

Estelita's
LIBRARY

Justice Focused Community
Bookstore & Library

IMPACT
REPORT
2022

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INTRODUCTION

The founders of Estelita's Library, Edwin & Estell, have had an intimate understanding of displacement. Having grown up in the Bay Area, Estell in Oakland and Edwin in the heart of the Mission District in San Francisco, CA. They witnessed the devastating effects of hyper-gentrification. What we know and witnessed of gentrification is that it not only displaces families from their homes, but it actually focuses on the cultural spaces as the first places to go. Gentrification has worked, time and time again throughout the world, to remove the cultural centers so that it is easier to evict families. It's made easier by removing the communities and culture created by these cultural institutions. If those institutions are not there, communities and families begin to ask themselves if this place is still the best place for them. The answer inevitably leads to "no", because everything they know about it has been decimated. The data tells us that there is a real phenomenon of displacement that takes a physical and psychological toll -- both emotionally and spiritually. It's called 'Root Shock'. When a community and neighborhood you grew up in has changed so dramatically that it becomes unrecognizable, it harms the psyche and body. It is when we are in a beloved community that we are the healthiest: we have neighbors and culture that care and take care of us, and resources like Estelita's that embrace us when we need it. But once you are removed from that space or that space is removed from you, research shows that your health deteriorates because you lost that community. We are here to fight back against this devastating harm.

SEATTLE URBAN LEAGUE

BLACK WELLNESS: TEENS

DISCUSSION

Mental health care was identified as a continuing and top priority for community health improvement by all community discussion groups including concerns for insufficient local capacity, particularly for higher levels of care, and increased need resulting from anxiety, stress and isolation impacts of COVID-19.

They discussed reasons why that it is hard to be a teen in Seattle:

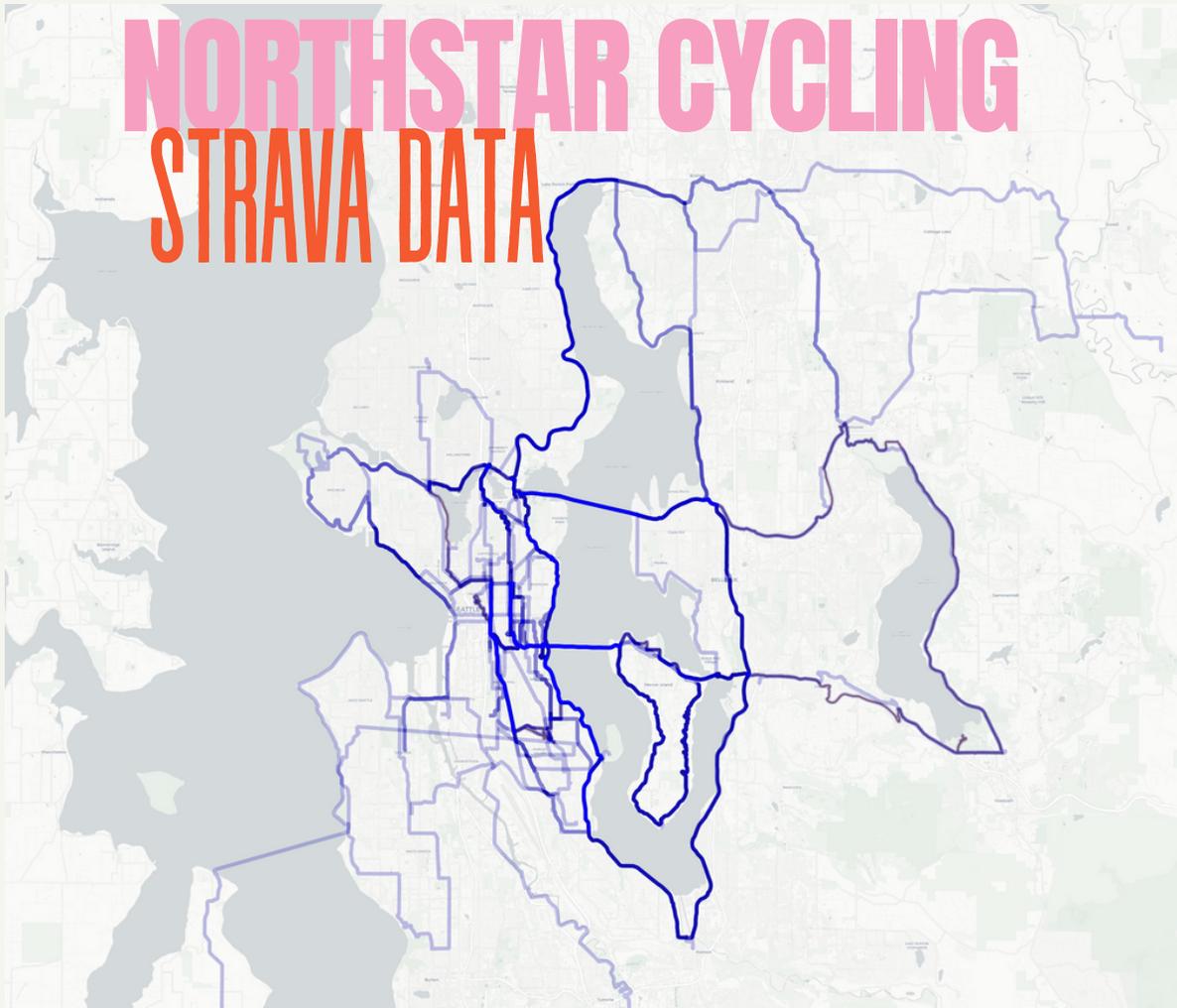
- "There are not enough spaces for me to escape to in a healthy way"
- "Getting around the city to see friends is hard, especially if they do not live along the Link (LightRail). I end up just staying at home in my room"
- "I feel like the City does not care about the brown kids in the community and do not want to help us out"
- "There is never anything that is my age to do in my community, it is always in the city so it is too far for my family"
- "Life costs too much and it is hard to see yourself in higher spaces"

Growing up can be hard on a young person of any generation, but today's kids and teens are facing an ever-evolving pandemic, racial inequality, social pressures online and systemic inequities that create barriers to success.

"It took a long time for me to figure out that when I'm not feeling okay, it's okay to go and talk to other people – and now I have fun with it. "

16 OUT OF 20
TEENS FEEL THAT THEIR
VOICES
ARE NOT HEARD
BY THE CITY

We asked our community to select and upload 3 bike routes that can highlight various topics: favorite route, safest route, least safe route, where they wish there was a route etc. This heat map of the selected routes showcase where, why, and how NorthStar uses existing spaces so we can better advocate for our spaces while cycling and being in community with one another.



98144

Where the majority of our riders reside

100%

BIPOC representation

33

Avg Age

It is imperative that Seattle Transportation Plan use this information to guide where and how the city grows over the next 20 years and where investments in the community to meet current and future needs. Questions that were asked are below with some responses on the following page:

- In your mind, what is the most important issue regarding housing & community Development and/or Transportation? What do you believe is the greatest inequities around these issues that must be addressed?
- What are your favorite and least favorite routes?
- Where would you want routes to be located?
- What makes you feel safe while biking in the Seattle area?
- Please share what bike infrastructure you'd recommend to the city to focus on?
- If not already, what would have to happen for you to become a bike commuter?
- How do you believe Gentrification affects your Transportation experience?

NORTHSTAR CYCLING RESPONSES

"Lake Washington BLVD is mostly closed to cars and allows for walking and cycling with relative protection. A road like this along the water should be for the commons and leisure not for cars."

"Housing is incredibly inaccessible here, it's too expensive. Transportation is also pretty expensive, be it the bus fare, or the items necessary to take alternative transportation like biking. Wealth and access inequities need to be addressed."

"Interlaken is great as it is scenic within nature and there are surprisingly few cars on the road. It would be a great road to protect for cyclists, runners, and walkers similar to lake Washington blvd and only allowing local vehicles through."

"The Stay Healthy Streets have been mildly effective, but most drivers disregard the "road closed" signs, so it defeats the purpose. "

"The Burke-Gilman Trail is great, I would love to see more heavily used trails like this in other parts of the city. However the last stretch of it going west to Ballard feels really dangerous biking on Shilshole Ave NW where there are parked cars facing you on one side and on the other traffic going 40+ mph. At any moment one of those parked cars could drive forward, hitting and sending you out into the 40+ mph road. It is wild to me that the city still neglects this stretch of the Burke-Gilman and has done nothing to improve it in the past 10 years despite it being the most heavily used bike-ped trail in the city."

"There is so little movement in the northern part of seattle because of safety for black and brown folks"

"There's a need to make it more accessible and safer for black and brown people to get to those areas via public transportation routes from se and south seattle which are still inaccessible everywhere below downtown."

"I feel safest when riding on dedicated bike paths, like the Burke-Gilman, because there are no cars. If I am riding in a bike lane on the road alongside cars, I feel safest when the road is paved well. If it's not, then I feel like I have to make extra maneuvers to make sure I'm avoiding potholes and whatnot, which makes me feel unsafe when riding next to cars. I also feel unsafe when riding alone and in wealthy areas, just the vibe makes me feel unwelcome. That's why it's nice to ride with other people when training"

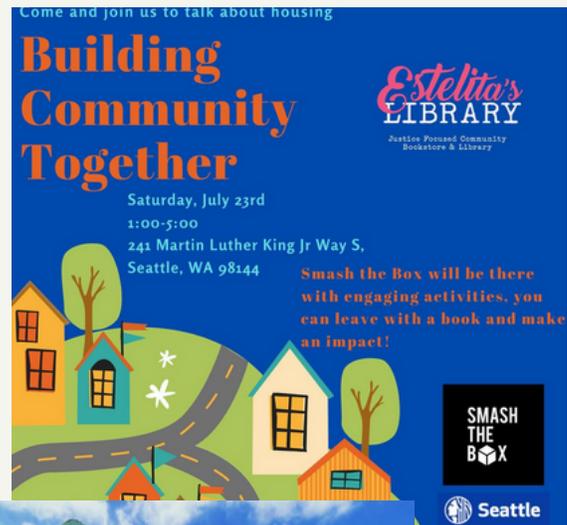
"Perhaps subsidies for electric bikes for commuters would be helpful. "

"A safe and quick way to travel from White Center, through South Park and Georgetown, to Beacon Hill and other parts of South Seattle. Overpass pedestrian crossings like the near Mount Baker Station would be useful at several other points along Rainier Ave as well. The Rainier Valley Greenway is confusing unless you've done it plenty of times, and it crosses Rainier Ave a few times. "

BUILDING COMMUNITY TOGETHER:

SMASH THE BOX

Smash the Box is a multidisciplinary community driven Urban Planning & Design Firm based out of Seattle, WA. We cohosted conversations on how we can build an equitable community. Sharing stories that matter in shaping an affordable and accessible Seattle.



Gentrification: How does it affect you?

"Seattle's housing crisis is on full display with the number of persons who are displaced due to lack of resources. We are seeing a rise in violence that should have been curbed during the early stages of the pandemic. When offering housing, it is vital to the help those in desperate need through counsel, rehabilitation services, and a stipend.

Create hoops to jump through or setting restrictions will lead to the problem overflowing onto the streets which is what we are seeing in Seattle today."

"Housing and Education is a human right and without them you're unable to establish a life. The main barrier is the lack of access to the resources available all and until policies change equity/equality is just a buzz word."

"The housing crisis in Seattle causes a hindrance to many in regards to transportation. Being pushed out forces people to commute for longer - wasting precious time in traffic. Creating affordable housing doesn't mean building apartment buildings where residents will be packed together. Expanding upon the established infrastructure by limiting home prices in various neighborhoods and not just in particular ones is necessary."

JUNETEENTH BOOK SWAP

"I believe housing, convenient transportation, and communal spaces are universal rights that should be guaranteed by our government rather than left to private developers or public-private partnerships to create."



DISCUSSION

We celebrated liberation with community and discussed what equity looks like when working with communities.

These were the themes:

- Housing Access
- Good Public Transportation
- Shared Public Spaces
- Environmental Impact
- Social Housing
- Stop Sweeps
- Affordability (housing/food/transportation)
- Youth Spaces
- Income Disparities
- Shared Resources
- Career Opportunities
- Cheaper Childcare
- More BIPOC Spaces/Representation



THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM SHOWING YOUTH



We had an wonderful time seeing *The Watsons Go To Birmingham* at the Seattle Children's Theater. We were able to ask the youth how they felt about Seattle when it comes to equity.

- "Children shouldn't experience homelessness"
- "Walking to school should be easy and not a long bus ride"
- "I like to be close to the train but we have to drive in a car"
- "I wish I lived close to my school and a park, there is nothing by my apartment"
- "I wish my mom could afford to live in a house"
- "We hear planes all day/night over my place(home/school)"
- "Why do all the brown people live way out of the city?"
- "It is not safe for me to use my bike in the street"
- "I do not get to see my friends often because they live far away and I don't drive"
- "Things are too expensive to do"
- "When it gets dark outside it gets scary in my neighborhoods"
- "I wish people would care about the climate"
- "I love going to the library and to see plays"

BOOKS AND BOOSTERS

ODESSA BROWN VACCINES

TOP 3 TOPICS DISCUSSED

1 Affordability Housing

Affordability and availability of housing was a common denominator across discussion groups addressing concerns of aging, mental health and substance use recovery, jobs and economy.

2 Livable Wages

The number of people seeking unemployment benefits increased rapidly. The largest number of employees filing unemployment claims included accommodation and food services, manufacturing, retail, construction, and healthcare and social assistance, which predominantly held by BIPOC folks

3 Access to Healthcare/Child Care

Community discussion participants identified health care costs and financial barriers to care as significant and ongoing concerns. It was also the most frequently mentioned topic area in an open-ended question about 'one thing you would change to improve health

Seattle Children's Odessa Brown Children's Clinic (OBCC) provides medical, dental, behavioral health and nutrition services for babies, children and teens — regardless of a family's ability to pay. They are a medical home for our families and so much more. They provide coordinated, whole-person care that addresses root causes of illness — social, economic and environmental. Our team reflects the communities we serve and advocates for their well-being.



TOP

RECOMMENDATIONS

More FREE community spaces for folks to use for organizing and holding programming for the community

Make housing costs flexible and based on residents incomes, rather than being based on a flat market rate that has risen quicker than minimum wage for the past few decades; make it so residents are not required to pay more than 20% (an example percentage) of their monthly income toward rent; make it so market rates are not a standard across all income levels, make it so market value adjusts to residents incomes, so if someone can afford a significant amount with 20% of their income, then they must pay at least the (present day) market value, of you know "\$,2000 for 1,000 sq. ft." ...,

More health spaces in the community to get immediate attention when needed

Cheaper and safer ways to get around Seattle

More pocket park spaces like our partners Common Acre

Protect youth participants, their suggestions, as well as many others, show up in the policy recommendations

The City should be more transparent about the things they "say" they do for community and how accountability measures in place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Estelita's Library

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<https://estelitaslibrary.org/>

*Thank you to our community:
which includes family, friends,
and those we have yet to meet!*

WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN
OUR PROGRAMS