 Policy Workshop

### Community driven policy

On January 25th, 2023, the team members of the SP Youth Vision Project and representatives from OPCD and SDOT met at Seattle City Hall to conduct the policy workshop. The intention behind this workshop was to provide an opportunity for Youth Leaders, representing South Park residents, and policy-makers to **strategize where policy can be most impactful**.

The policy workshop was an opportunity for the Youth Leaders to present the data analysis and to center them as leaders in the generation of policy strategies. Additionally, this workshop created an environment where the folks behind decisions would be “visible” to the community members.

While unprecedented, it was crucial to our team that the Youth Leaders, on behalf of their community, challenged power dynamics, and in the name of community autonomy, had a seat at the table and spoke from not only their research, but most importantly their lived experiences.

Not only would we have agency over what data would be shared with the city, but what policies would be generated for the community. We firmly believe that policies should be generated **with** and **by** the community.

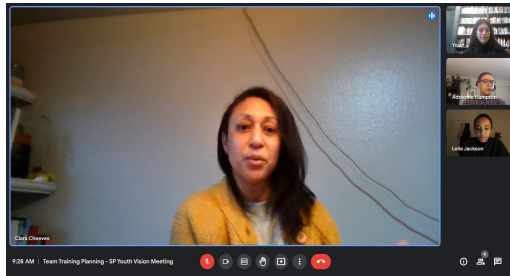
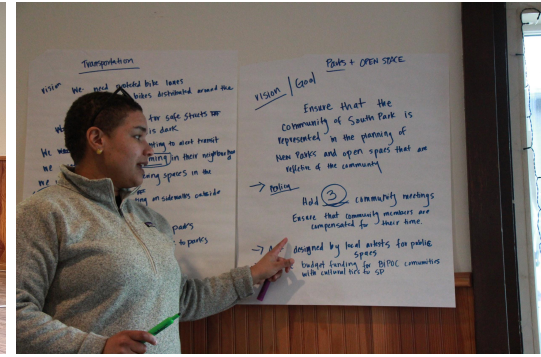
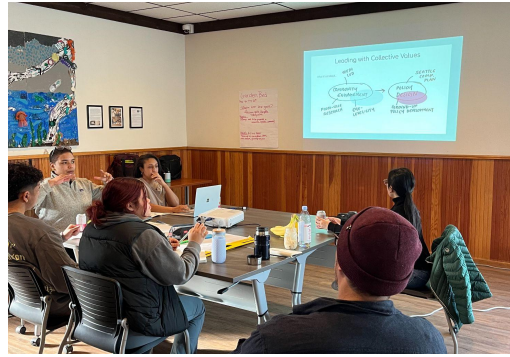


*DVSA staff and Youth Leaders at City Hall for the Policy Workshop in January 2023. Image credit: Alexandra Burgos*

## Policy Consultants

Since no one on the team has worked with policy, we sought out the help of consultants who were experts in the area of policy and equitable community development. They led us through the different plans and had us study the Duwamish Valley Action Plan to better understand existing efforts. They helped to show up to the policy workshop as prepared and as confident as possible.

Through our community, we were SO lucky to be introduced to Adrienne and Clara. Together they trained us, prepared exercises, a guidebook, and facilitated the workshop at City Hall. With their guidance we felt prepared to speak about policy and had an incredibly successful workshop. We have the utmost gratitude to these two.



*Policy consultants, Adrienne Hampton and Clara Cheeves leading policy training workshops for the SP Youth Vision Project in person and remotely.*



## Day of the Policy Workshop

On the day of the workshop, in attendance were the three Youth Leaders, Joanne, Sebastian and Maria, DVSA staff Jorge and Alexandra, and policy consultants, Adrienne and Clara. In addition, there was a nice balance of representatives from OPCD and SDOT.

Overall, we felt that the policy workshop was successful and we left feeling energized and inspired. We started with grounding presentations from both the Youth Leaders about our project, and from Aja and Lizzie about both the Comprehensive and Transportation Plans.. Our policy consultants prepared an agenda for the day, starting with an icebreaker to get us all comfortable in the space. Before participating in the policy generation exercise prepared by Adrienne and Clara, we asked the attendants to do a gallery walk of the poster boards we had prepared.

Printed on the boards were the three exercises from the community engagement workshop (community participants were kept anonymous) as well as the data analysis we did as a team. The boards served as both a storytelling piece as well as a way for the community participants to also be in the room for the policy workshop.

After the gallery walk, we split into three groups with one Youth Leader leading each group of SDOT/OPCD representatives. After the exercise, we all participated in a final group discussion where the youth were able to further vocalize thoughts and opinions, such as emphasizing equitable data collection practices in their community and advocating for accessible language in city plans.



*Photos from the Policy Workshop. Shown above are representatives from OPCD and SDOT on their gallery walk, various conversations between the teams. Image credit: Alexandra Burgos and Joanne Ly.*



## Workshop Attendance:

### OPCD:

- Aja Hazelhoff (Outreach and Engagement Coordinator)
- Brennon Staley (Growth Strategy)
- Nick Welch (Housing)
- Patrice Carroll (Climate & Environment)
- Michael Hubner (Project Lead, Transportation)
- Phillip Carnell (Planning & Equity Data Analyst)

### SDOT:

- Lizzie Moll (Community-based organization manager)
- Jennie Mulenberg (Seattle Transportation Plan Project Coordinator)
- Joanna Valencia (Seattle Transportation Plan co-Project Manager)
- Jenny Sai (Seattle Transportation Plan intern)
- Anna Scarbrough (Seattle Transportation Plan intern)

*Photos from the Policy Workshop. Shown above are representatives from OPCD and SDOT on their gallery walk, various conversations between the teams, and the three youth leaders, Sebastian, Joanne, and Maria. Image credit: Alexandra Burgos and Joanne Ly.*

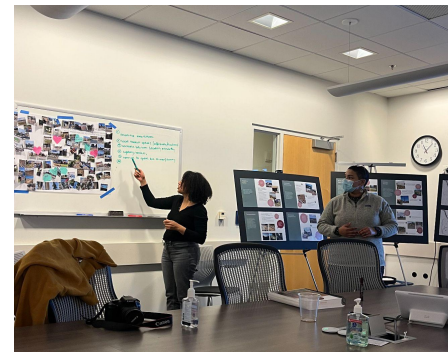
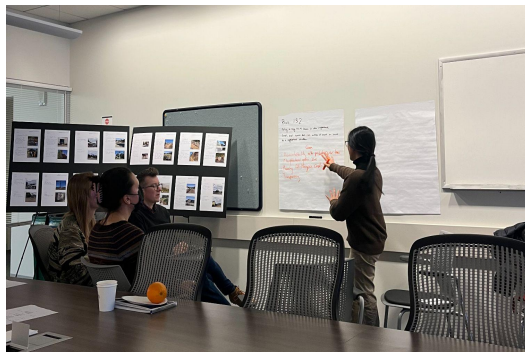
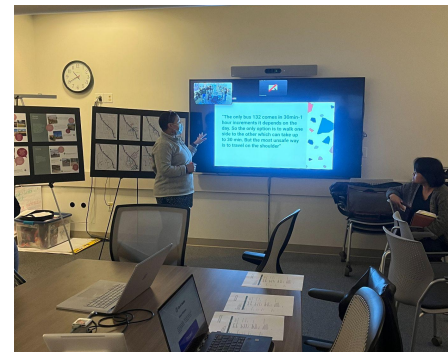


## Policy Generation Exercise

Adrienne and Clara had prepared an excellent exercise that made policy generation accessible to the DVSA team and help conduct productive conversations. With this exercise and everyone's openness, the youth leaders felt confident to facilitate the conversations in their small groups and were comfortable to share their lived experiences and honest feedback for what policies should be in place in their community. From the data analysis, each group was presented with a quote from a community member, and based off the values chosen by DVSA, we formed policies that could respond to the community member's sentiment.

"The only bus 132 comes in 30min-1 hour increments it depends on the day. So the only option is to walk one side to the other which can take up to 30min. But the most unsafe way is to travel on the shoulder"

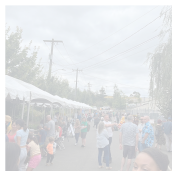
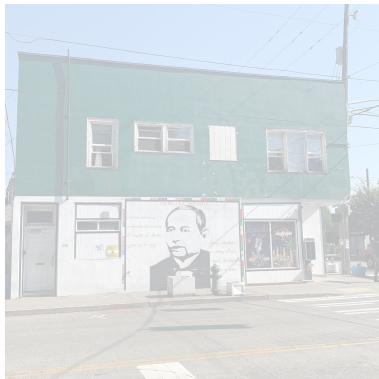
Values	Policy Example 1	Policy Example 2	Policy Example 3
Accountability			
Family and Community			
Feasibility			
Joy			
Leadership			
Interdisciplinary			
Reciprocity			



Photos taken during the policy generation exercise. Image credit: Alexandra Burgos

5

# Policy Recommendations



# Policy Recommendations

## 5.1 Youth Led Policy



# 5.1 Youth Led Policy

## Policy recommendations development

Post policy workshop with City of Seattle officials, the youth continued to workshop policy recommendations to address each of the issues covered in the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Our youth replicated the policy ideation process that they presented during the workshop with the City. From the data analysis, they identified subjects that community members had expressed interest in preserving or changing. and based off the values chosen by DVSA, we formulated recommendations that reflect what the community would like to preserve and what they would like to change. The guidebook developed by our policy consultants was critical for this exercise.



Guidebook developed by policy consultants Adrienne Hampton and Clara Cheeves.

# Vision Statement

***We envision the future of South Park being a safe community full of diversity made possible through affordable housing, safe play areas, accessible transportation, and community empowerment.***

*In our vision,*

- Forgotten areas will be enhanced
- The community will utilize sustainable energy
- There will be improved social and cultural diversity, and housing security

*\*\* We learned from community insights yet we do not speak on behalf of the whole community.*

# Overall Strategy Policy Recommendations

## 1. **Never make a policy or decision without community input**

- We propose that in order to ensure City wide plans represent the needs of the South Park community, that no policy or decision be made without consent from community members. We recommend co-creating a permanent community engagement plan with community members for the neighborhood of South Park.

## 2. **Hire a community member from the South Park community to have this role**

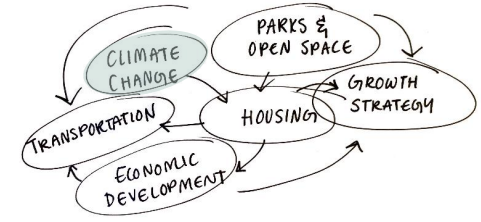
- While it is important to collaborate with community based organizations to be the liaisons for their community, we want to develop a paid role for a South Park community member to continuously be the community representative. Said member will be trained in community engagement, policy making, and administrative work, and will make a living wage.

## 3. **Develop an accountability criteria**

- South Park has continuously seen projects fall through the cracks with lack of accountability from City officials. We require that each Department for the City of Seattle develop an accountability criteria for ongoing efforts in South Park. SP Residents will know who is responsible for what effort and will have clear communication with each City department. This will ensure the residents of SP projects that not only reflect their needs and desires, but also are followed through

# Climate Change Policy Recommendations

1. **Prioritize the development of equitable emergency response measures that address effects of climate change such as sea level rising.**
  - Community members demand that the city develop policy to address the environmental injustices that the South Park neighborhood has experience for a long time. A clear example is the chaotic emergency that occurred on December of 2022.
2. **Implement sustainable infrastructure and energy sources in community spaces.**
  - The implementation of sustainable energy sources like solar panels and green roofs.
3. **Establish policy to reduce the asthma crisis in South Park and to reduce the life expectancy gap.**
  - With the proximity of industry and housing, residents are concerned about the health of their community and the natural environment. The gypsum plant on 8th was mentioned as being perceived as hazardous to the health of the community.



## Climate Change Policy Recommendations

### **4. Develop culturally relevant multigenerational educational opportunities related to climate change for community members.**

- Based on findings from the data analysis, our youth recommend that more information is made accessible to community members from different generations to have a better understanding on the effects of climate change. One of them suggested to create climate change curriculum for elementary schools.

### **5. Develop policy with more stringent codes for pollutant emissions/waste disposal from industry.**

### **6. Create a remediation plan for forgotten spaces.**

- South Park residents referred to many community spaces as “forgotten” in the sense that they were under maintained, and unusable by the community because of health and environmental concerns. These spaces include the Duwamish Waterway Park. Each existing + developed open space in South Park needs to follow the remediation Plan’s criteria to ensure that parks in SP serve the community members, combat toxins in the water, soil, and air, and provide at least one plot of land to grow edible plants.

# Economic Development Policy Recommendations

## 1. Provide funding to support small businesses and organizations. In particular, to those that provide food security to South Park.

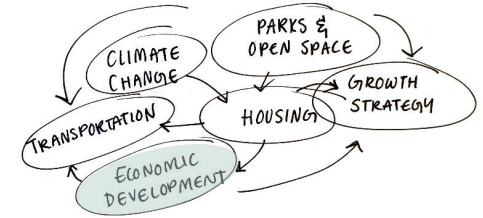
- South Park is considered a food desert since there are no easily accessible grocery stores nearby. Providing funding opportunities to support the current efforts of organizations like Cultivate South Park would be of great benefit to the community.

## 2. Support locally-developed circular economy projects and infrastructure.

- Organizations like DVSA are currently leading efforts of the implementation of a biodigester to transform local business organic waste into clean and renewable energy, and rich fertilizer for urban farming spaces like Marra Farms.

## 3. Provide community spaces dedicated to arts and cultural activities.

- The youth from South Park expressed the need of spaces where community gatherings can be held and art can be created and displayed. They also stressed the need to preserve murals that they have painted as the neighborhood changes.



# Housing Policy Recommendations

## 1. **Prioritize affordable housing funding to prevent displacement of South Park residents.**

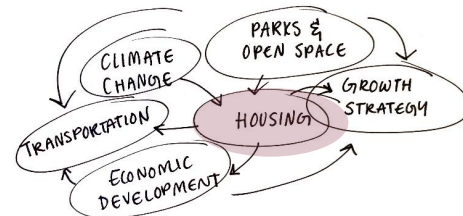
→ South Park organizers and community members shared that affordable housing is a paramount priority. Without affordable housing, they believe that the cycle of gentrification and displacement will be perpetuated.

## 2. **Direct funding for building reuse projects.**

→ Residents shared they wanted to preserve older historic buildings in the community and make them livable again, rather than solely prioritizing new housing developments that drive up costs in the area

## 3. **Create housing and rent support programs in collaboration with community based organizations who are currently lead the advocacy for housing security.**

→ South Park home owners are often prioritized on receiving support, leaving renters behind. Develop funding programs for renters.

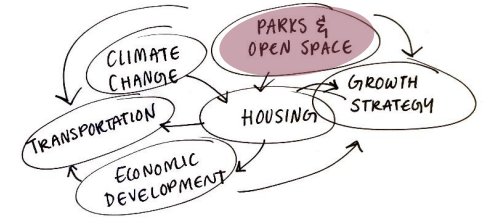


## Housing Policy Recommendations

4. **Develop multigenerational educational opportunities related to housing rights to empower community members.**
  - South Park youth and adults alike, expressed that knowledge related to housing rights is not accessible.



# Parks & Open Spaces Policy Recommendations



1. **Prioritize the completion of current projects to increase access to green spaces.**
  - The restoration of the Duwamish Waterway Park, remodeling of the South Park Community Center, and South Park Plaza are spaces that remain unavailable to community members.
2. **Collaboratively develop a plan for a maintenance schedule that meets community needs and standards.**
  - When parks in South Park are well maintained, the community feels more cared for. Ensure more long-term maintenance of these spaces so they can be enjoyed year round and years to come. Lack of maintenance leads to feelings of being forgotten.
3. **Provide opportunities for community to take ownership of spaces and give land back.**
  - Community members should have agency over their parks and open spaces, and not have to depend on City officials to better their public spaces. With community ownership of land, they can have decide how to utilize spaces and with funding from the city, have the support to maintain them.

## Parks & Open Spaces Policy Recommendations

### 4. **Direct funding for maintenance and upkeep of green infrastructure and ensure community involvement and consent for new projects.**

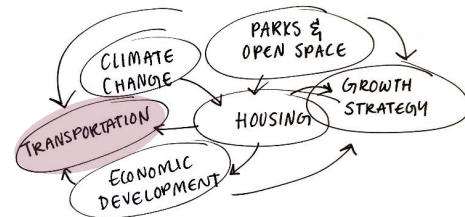
- Residents, youth in particular, expressed frustration due to the lack of maintenance of parks and open spaces. Some residents feel like the City considers South Park to be Seattle's dumping ground and they are concerned about the negative impacts that this have on the youth.

### 5. **Ensure the involvement of the community in decision making ' processes related to preservation and installation of public art.**

- South Park residents expressed discontent with the community engagement efforts or lack thereof related to the installation of angler fish sculpture near the South Park bridge and the lack of maintenance around it.

# Transportation Policy Recommendations

- 1. Prioritize maintenance and explore complementary safety through sustainable measures.**
  - Community members expressed concern for their safety due to the lack of properly lit spaces such as bus stops, and bike trails. Additionally, they shared their frustrations regarding the lack of maintenance of sidewalks and trails. Residents of South Park recommend that bus stops and transportation-related spaces are properly lit through the use of solar panels, and that funding is allocated to support neighborhood green jobs focused on maintenance and worker owned co-ops.
- 2. Pursue locally serving transportation options to compliment mobility gaps within South Park, the Duwamish Valley, and the Greater Seattle Area.**
  - Residents refer as the public transportation services around the neighborhood as inaccessible and perceive the Duwamish River as a barrier. They recommend the implementation of shuttles powered by electricity to connect residents to public transit.



## Transportation Policy Recommendations

### **3. Establish policy to improve public transportation infrastructure to increase connectivity to key locations.**

- Residents of South Park feel disconnected from the rest of the city and its surroundings since there are only two bus routes that pass through the neighborhood (bus routes 60 and 132). For example: the average travel time to SEATAC International Airport from South Park using public transit is approximately 48 minutes versus 10 minutes driving or ridesharing.

### **4. Increase safety measures for pedestrian and bicycle/scooter mobility throughout South Park**

- There are no protected bike lanes in South Park.

## Transportation Policy Recommendations

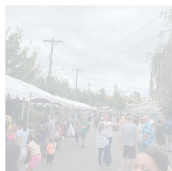
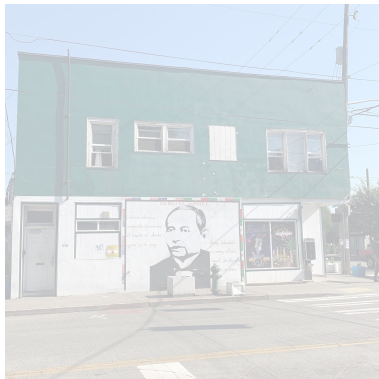
**5. Improve safety across mobility options by adding pedestrian lightning, benches, bus shelters, protected walkways, and real time information for transit.**

- South Park infrastructure is centered around cars. Residents demand changes to create infrastructure centered around public transit.

**6. Create buffers between industrial and residential areas of South Park and provide alternative freight routes outside of residential streets.**

- South Park community members recommend the creation of green infrastructure to buffer the transition between residential and industrial areas and to reimagine the freight routes as they believe that currently these routes pose a safety issue to residents, in particular the youth.

# 6 Lessons and takeaways



## Lessons and Takeaways

**6.1** For the City

**6.2** For DVSA

## Lessons and Takeaways from DVSA

While we didn't invent the wheel with community engagement practices, we did do some unprecedented actions and hopefully pushed the boundaries of what it means to have community input in City plans. For some of us it was our first time working with the City, and/or working with data, and policy, so there were learning curves along the way. Most important to us throughout the entire duration of this project was to let our values drive us, and to have the community at the center of what we do.



*Image credit: Joanne Ly*



## 6.1 For the City

### Working with community-based organizations, a road to Mutual Aid

We want to acknowledge and express gratitude to Aja and Lizzie, who because of their communication, support, and trust, we were given the space to let this project flourish. The openness and willingness of the folks who joined the walk + the policy workshop is a great example of how to show up for a CBO.

That aside, we wanted to share some of the challenges throughout the process and some specific opportunities for how community organizations working with City Officials could benefit greatly.

### Challenges

As a team, we experienced some practical administrative challenges that could be smoother in the future. The paperwork (contracting, invoicing) for both grants (especially SDOT) was tricky and felt overwhelming. This could possibly deter CBOs from working with the City. Challenging paperwork is common in the nonprofit world when applying for funding. We highly recommend a smoother process with less complicated paperwork and invoicing processes.

### Opportunities for Success

Based on our experience working on the SP Youth Vision Project, we identified some strategies that would improve working with community-based organizations in the future.

- Strict contracts is a continuation of elitist practices and problematic philanthropy. Distribute funds to CBOs with **flexible project scopes**
- **Offer administrative training to CBOs** who don't have as much experience with the administrative work it takes to run a project.

- **Offer basic urban planning knowledge to CBOs** that support local municipalities with their valuable insights and connections. Partnering with CBOs should include a basic training for the CBO in community engagement, policy, urban design and other planning processes that are relevant to the partnership.
- If the CBO doesn't have a work space, **provide work spaces**, or resources to acquire one temporarily.
- Provide the CBO with **clear documentation of what department is in charge of what effort in their communities.**
- Continue relationship with CBOs, not just during the project timeline, but **long-term support**
- We understand the policies take time, but we strongly encourage a plan for **immediate action** in the neighborhood of South Park. This could look like monthly funds to CBOs in the community to support their existing efforts
- For us, using the Eye Level City app and learning equitable data practices was an intentional way of moving past extractive methods of gathering data. We advocate to advance these **non-extractive practices and make them inherent to how you work with community's data**

## 6.2 For DVSA

### Practicing Mutual Aid

As a team, there were many lessons and takeaways throughout this process - and many things we would've done differently.

### Missing Voices

- We as DVSA and the City need to work to build and maintain more trust with the neighborhood of Georgetown. Community members were not comfortable participating because of a lack of trust. We were sad to have their input left out of the plan, but respected their decision and will work harder to build that bridge
- We wish we had more time to do extensive community outreach.

We appreciate all 17 members who participated and hope to hear and learn from more community voices in the future

- There are prominent voices missing in this project: folks from the Duwamish Tribe and the Black community. We take full responsibility for this and will work to do better to include these essential voices.

### Key Takeaways

- As a team there are things that we have had to reckon with during this project:
  - 1) When analyzing data and sharing stories to the City, it is complicated to share that there

are concerns for safety from gangs and local violence in SP. We must grapple with the possibility that this will lead to more surveillance, policing, and violence but honor the trust the members have with us to share their lived experiences

**2)** We are aware of the history that urban planning and blatant racist policies have had in perpetuating the oppression of BIPOC communities. South Park is a neighbourhood directly impacted by redlining, so how do we not try to make up for the wrongdoings of City officials but instead work to reclaim, remediate, and heal?

## Celebrating our successes

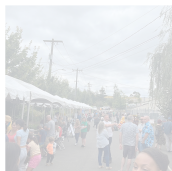
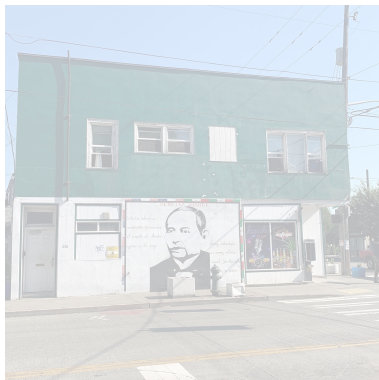
- Our open communication and trust within our team is what was most successful with this project
- Leaving room for our humanity such as mental health, burnout, monetary needs, and other life events is integral in mutual aid work- no one can make an impact running on fumes
- We give ourselves grace with this project as for many of us it was the first of its kind. We hope to take these lessons and apply them to continue elevating the voices of South Park residents to reach full community autonomy
- It was so helpful, necessary, and crucial to hire our various consultants for data gathering/analysis and policy work

- Due to its success, we think the Policy Workshop should have been longer or a series of workshops to continue the conversations

## Moving forward

- It is our goal to create an open sourced platform to host community members' data so that we are not the owners of it and they have full agency of their stories

# Appendix



# Appendix

## i. Data Synthesis

## Data Synthesis

In addition to the key insights, we synthesized our data analysis as it responded to the issue briefs provided by the City, and a couple additional topics that emerged throughout the engagement process. These additional themes included Community Empowerment, and Health and Safety.

See the following for a summary of what the community said through their photos and workshop insights regarding the following themes:

1. Climate Change
2. Economic Development
3. Housing
4. Parks & Open Space
5. Transportation
6. Community Empowerment
7. Health and Safety



# Climate Change

South Park residents are actively experiencing the direct effects of climate change, tied to a history of injustice leading to poor environmental conditions and a negligence from the city to take action. However the community is actively fighting towards sustainable futures.



1

The **contamination of the Duwamish River** is affecting the neighborhood's health, quality of life, and housing.

"...to know that in my river, there is a full office chair while in some other rivers it's like clear, as it can be."

The lack of maintenance and upkeep for green infrastructure projects is resulting in "**forgotten spaces**". This makes it so that the community is not able to enjoy existing green space including parks and the Duwamish River because of poor environmental conditions.

"South Park has been forgotten by the city, we would never see that in the north end"

"The rain garden has been forgotten!"



2

The community is interested in and has been a part of **sustainable futures** within South Park.



3



# Economic Development

South Park finds itself at an interesting crossroads of disinvestment and concerns for rapid development from outsiders that will potentially displace residents and change the vibrant and diverse culture of the neighborhood. Residents wish to protect existing local businesses.

"this side is still vibrant, Latin, colorful, Mexican - so I hope it remains."



1

**Gentrification** is a major concern for South Park residents

"It's one of my biggest worries - that **South Park becomes a victim of our success...** all we're doing is making this space valuable to investors."

"An example of what I'm most afraid of, is the Central District. [...] **There's no model for us to follow to prevent that from happening**"



2

**Social and cultural diversity, and housing security** for current South Park residents should be a priority in economic development.

# Housing

Safe and secure housing that takes into account the health of the community and the proximity to industry is needed in South Park. The threats of gentrification and climate change make housing for current residents of South Park as an even more vulnerable concern.



1

"Two different settings come down to the same road. House on the left, industry on the right"

**Proximity of housing to industry** is an issue, because it is affecting the health of the community

"Have you noticed that like, our only two options are drug houses or houses we can't afford?"

"We want to preserve older, historic homes but not dangerous ones!"



3

Existing housing needs to be **salvaged and improved**.

More **affordable housing is needed**, and housing insecurity is a very visible concern in SP.

2



# Parks & Open Space

South Park lacks parks and open spaces especially compared to other neighborhoods in Seattle. There is a desire for more safe, healthy, and green open spaces. The existing green spaces that are reflective of the community are highly celebrated but are often under maintained by the city.



1

Parks are not well maintained and **unusable because of poor environmental conditions** and disinvestment

"The park is still closed because of the contamination in the soil"

"Wouldn't be closed in other areas."

"There's also a little kiddie pool that's supposed to be turned on. And I've never seen it turned on ever."

2

There is a **lack of safe and quality spaces for kids and young people**



3

New parks open spaces are **not always reflective of the community**

"I hate modern parks, the design is weird"

# Parks & Open Space

South Park lacks parks and open spaces especially compared to other neighborhoods in Seattle. There is a desire for more safe, healthy, and green open spaces. The existing green spaces that are reflective of the community are highly celebrated but are often under maintained by the city.

Parks and open spaces are **serving multiple purposes including settlements** for people who are unhoused.

"one of the **few green spaces** that is **open, safe, clean** and maintained in South Park"

"That's like one of the places where I feel **normal**, and **valued**, and **equal** and, **cared for**, and **proud**."

5



6

Existing parks like **Marra Farms** are **celebrated for offering engaging, learning experiences for the community**. These spaces need financial support to continue serving the community





# Transportation

The residents of South Park have expressed that when it comes to transportation in their neighborhood they often experience it to be inaccessible, inconvenient, and unsafe for pedestrians, cyclist and public transit users.



1

There is **poor maintenance** and **lack of pedestrian infrastructure**

"We need visibility year round for safer and more comfortable transportation and accessible routes."



2

Lack of lighting and **poor visibility** is a major safety concern

"no sidewalks to access food lifeline and adolescence clinic"



3

Nicknamed the "scary trail"

It is **difficult to access essential services**

# Transportation

The residents of South Park have expressed that when it comes to transportation in their neighborhood they often experience it to be inaccessible, inconvenient, and unsafe for pedestrians, cyclist and public transit users.



4

There is **poor and lacking cyclist infrastructure**.

"The only bus (132) comes in 30 min-1 hour increments, it depends on the day. So the only option is to walk one side to the other which can take up to 30 min. But the **most unsafe way is to travel on the shoulder**"

There is **poor public transportation** getting to and from South Park as well as within SP. This makes it challenging for folks who do not have a car.

5



# Community Empowerment

South Park is a community that cares, and that has cultivated meaningful social infrastructure and support where and when municipal support has lacked.

**Belonging** in South Park is **tied to the diversity** of the community. Participants consider their neighborhood to be “culturally rich” and this can be seen by the art around the neighborhood and community events.



“Why is South Park Seattle’s Landfill?”

South Park residents feel **forgotten** by the city of Seattle and feel that **their lives have come second to industry priorities**.

There was a **conflicting view on graffiti/ tagging** from the participants. Some folks found it to be a sign of lack of safe space, and others thought some of the art had a “positive theme”

# Community Empowerment

South Park is a community that cares, and that has cultivated meaningful social infrastructure and support where and when municipal support has lacked.



4

**Strong social infrastructure** and a culture of mutual aid is a significant community asset

"Community solves crime, not cops. The problem isn't that we don't have police, the problem is that we don't have investment, we don't have green space. **The problem is that we're not cared for...The solution is to send money and invite community into that space**"

"... community voice is important. As a **community getting together, we can make things happen...** We can turn something bad into something good and healthy if we push enough"





# Health & Safety

Health and safety was a major concern for South Park residents. Not only are there health concerns relating to industry and pollution, but also food access, safe walking routes and emerging local violence.

"Las veredas se vuelven inseguras para usar pudiendo causar muchos accidentes"

2

Health and safety are connected with the **quality of the built environment**

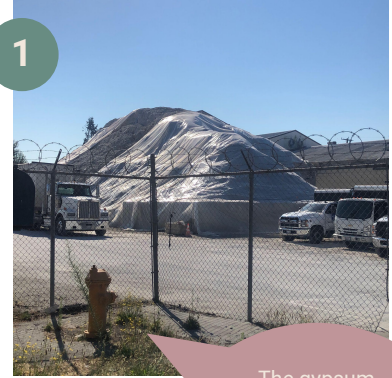


4

**Local violence** in SP is an emerging concern for some

1

Environmental challenges from **industry** are **impacting the physical and mental health of the community**



The gypsum recycling plant on 8th is, "supposed to be covered... It's literally next to the river and there isn't anybody with the power to make sure that they keep working cleanly."

Thank you to the folks at OPCD and SDOT, specifically Aja and Lizzie, for your trust in us. It has been such a pleasure working with you, and we look forward for what's to come.

**SOUTH PARK  
YOUTH VISION  
P R O J E C T**