

# **Accelerating a Just Transition in Washington State:**

## **Climate Justice Strategies from the Frontlines**



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## About Front and Centered

Front and Centered is a statewide coalition of organizations and groups rooted in communities of color working for climate justice and a Just Transition. We were formed in 2015 out of a desire by leading racial justice organizations in Washington state to organize and ensure state climate policy was effective and equitable for communities on the frontlines. We see climate as fundamentally an issue of equity.

Front and Centered envisions a future where our communities and the earth are healed and thriving, our people have dignified work and the building blocks of opportunity and prosperity, and our government values, respects, and represents us. We are working for sovereignty, resilience, and self-sufficiency for our communities so that future generations can thrive. We strive to make racial inequities on all issues a thing of the past, and to ensure that people of color and Indigenous people are at the forefront of building equitable, democratic systems and policies that work for their communities.

To realize our vision, we must understand and address the world in all its complexity. Global environmental threats like climate change and local environmental threats like air pollution are woven into our societies, closely linked with other social and economic challenges, and cannot be addressed by drawing boundaries and treating only the symptoms. Ultimately, it's a combination of the wind, the water current, the rudder that steers a sailboat; by deeply understanding broadly the forces at work we can better shift direction toward our vision.

## Acknowledgements

Front and Centered's Steering Committee and the many organizations and individuals that have participated in Front and Centered's listening sessions are responsible for the ideas brought forward in this September 2020 report.



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# Accelerating a Just Transition in Washington State: Climate Justice Strategies from the Frontlines

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate impacts hit us wherever we live, work, and play in Washington state. From our cities, towns, and neighborhoods to our forests, farmlands, and waterways, every community is at risk. Climate pollution threatens our health and the health of future generations—but the impacts are not distributed evenly. Who is at risk is a factor of both 1) who is most exposed, and 2) who has the ability to respond; communities of color, Indigenous peoples, and communities with lower wealth and incomes tend to face the greatest climate risks—we're on the frontlines of the environmental threats and have greater existing social, economic, and health issues we're facing. Addressing climate change requires confronting this reality while creating a wholesale transition of our energy, transportation, land use systems, and beyond.



Figure 1: Risk Framework from our Unfair Share Report, illustrating that who is impacted is both a factor of who is exposed and who is most vulnerable.

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH THE LENS OF CLIMATE INJUSTICE

The measure of health impacts and available remedies during the COVID-19 pandemic follow a similar pattern to climate and environmental injustices. How you're impacted is a factor of both 1) if you're exposed, whether to the virus or the economic fallout, and 2) pre-existing vulnerabilities like healthcare access, existing health conditions, race and language discrimination, and lack of employment or savings. These vulnerabilities disproportionately impact Indigenous communities and people of color and are the result of historic and persistent institutional racism and systemic inequity.

These systems are not sustainable nor just. Whether it's COVID-19 and our response that proves to be the tipping point, compounding climate disasters, an economic crisis, or some combination of events, business as usual cannot last. Together we have an opportunity to decide whether we proceed through this crisis by disaster, or by design. This transition is inevitable, we must make sure it is just.

# Accelerating a Just Transition in Washington State: Climate Justice Strategies from the Frontlines

## WASHINGTON'S OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD

Washington state has long been an incubator for forward-looking climate solutions. We see it as an important proving ground for climate justice. Climate change is a global phenomenon that does not recognize political boundaries, both in effect and in cause, but it hits close to home and is linked to the most pressing problems in our communities, such as health, the cost of living, and jobs. Understanding the scale and nature of our state's responsibility to reduce emissions includes recognizing that thresholds exist which we cannot accept transgressing and a budget that we must meet. It is integral to climate justice that the budget not only account for our current greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, but also our historic contributions and the impacts of co-pollutants. We must differentiate not only between energy sectors, but between different communities and their role and ability to transition.

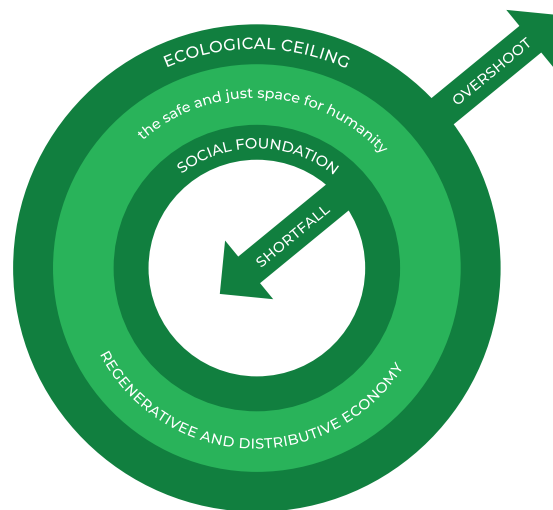


Figure 2: Kate Raworth's doughnut diagram showing sweet spot between failing to provide social foundation and exceeding ecological limits.

## VISION FOR CLIMATE ACTION FROM THE FRONTLINES

The scale of the challenge is massive, yet in it we see—and choose to focus on—the opportunity. An equity-focused approach to solving the climate crisis can dismantle institutionalized systems of oppression and replace them with regenerative models that serve everyone. This report is intended to guide Front and Centered, our member organizations, and our allies as we consider where to focus our work.

### Front and Centered's Principles of Climate Justice

- ✓ Racial and economic analysis should drive decisions.
- ✓ Follow the leadership, knowledge and expertise of communities disproportionately impacted.
- ✓ Use targeted strategies to create net environmental and economic outcomes for communities of color and Indigenous people.
- ✓ Advance Just Transition toward regenerative economies.



## OUR APPROACH

Front and Centered's approach to policy begins with discussions with people most impacted by the issues through grassroots organizations rooted in communities of color doing direct listening and organizing. It builds from the Front and Centered Principles for Climate Justice established originally in fall of 2014. These principles define the coalition's collective approach to equity and guide our practice. We focus on policy that improves the well-being of everyone by identifying and targeting support to the communities facing the greatest risk. Policy that ensures those most responsible for pollution, are most accountable for the transition. We see a strive for action on all fronts on the solutions we really need. We are not content with what is politically feasible today if it is not effective and just.

## A STRATEGY FRAMEWORK FOR JUST TRANSITION

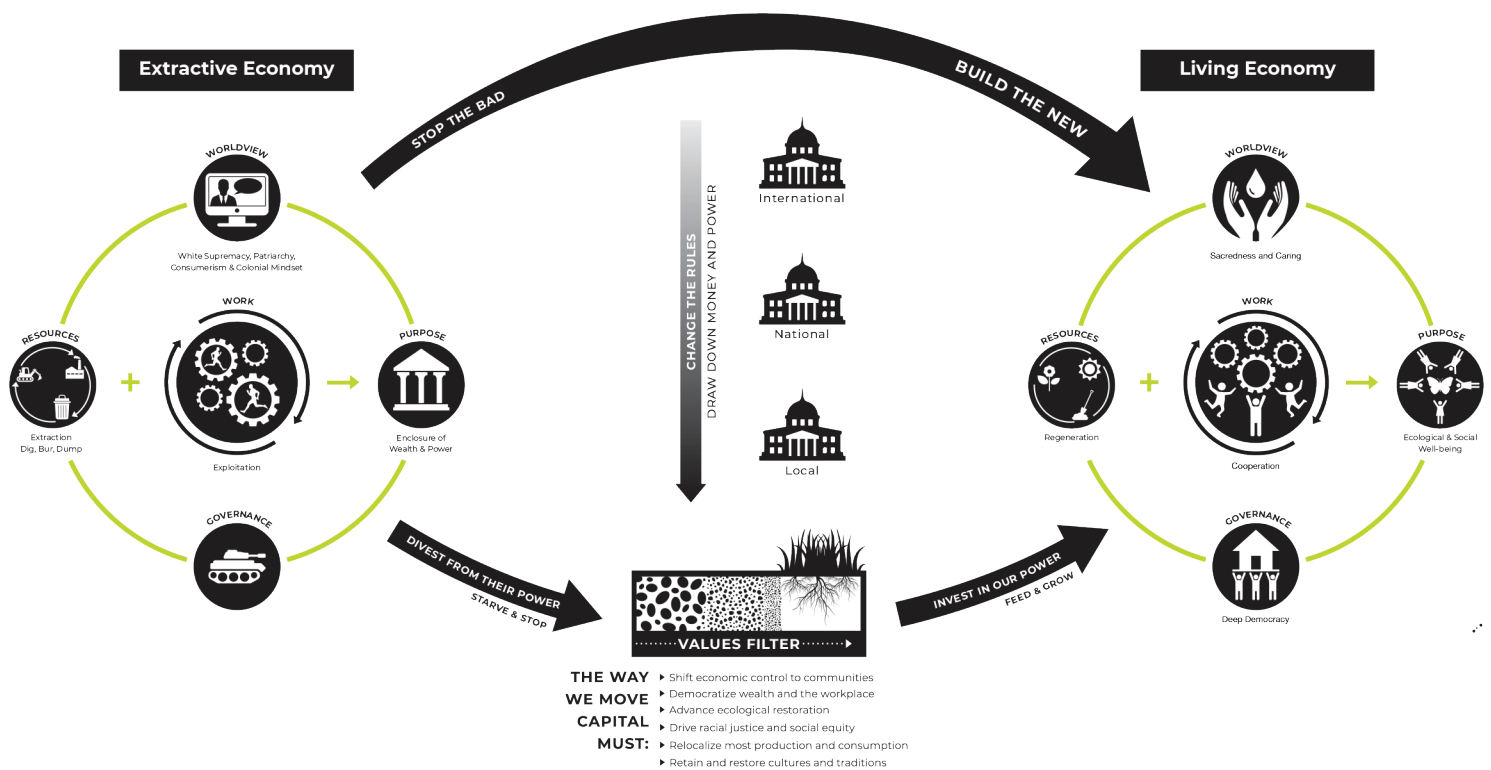


Figure 3: Movement Generation's Just Transition Framework illustrating what Just Transition looks like.

## ACCELERATING A JUST TRANSITION

We seek to transition away from an extraction-based economy to one centered on ecological restoration, community resilience, and social equity, fueled by regenerative resources and cooperative work, governed by deep democracy, and a culture of caring and sacredness. This Just Transition will require interventions in four key areas, that while not historically the focus of climate work, are necessary conditions for achieving climate goals:

## 1 Center Those Disproportionately Impacted in Governance

Those closest to an issue are best able to identify effective and equitable solutions. Core to Front and Centered's vision is democratic, localized, participatory system of resource management and self-governance that protects and upholds the rights of our most vulnerable communities. Overcoming the patterns of discriminatory biases in the policy and governance processes, systemic disregard for community knowledge, exclusion of community participation, and lack of diversity within decision-making and environmental organizations are core steps on the path to achieving equitable governance. In order to truly center social equity, we must:

- Create practices and structures that enable equitable governance
- Enhance Grassroots Participatory Democracy

*"Recognition of the knowledge, innovations and practices, institutions and values of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and their inclusion and participation in environmental governance often enhances their quality of life, as well as nature conservation, restoration and sustainable use."*

~ **United Nations, 2019**

## 2 Restore Community Connections to Place

At the heart of a Just Transition are place-based communities that can practice self-determination, care for their social and economic well-being, and honor ecological stewardship and sustainability. A place-based approach focuses policy, programmatic interventions, and innovations in specific geographic areas that are suffering from environmental and social injustices. When we prevent extraction and emissions from the communities most impacted, pollution will have no place to hide. Place-based strategies include increased green space, strengthened food systems, public transportation, sustainable land-use planning, and affordable housing all together. In doing so, place-based approaches can reduce greenhouse gases and improve health and economic outcomes for low-income communities and communities of color. Through this work, communities can reclaim culturally-rooted traditions of land stewardship and interpersonal connection that have been decimated by colonization and systemic oppression. Overarching policy approaches that are important in Front and Centered's vision of place-based strategies are:

- Local accessibility for all through integrated housing and transportation
- Clean-up and prevention of pollution
- Green infrastructure, open space, and supporting healthy ecologies
- Regenerative agriculture

### 3 Create Livelihoods within a Healthy Environment

A regenerative economy is one that is structured to prioritize sustainable living and work within ecological limits, eradicate inequality, ensure all basic needs are met, and foster individual and community well-being and health. We envision a Washington where all people's fundamental needs are met, including having free time for important things like family and participation in community life. Where all work is dignified, rewarded, where all workers have a voice at work, and where everyone can afford to live a good life; and where the air, water, and land is clean and healthy. This is a fundamental reorientation away from an economy and livelihoods rooted in growth, commodification, extraction of labor and resources, and exclusion based on race and gender.

*"A Just Transition must advance ecological resilience, reduce resource consumption, restore biodiversity and traditional ways of life, and undermine extractive economies, including capitalism, that erode the ecological basis of our collective well-being...This also means producing to live well without living better at the expense of others."*

**~ Climate Justice Alliance**

- Meet universal, fundamental needs, build a social foundation
- Create economic models that support livelihoods within ecological limits
- Equitably distribute of wealth and work

### 4 Transition to Renewable Resources and Energy

Ensuring a transition to renewable, equitable energy generation and use can and must be a tool to achieve environmental and climate justice and can be a cornerstone to powering the new regenerative economy we envision. We have identified various policy approaches to achieve this goal, including 'stopping the bad' strategies through the slowing of energy emissions and energy demand to 'building the new' approaches that deploying renewables and electrifying end uses in ways that advance equity. The approaches are often overlapping and are interwoven together. By developing policies that expand access and increase affordability for low-income residents, safeguarding against negative impacts in low-income communities, and strengthening democratic and participatory practices, many of the policy approaches can directly improve the health and economic opportunities of low-income communities, while creating universal benefits for all Washingtonians and the climate. The policy approaches include:

- Limit pollution
- Improve energy efficiency and conservation
- Increase renewable energy production
- Electrify energy uses



While climate action conversations traditionally focus on energy, due to the outsized role the burning of carbon-based fuels plays in the greenhouse effect, such a narrow focus can create additional extraction pressures, such as increased mining for raw materials needed to produce solar panels and wind turbines. While we include energy in this report as fundamental to the climate crisis, we recognize the need to address the broader set of very important resource questions going forward.

## Looking Ahead

Washington state is at a pivotal moment. While we are winning small battles to shift our economy off extractive resources, we are losing communities to displacement, life expectancy to air pollution, and our future to climate change. The solutions that will allow us to break from business as usual are those that prioritize equity. There is no climate path forward that does not address the need to shift systems of governance, place, economy, and energy toward justice. We must temper the urge to put all our resources toward short term wins based on what is politically possible right now to illuminate the full potential of where we can go if we pull together for a truly Just Transition to a regenerative economy.

# CHAPTER I: Introduction and Context

## THE FRONTLINES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change is a threat to every person and virtually every living being on this planet. We understand this from comprehensive international reporting bodies like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, from Indigenous knowledge, and the rise in catastrophic environmental disasters like floods, heatwaves, and wildfires, gassed up by a warming climate. Direct climate impacts hit us where we live and play, whether its floodplains, wildland-urban interface, or urban areas, and where we work, including farmworkers, people who fish, and construction workers, industries that our entire economy depends on. Similarly, the pollution that causes climate change affects the lives of everyone in our communities.

But some communities are more exposed to pollution and climate hazards than others and some communities are more vulnerable because of historic/persistent institutionalized racism, income, wealth, language, age and health status and other factors. Communities of color, Indigenous peoples, and communities with lower wealth and incomes tend to face the greatest climate risks. These same communities often have less mobility to avoid these risks and historically less political access to mitigate pollution and buffer climate impacts. Addressing climate impacts requires changing this phenomenon and shifting power to address the source of the problem.<sup>1</sup>

## CLIMATE POLLUTION AND THE EXTRACTIVE ECONOMY

### Understanding the Problem

Ecological problems are driven by extracting resources faster or greater than they can be regenerated or dumping more pollutants into bodies and the earth faster or at greater volumes than they can safely be processed. Climate change is a product of dumping greenhouse gas pollution into the atmosphere at greater speed and volume than they are depleted.

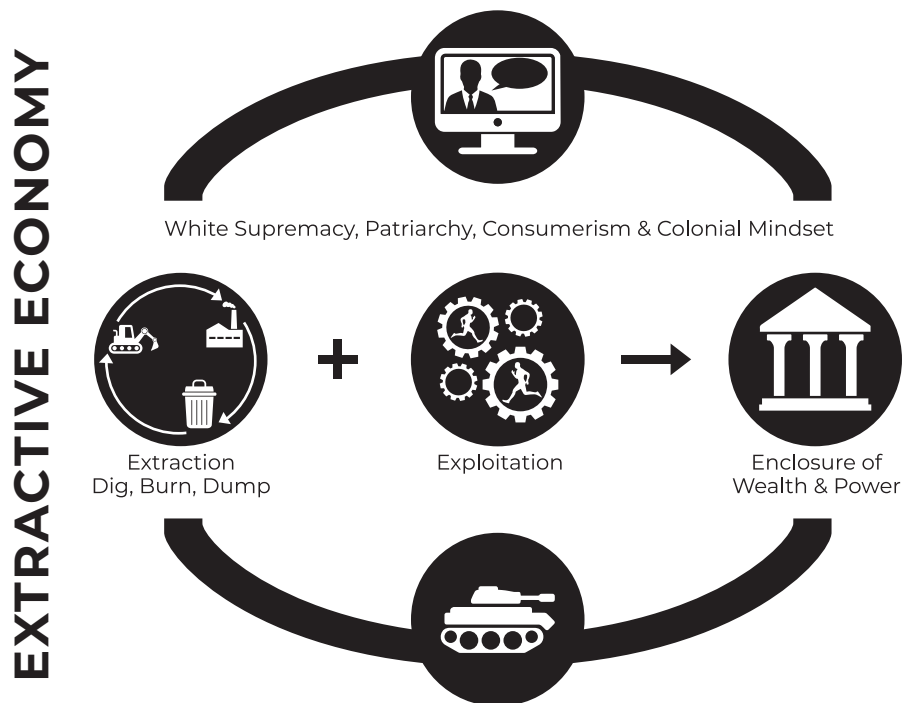


Figure 1: Extractive Economy illustrated by Movement Generation for the Climate Justice Alliance

<sup>1</sup>Unfair Share: Climate Change Hits Some Harder Than Others, 2018, <https://frontandcentered.org/unfair-share/Change>

This suggests two areas for interventions: 1) switch away from the resources that emit greenhouse gases, such as fossil fuels for energy, meat for sustenance, forest land for agriculture and 2) slow the rate and scale that we're churning through those processes to a speed where the oceans and atmosphere can absorb the emissions. We must do both. As illustrated by Movement Generation for the Climate Justice Alliance, our economic operating system works to extract resources that are harmful to the climate and apply labor through exploitative processes for the purpose of enclosure of wealth and power for the few. This is made justified through a worldview that ties into racism, patriarchy, settler/colonialism and consumerist culture, enforced through market rules and authority to enforce them with violence and incarceration, and locked in through tools like debt, economic insecurity, enclosure of the commons.

The extractive economy is not only a threat to the climate we need to survive, but to other pressing issues we're facing today, such as a declining life expectancy in the U.S., growing inequality, displacement of families and communities, xenophobia and racism, and the rise of authoritarianism and decline of democracy.

## WASHINGTON'S RESPONSIBILITY

Climate change is a global phenomenon that does not recognize political boundaries, both in effect and in cause. Clothes used in London create emissions around the world as illustrated in Figure 2. Historically, most of the space in the atmosphere that absorbs GHG has been filled up by more industrialized countries and the wealthier corporations and people within those countries. Although the global North has just 20% of world population it has used over 80% of the available space for carbon.

Ultimately, we are striving to understand the scale and nature of Washington state's emissions reductions responsibility to be able to develop actions that match that scale and nature. That includes recognizing that thresholds exist which we cannot accept transgressing; this gives us a budget that we must meet. In that budget we must not only account for our current emissions, but our historic contribution to the problem that has impacts far beyond our borders, this is integral to the concept of climate justice. Unfortunately, climate and environmental policy often fail to acknowledge that our budget is limited and accept our fair allocation. Ultimately, we need to set targets in context.

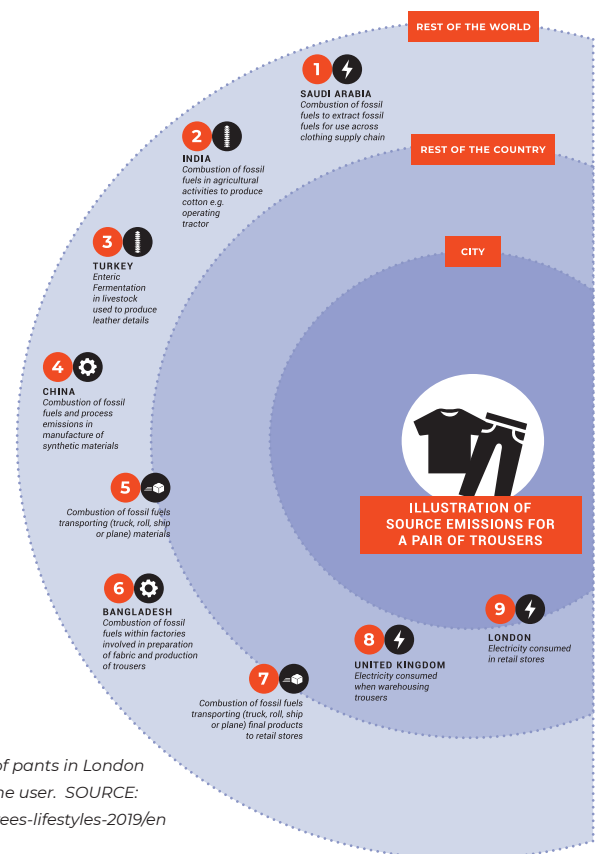


Figure 2: The emissions from a pair of pants in London occur in many countries by benefit the user. SOURCE: <https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/15-degrees-lifestyles-2019/en>

Globally this looks like reductions in the neighborhood of 50% of 2017 levels by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050; although it's highly contested that this is sufficient.<sup>2</sup> In 2020 legislature adopted new targets for Washington, including the duty to reduce overall emissions by 95% below 1990 by 2050. But it's important to note that these targets only accounts for only territorial emissions, rather than total consumption and may of our emissions now occur outside Washington.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, climate change is integrally tied with other environmental impacts that cannot be ignored with myopic focus. Ecological footprint, and similar methodologies, take context specific approaches, by estimating the natural biocapacity of the state, how fast nature can absorb or waste and generate new resources, land, fisheries, forests, carbon budget etc. against, how fast we consume resources and generate waste from energy, development, logging, agriculture, seafood, etc. By that measure Washington footprint is near 1.6 times its biocapacity.<sup>4</sup> Washington can be a leader on climate justice, it must account for its full, present, and historical contribution to the problem

Relative to other states, Washington has been more active in attempting to address climate change. Earlier policies included setting emissions targets, electricity sector policies like a renewable portfolio standard passed at the ballot, strong building energy codes, and perhaps the most ambitious, the 2019 Clean Energy Transformation Act which requires electric utilities to eliminate greenhouse gases from Washington electricity consumption by 2045. The State also set vehicle miles traveled targets and required action within state government. More recently Washington Governor Jay Inslee convened a task force on carbon pricing,<sup>5</sup> and made attempts at cap & trade and carbon taxes in the legislature, attempted executive action through a Clean Air Rule, and then saw ballot measures attempt carbon taxes and fees, I-732, revenue neutral, and I-1631 which focused on climate investments. Progress has been made more recently at the sector level, again in the electricity sector through SB 5116, the Clean Energy Transition Act, which phases out coal and fossil fuels, and through energy and conservation standards for commercial buildings and gas consumption (SB1257).

In 2017, Governor Inslee contracted a deep decarbonization plan for the state that outlined three technological scenarios to meet emissions target of 80% below 1190 by 2050. These scenarios show the potential timing and cost of how technologies, like renewable energy and electrification of cars and homes (Figure 3); but does not provide policy proposals and holds constant other conditions to existing projections; meaning they are not considered factors.<sup>6</sup> In 2020 as part of the Clean Energy Transformation Act, the Department of Commerce is developing the 2021 State Energy Strategy which will inform State climate policies moving forward and develop a more robust model of emissions reductions pathways.

Washington Tribes are highly engaged in climate adaptation and more recently leading work on mitigation, including multiple tribes co-developing I-1631. Policy proposals advanced by Tribes often focus on supporting natural resources ability to absorb carbon, through forestry or through water restoration, but also include strategies unique to rural communities where most tribal Regional bodies like the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-06876-2>

<sup>3</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1601010.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.footprintnetwork.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.governor.wa.gov/boards-commissions/workgroups-and-task-forces/carbon-emissions-reduction-taskforce-cert>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/energy-environment/deep-decarbonization>

## Demand-Side Equipment Sales (Top) and Stocks (Bottom)

Electrification Case

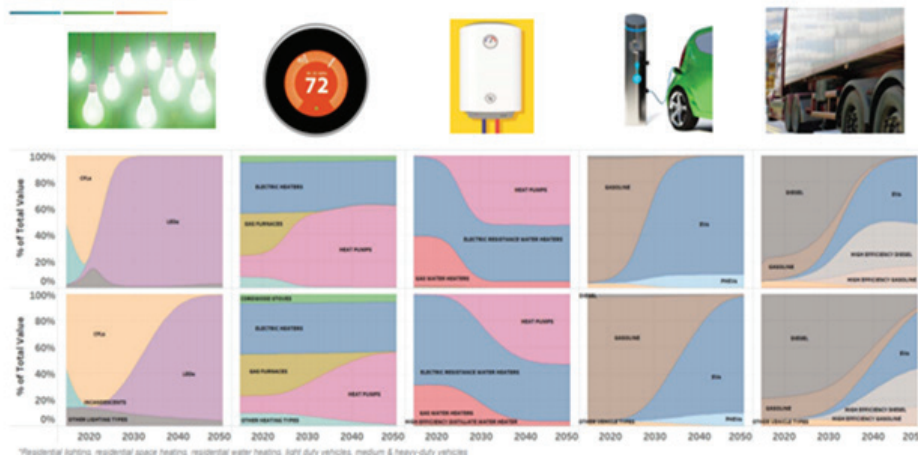


Figure 3: Image from Washington Deep Decarbonization Report illustrating the transition in technologies for the electrification pathway toward Washington climate goals. SOURCE: <https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/energy-environment/deep-decarbonization>

Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), which focuses on regional growth, both established GHG targets to reduce emissions 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. The PSRC report identified a set of strategies in the transportation sector that included regulations to boost zero emissions vehicles and low carbon fuels through market based mechanism, increasing fuel economy standards, fees based on carbon content, regulating emissions from major activity centered, regulating heavy duty trucks and aviation fuels.<sup>7</sup> The PSRC major planning documents, Transportation 2040 and Vision 2050 (growth and land-use) both have goals tied to reducing greenhouse gases. Vision 2050 draft policies include a variety of explicit climate mitigation strategies, like preserving and expanding the urban tree canopy, reducing building energy use, and electrification, and implicit strategies like equitable transit-oriented development. The regional Four-Part Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Strategy described in the 2018 Transportation 2040 document includes: land-use, mobility choices, road user fees, and technology standards on vehicles.

While there are very strong proposals from a variety of governments in Washington, there is no comprehensive policy vision for Washington state to eliminate greenhouse gas pollution or even met our near-term targets. Many policy proposals put a necessary emphasis on fuels and technologies, which are necessarily, but insufficient given the scale of change required. To achieve deep reductions will require weaving climate justice through-out state policy and demonstrating broad benefits to sustain a movement. There is also an emphasis on technocratic market-based mechanisms that may not be enough for what are often non-market drivers; for example, creating conditions for a person to choose to give up ownership of a car.

<sup>7</sup> PSRC: [https://www.pscleanair.org/DocumentCenter/View/3314/Evaluation-Report\\_Transportation-Actions\\_June2018?bidId=](https://www.pscleanair.org/DocumentCenter/View/3314/Evaluation-Report_Transportation-Actions_June2018?bidId=)

Many Washington counties and cities have made pledges and developed climate action plans. The King County-Cities Climate Collaborative include 16 partners who in 2019 issued a set of priorities for state policy that included: 1) Transportation and Land-use: strategies that reduce vehicle miles traveled, the carbon intensity of fuels, support transit, passenger and heavy-duty mobility; including funding transit, clean fuel standards, fleet electrification investments, and commute trip reduction; 2) Green Buildings and Energy efficiency: including strong energy codes and energy conservation policies and investments; and 3) Accelerating renewable energy, phasing out coal, and limiting gas; including utility planning and distribution generation.<sup>8</sup> Overall Washington seems to be out in front in talking climate justice, but often bold goals have not been followed with bold policy.

## WASHINGTON STATE'S EMISSIONS INVENTORY

Washington's most recent Greenhouse Gas Inventory shown as an average of 2013-2015 and released in December 2018 shows that Washington territorial + electricity consumption emissions are not on pace to meet stated goals and transportation, the largest source of emissions (see Figure 4) remain a stubborn contributor to pollution.

Furthermore, Washington state is not accounting for its full impact. The State has not done a consumption-based inventory which illustrates emissions that we benefit from, through exports, but are not emitted or do not come from electricity. That means we're only getting part of the picture and shifting the responsibility for our emissions out of state. To get a complete inventory Oregon has an integrated territorial and consumption-based inventory. Figure 5 shows difference between a territorial inventory, what Washington has documented, the colored-in section, and a consumption-based inventory, the outline + green section in Oregon.

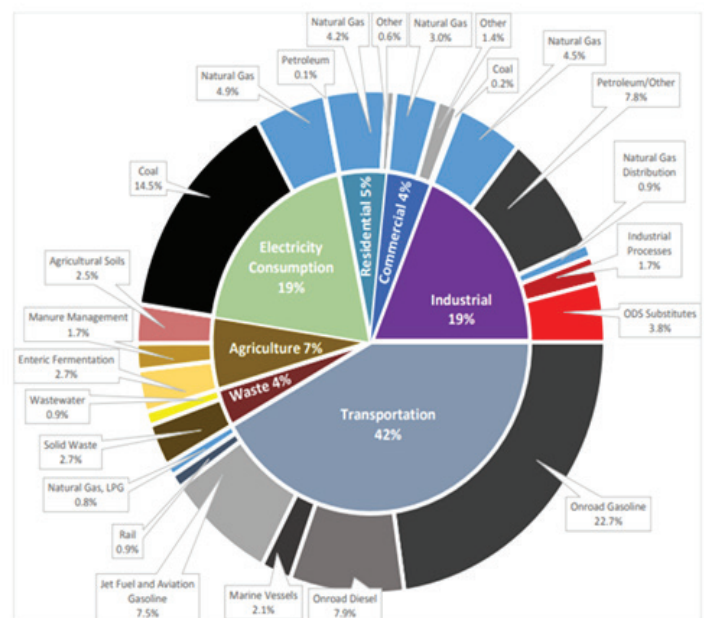


Figure 4: Washington Territorial GHG Emissions Inventory by Energy Sector



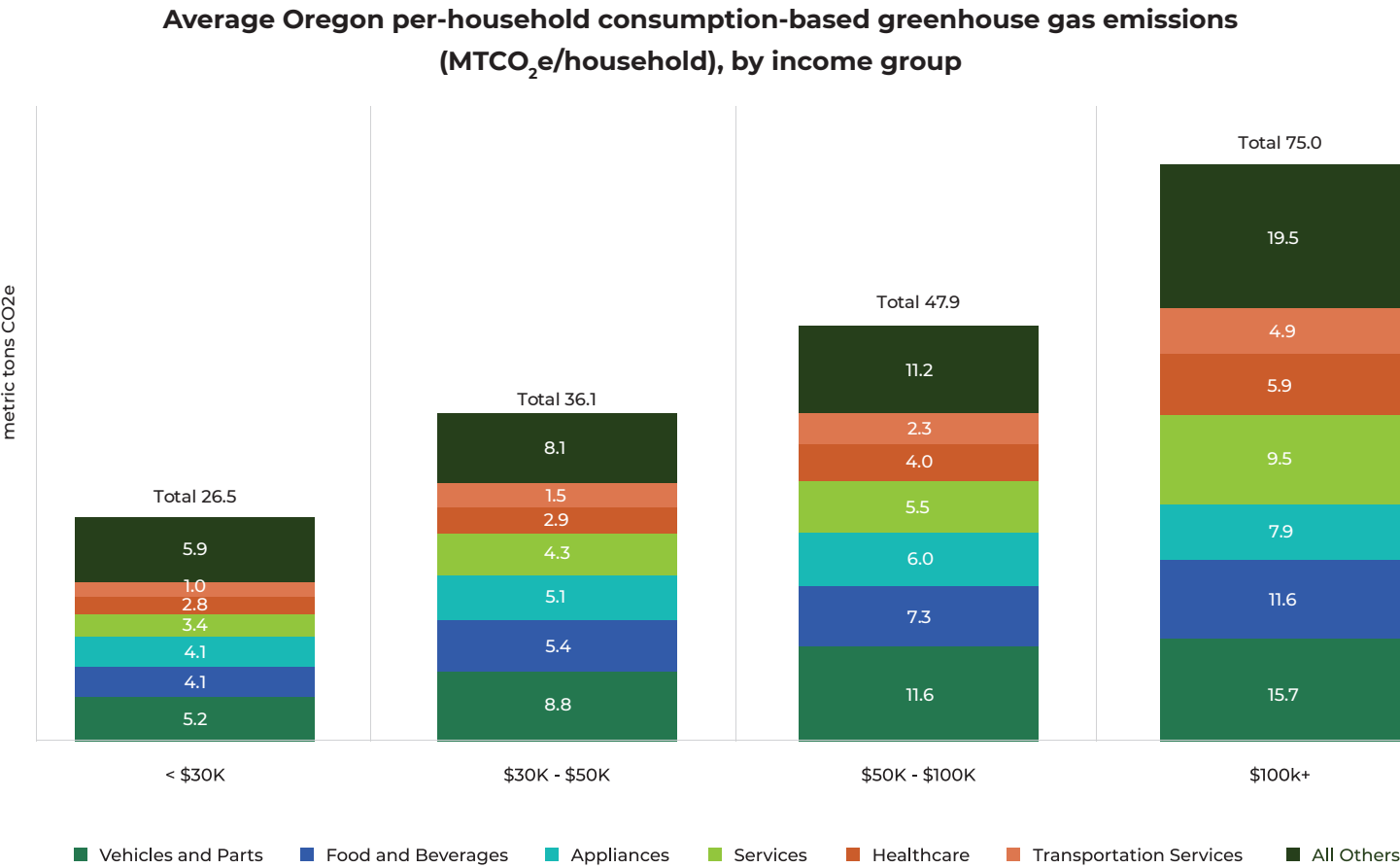
Figure 5: Oregon's Territorial + Consumption based inventory counts emissions produced in-state for exports (orange), in-state for consumption (green) and imported for consumption. SOURCE: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/Pages/Consumption-based-GHG.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <https://your.kingcounty.gov/dngrp/climate/documents/2019-K4C-Legislative-Interests.pdf>



King County has looked at its consumption in recent inventories. A consumption-based inventory is important because it illustrates a huge, otherwise hidden source of emissions and because it can be the difference between making progress and not. It provides different insight on the source of emissions beyond the fuel to the specific polluter. This provides the ability to target solutions by demographic indicators, such as income, rather than just energy sectors (as illustrated in Figure 6). Without data, it's difficult to know whether Washington would mirror Oregon, where the gap between territorial ("Sector-Based") and consumption emissions (blue line) has grown consistently.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 6: Oregon GHG inventory shows emissions grow with income, particularly high incomes. SOURCE: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/Pages/Consumption-based-GHG.aspx>



## THE STATE OF CHANGE

The COVID-19 crisis and the rise of Black Lives Matter movement have only amplified the need for Washington state to take a comprehensive approach to climate justice through a transition that is just and transformative. Washington was the first state in the United States to be struck by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were the first state forced to respond to the crisis. If we act thoughtfully and comprehensively take action, we can be the first to demonstrate pathways to a just recovery and just transition, not just from a pandemic but to our vision of a just, sustainable, and resilience society.

<sup>9</sup> [https://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/other\\_uploads/images/2233\\_WITH\\_FOREWORDS\\_-\\_Main\\_report\\_20190611\\_%281%29.original.pdf?1560286287](https://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/other_uploads/images/2233_WITH_FOREWORDS_-_Main_report_20190611_%281%29.original.pdf?1560286287)

The initial response to COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter demonstrated that we do value life above all else and can take action to change the functioning of our economy and our society to pursue that value. We will not be going back. These systems are not sustainable nor just. Whether it's COVID-19 and the response that proves to be the tipping point, compounding climate disasters, or an economic crisis or a combination of events, business as usual cannot last. Together we have an opportunity to decide whether we proceed through these crises by disaster, or by design. This transition is inevitable, we must make sure it is just.

The community and public policy response to recent events has made it clear that we can choose to turn-down the spigot of pollution. It's revealed that for too many, the options we have to meet our needs are deeply harmful, whether its transportation, housing, energy, food, etc. Restricting our ability to move has unintentionally restricted our ability to produce and consume these harms, resulting in the most significant drops in pollution locally and globally in decades. We must learn from "The Great Pause" that part of the solution is simply doing less. But not this way. This is not climate justice. Our vision requires first building a foundation for structural, procedural, and distributional equity so when we choose to set limits that apply to everyone, as COVID-19 has done, the costs aren't borne disproportionately by those most impacted, and at the same time we're building better alternatives.

## **PURPOSE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS FRAMEWORK**

This report is an attempt to begin to better articulate our approach to addressing the climate emergency and strive toward our vision of climate justice. It is a roadmap for Front and Centered, our member organizations, and our allies to be able to consider where to focus our efforts. It was created in response to a desire from the Front and Centered Steering Committee to move from a position of responding to proposals developed by large, historically white-led environmental organizations and policymakers to developing our own priorities and approach to climate policy. This framework focuses explicitly on reducing climate pollution as a starting point.

The substance of this framework draws its origins from the initial Principles for Climate Justice established in fall of 2014 and the practice of applying those Principles in the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy policy development and in the deliberation and policy positions on legislative and administrative policy issues related to carbon, clean air, and energy, and from our first homegrown policy proposal, the Health Environmental For All Act that was approved in part as a budget proviso during the 2019 Washington legislative session. It draws on frameworks used by Front and Centered members in national networks and local climate reports, like the Puget Sound Sage and Got Green, Our People, Our Power, Our Planet report. This specific process began in the Spring of 2018 with a small group from the Front and Centered Steering Committee that developed an outline, two independent workshops, and the Front and Centered 2019 Summit, where more than 226 leaders of color deliberated the four strategy areas covered and provided the foundation for further research and elaboration.

## Chapter II: The Front and Centered Approach

The Front and Centered approach to policy begins with discussions with people most impacted by the issues through the grassroots organizations doing direct listening and organizing. Through several years of work together, our coalition has identified a set of core principles that undergird all our work together. These principles have been developed from the expertise and input of our Steering Committee and affirmed by over sixty community-based organizations, working directly in most impacted communities, low-income communities, communities of color, and Indigenous communities across the state of Washington.

Environmental justice is the right of all people to healthy places to live, work, learn, play, and pray, regardless of race, class, religion, or national origin. Environmental justice is a lived reality when all people and communities can achieve their highest potential without interruption by environmental racism, climate injustice, or inequity. Front and Centered established principles for climate environmental justice that define the coalition's collective approach to equity — reducing uneven barriers to participation and wellbeing — so that all communities thrive. We apply these principles in our development of policy and decision-making.

### PRINCIPLES FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

#### **1. Racial and economic analysis should drive decisions (Structural Equity)**

Racially neutral policies are rarely race neutral. Policy choices and implementation have racial consequences. Achieving justice requires acknowledging that past policies and decisions maintain a system of racial injustice and disproportionality, and that equity and leveling opportunity must be at the center of every new policy decision. 'Trickle-down' policies rely on the false notion that benefits to all will be equally accrued across lines of race and class. They disproportionately hurt, and do not benefit, people of color and Indigenous people.

#### **2. Follow the leadership, knowledge and expertise of communities disproportionately impacted (Procedural Equity)**

Who writes the rules matters. Communities of color and Indigenous communities must have the capacity and opportunity to fully engage, at the outset, in policy design and implementation. Accountability also matters. Monitor policy impacts on an ongoing basis, make this information publicly available, and create oversight for communities most impacted.

#### **3. Use targeted strategies to create net environmental and economic outcomes for communities of color and Indigenous people (Distributional Equity)**

Benefits must be directed to communities most impacted, particularly environmental justice areas with high environmental burdens and social and economic disparities. Adopt a strategy of targeted universalism—one that benefits all but is crafted to lift up communities facing the greatest barriers, and therefore provides community-specific results. Polluter pays revenue raised should first offset any additional economic burden placed on people with lower incomes and fewer resources, and then should support strategies that reduce pollution.

# A JUST TRANSITION FROM EXTRACTIVE TO REGENERATIVE ECONOMIES

Frontline communities across the U.S. are beginning to align around a framework for a Just Transition. The diagram in figure 7 illustrates the core elements. A Just Transition requires a fundamental shift in the understanding of the economy, away from a system that is built on extraction of resources and people for profit and growth, towards a system that is based on regenerative, localized and living economies. A transition to a new economy that is centered on ecological restoration, community resilience and social equity, fueled by regenerative resources and cooperative work, governed by deep democracy, and a culture of caring and sacredness.

A Just Transition requires solutions that are oppositional, stopping “the bad,” but also visionary, “building the new.” It requires divesting from institutions of extraction, broadly conceived as not only the fossil companies that extract, but all processes extractive of people and planet. Instead, investing in building the power, shared wealth, ecological restoration and social well-being of our communities. That includes investing in organizing grassroots communities, in bringing land, enterprise, and capital into shared ownership and benefit, restoring our land, water, air and all commons to health, and building strong relationships within and between communities. In order to achieve this transition, we must change the rules of how our economy and political systems operate. Our solutions must be rooted in our values of ecological sustainability, community control, racial and social justice, and uplifting cultures and traditions. All of this requires changing what is politically possible.

## A STRATEGY FRAMEWORK FOR JUST TRANSITION

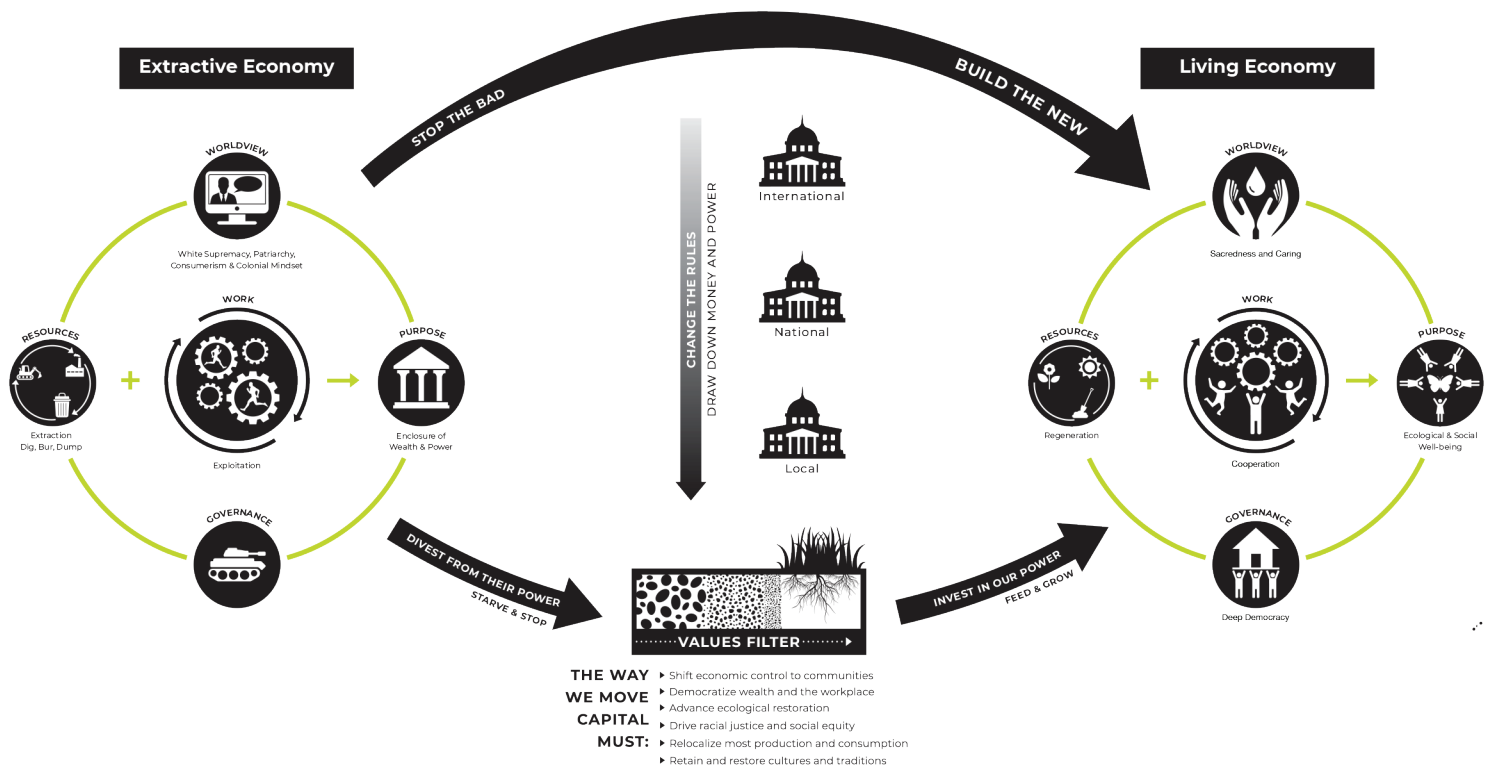


Figure 7: Movement Generation's Just Transition Framework illustrating what Just Transition looks like.

## IMPACT STRATEGIES

The Just Transition from an extractive economy to regenerative economy will require interventions in resource use, worldview, governance, and values, the scope of which may take decades or generations to evolve. We have identified four areas that we organize our work around, each creating a context for the succeeding to live within, renewable energy to power a regenerative economy, a regenerative economy that's rooted in place, and places governed equitably. Across each of these areas our approach is guided by our Principles for Climate Justice, calling for equity in structures, process, and outcomes.

**1. Equitable Governance: Center the People Disproportionately Impacted.** We need to build our climate and environmental systems in way that give voice and decision-making to the people impacted first and worst. Frontline communities are best positioned to assess risk as they are nearest to the threat.

Decision-makers and processes that occur far from the frontlines of climate and environmental exposure and have no experience with racism, low income and wealth, and not speaking the language of the government do not have appropriate information to be making decisions without full participation of those most impacted.

**2. Place-Based: Restore Community Connections to Place.** Climate pollution ends up in the atmosphere, but it originates in extraction and emissions in local communities all over the globe. Building sovereignty and self-determination of communities to care for themselves and the places they live can prevent emissions at the source. Strengthening self-determination of communities in place will improve stewardship of land, water, and ecology. Sustainable, equitable land-use, housing, and transportation are essential to reducing Washington's greenhouse gas footprint and building healthier communities and economies as are preventing fossil fuel infrastructure, sustainable agriculture, forestry, and overall ecological management.

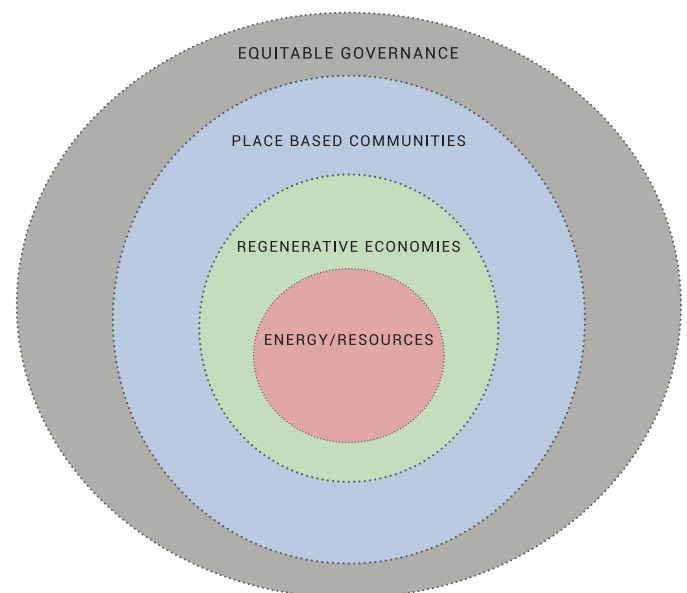


Figure 8: There is a hierarchy in these strategies. All strategies must embed equitable governance, place-based strategies create appropriate context for a regenerative economy, and energy strategies must scale and form appropriate to the economy

### 3. Sufficiency Economics: Create Livelihoods within a Healthy Environment.

We must address both the carbon content of our resource use, as well as the scale of resource production, consumption, and distribution systems that make up our economy. Our current economy is premised on the accumulation of profits, dependent on growth and the unlimited use of resources. We need new economic models and to re-frame the purpose of our economy away from hoarding and overconsumption by the few to maximizing everyone's well-being. This means emphasizing dignified work for all and institutions of collective economic security, rather than individualism. We need an economy that is equitable, that removes barriers and opens opportunities to the people most marginalized by our current economy and political systems. We must reorient our labor to towards the wellbeing of communities, rather than the accumulation of profits.

### 4. Renewable Resources: Transition to Renewables Energy and Materials.

We must move away from fossil fuel resources that are finite and have disastrous impacts on people and the planet. We must move toward efficient and resilient techniques and technologies that embody sustainability throughout their entire lifecycle, from cradle to grave, and that can be powered by 100 percent renewable energy and resources. We must rebalance resource use with ecological limits, and better align our resource use with our local economies and communities.

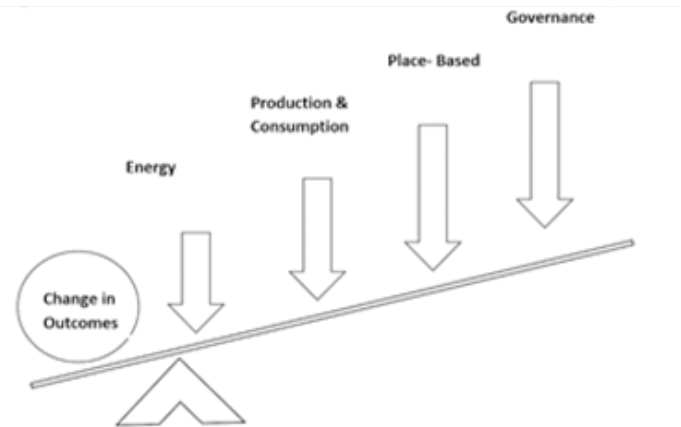


Figure 9: Strategies higher on the line (e.g. governance) have more leverage to address outcomes than those lower on the line (e.g. energy).

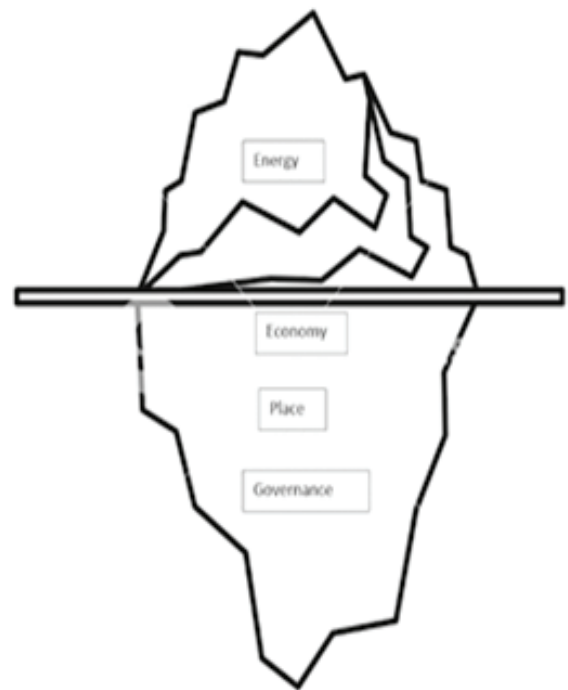


Figure 10: While addressing energy technology is the most visible response to climate change, outcomes are driven by larger forces below the surface.

These strategies are all interconnected. Governance that gives power to the people most impacted is critical to all other impact strategies. Respect for every local place ensures that no community can become a sacrifice zone, nor contributes to ongoing ecological destruction. Reorienting our economy toward people over profits and reducing overproduction and consumption makes sustainable use of resources feasible. While we may work on all of these areas simultaneously, it is critical to not lose sight of which impact strategies have the greatest potential for impact, changing the way we govern, putting more power in the hands of the people most impacted can have cascading effects that changing energy technologies cannot. The prioritization of each impact strategies is based on their prospective leverage in realizing our vision as illustrated in figure 9.



## APPLICATION IN POLICY

Within each of these main strategies we have identified, there are different policy tools to choose from. We have tools for developing and screening policy proposals within each of our strategy areas. It is our intent to identify policy approaches within our four core impact strategies, that advance a Just Transition and align with our overall principles. How does the policy attempt to reduce pollution or increase community resilience? What is the anticipated impact on whom? Could it make an existing social or environmental problem worse or maintain extractive relationships of power? How would it be implemented and who is accountable? And critically, how have the most impacted people and communities been engaged or will be engaged?

## POLICY EQUITY & EFFECTIVENESS

The policy development process involves choosing the right tools based on equity, their effectiveness, and what's politically viable (discussed further below). Policies may include lower leverage intervention tools like education, to more impactful tools such as disincentives/incentives, to higher leverage regulatory requirements, like rules created from the Clean Air Act to limit local air pollutants. For example, in most cases, incentives are aligned with our approach when they are used to provide access for those with less income/wealth and generally less ecological impact. Similarly, mandates are most aligned with our approach when applied to entities with greater wealth/income, power, and higher impact. The most important takeaway, however, is simply that we need to disaggregate and look at policy applications specific to their target.

	Mandates	Disincentives	Incentives	Education
High Power/ Wealth/Income	Higher Effect <<>> Lower Effect			
Lower Power/ Wealth / Income	Lower Effect <<>> Higher Effect			

A key framework to help identify the right policy approach is “targeted universalism,” An equitable strategy that benefits all but is crafted to lift up communities facing the greatest barriers, and therefore provides community-specific results. “Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal.”<sup>10</sup> Targeted universalism affirms a particular policy goal that everyone should be able to benefit from - such as climate protection - but recognizes the differential strategies and implementation mechanisms needed to account for structural marginalization.

<sup>10</sup> John a. powell, Stephen Menendian, Wendy Ake, Targeted Universalism: Policy & Practice, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley, May 2019, [https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/targeted\\_universalism\\_primer.pdf](https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/targeted_universalism_primer.pdf)

It affirms that a range of implementation strategies are needed, rejecting the tendency within policy towards a “one size fits all” strategy. However, it also recognizes that many policy goals have universal benefits that all should be able to benefit from, even if certain communities need targeted strategies to achieve the goal.

**LOCAL AND GLOBAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

A climate and environmental justice approach is concerned with the communities most impacted, locally and globally, which ensure a healthier world for everyone. The C40 cities Thriving City Portrait<sup>11</sup> provides another tool for thinking about both the global and the local implications of policy from both a social and ecological perspective with a simple matrix:

	SOCIAL	ECOLOGICAL
LOCAL	What would it mean for Washington communities to thrive?	What would it mean for Washington communities to thrive within our ecological capacity?
GLOBAL	What would it mean for Washington to respect the wellbeing of people worldwide?	What would it mean for Washington to respect the health of the whole planet?

**STRATEGIES TO REDUCE POLLUTION**

In addition to being targeted, we need to understand the change we’re trying to achieve to ensure policy effectiveness. Three or main categories are illustrated for transportation in Figure 11: absolute reductions in amount (x-axis) efficiency improvements (y-axis), and mode shifts (columns).<sup>12</sup> Each can contribute to shrinking the total pollution emissions.

**Absolute Reduction**

means reducing physical amounts of goods or services consumed, such as food, miles driven, energy use, or living space, as well as avoiding unsustainable driving emissions, whether by business, government, or households.

**Efficiency Improvements**

means decreasing pollution or other harms by replacing technologies with lower-carbon ones while not changing the amount consumed or used, such as in energy efficient buildings or vehicles.

<sup>11</sup> For an example, see THE AMSTERDAM CITY DOUGHNUT, <https://www.kateraworth.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/20200406-AMS-portrait-EN-Single-page-web-420x210mm.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [https://pub.iges.or.jp/system/files/publication\\_documents/pub/technicalreport/6719/15\\_Degree\\_Lifestyles\\_MainReport.pdf](https://pub.iges.or.jp/system/files/publication_documents/pub/technicalreport/6719/15_Degree_Lifestyles_MainReport.pdf)

## Modal Shift

means changing from one consumption mode to a less carbon intensive one, such as adopting plant-based diets, using public transport, or renewable energy for electricity or heating.

These are demand focused strategies. An additional category is supply side strategies like efforts to keep fossil fuels in the ground. These strategies also ultimately act to limit consumption as the final source of emissions but aim higher upstream in the process. The connection between supply and demand side strategies is crucial to ensure a Just Transition.

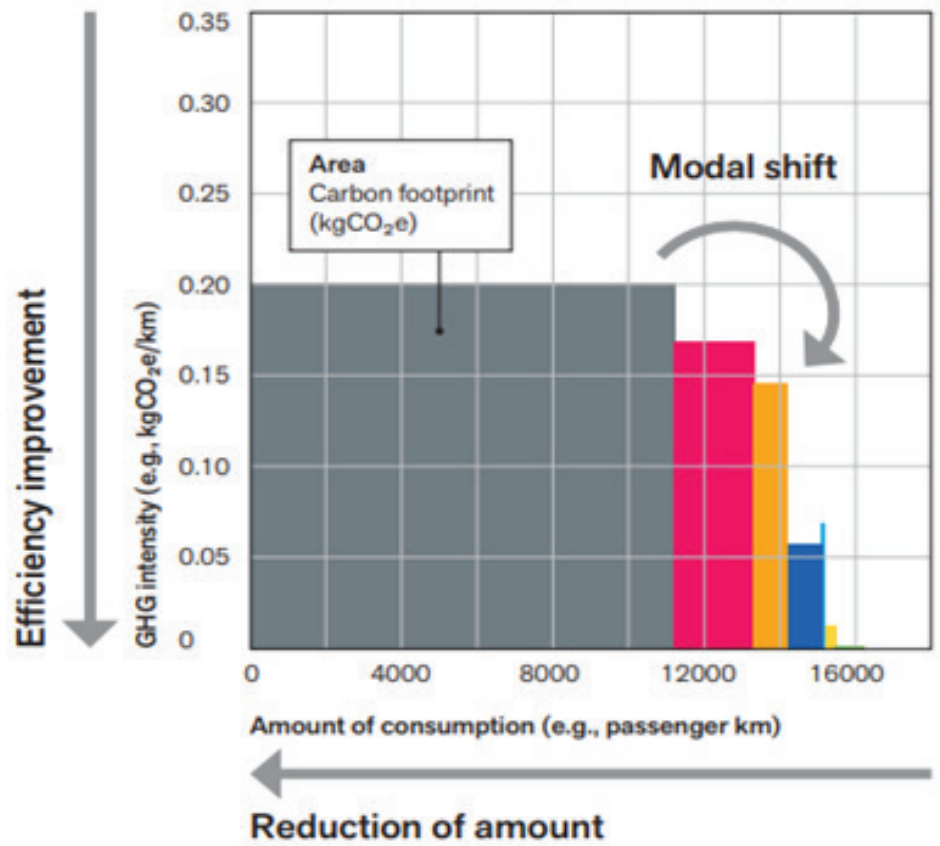


Figure 11: Illustration of different strategies to reduce pollution. SOURCE: <https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/15-degrees-lifestyles-2019/en>

## POLITICAL VIABILITY

As we identify policy approaches that hold the most transformative potential for our communities and the planet, we must be in conversation with our assessment of the current system. We cannot constrain ourselves to what's politically viable at this moment, and we must be clear eyed about our vision versus the system we currently live in. We must work to expose and oppose the extractive economy we have and actively build the economy we need. However, we must also assess our opportunities and current political, social, and economic context, and take the current conditions into consideration as we develop our agenda. This tension is exemplified in the Movement Generation graphic in Figure 12.

As we identify the most appropriate policy tools to use in any situation, it is important to keep in mind that achieving social justice and resolving equity concerns requires focused intervention. Often, policies are designed with the faulty notion that “the market” will ensure everyone benefits. But the market solves primarily for least cost, while equity concerns are rarely addressed—and in fact, only exacerbated by—the market; and thus, government investments and interventions focused on achieving equity are necessary.

Our challenge and opportunity are to identify policy approaches that move forward a Just Transition and embody our Principles of Climate Justice, and, as we do so, we can and must change what is politically possible. We must advance solutions and carry out our work in a way that shapes conditions so that more transformative solutions are possible in the future.

Accordingly, we must expand what is imagined in our sphere of influence, particularly when it comes to the sphere of influence for the public policy. As illustrated in Figure 13 from King County’s Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory, policymakers may avoid tackling issues that they don’t think they can affect, like food systems, but are critical to the realization of our vision for climate justice and cannot be left unaddressed because no one sees them as their responsibility.

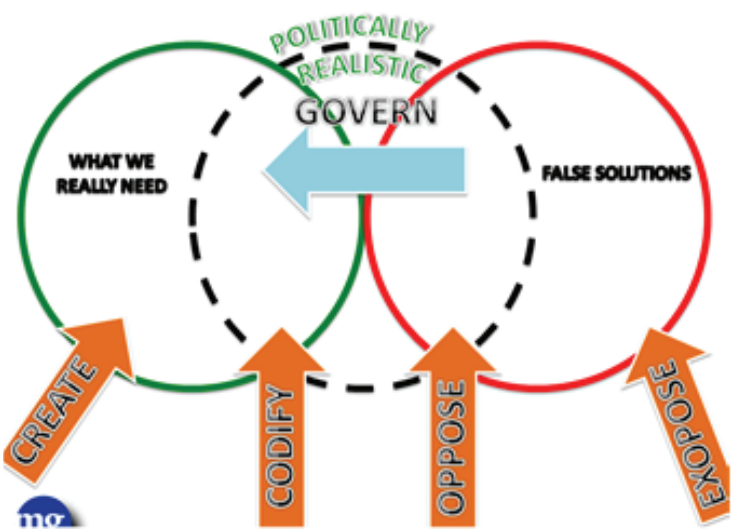


Figure 12: Movement Generation illustration of political viability considerations. SOURCE: Movement Generation

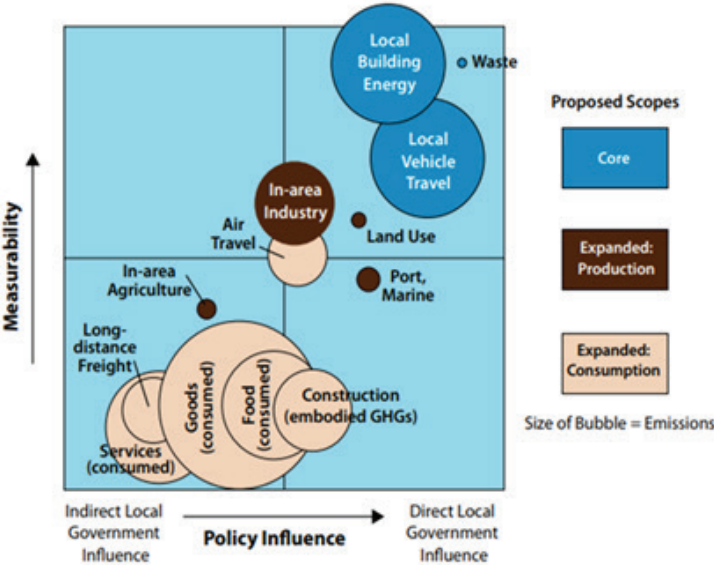


Figure 13: Illustration from King County climate strategy on assessment of GHG emissions sources and recommended scopes. SOURCE: King County

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## Chapter III: Equitable Governance

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Core to Front and Centered's vision for a Just Transition is a democratic, localized, participatory system of resource management and self-governance. Equitable governance that enables the self-determination by communities most impacted encompasses all other issues. Without it, progress on one discrete issue, or a one-time victory, can be eroded as implementation does not move forward equitably or as values of equity and justice are not maintained after the one policy change.

The right of all people to participate in decision-making that impacts their lives is a central component of the environmental justice movement.<sup>13</sup> The premise that communities most impacted—those on the frontlines of pollution - should speak for themselves has been codified by the Environmental Justice Principles, adopted at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held in 1991. Principle 7 states: “Environmental Justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Front and Centered's second principle of Climate Justice elevates the need to “follow the leadership, knowledge and expertise of communities disproportionately impacted.”

These principals are the foundation of equitable governance. They affirm the right of all people to participate in decision-making but go further by simultaneously lifting up community experience and knowledge as legitimate, powerful, and effective forms of expertise. The claim “we speak for ourselves,” a tenet of the environmental justice movement, asserts the wisdom of community experience, the importance of ensuring direct participation in decision-making, and a reclamation of power. Centering community voices and experiences not only dismantles environmental injustices, it dislodges the dominant decision-making framework that perpetuates the crisis.

A Just Transition expands the notion of “we speak for ourselves” to include the deeply democratic, localized practices that are needed to create a regenerative economy. Movement Generation explains the role of democratic participation in a Just Transition: “‘Deep democracy’ will be diverse in forms across place, but at the core, people are in control of the decisions that affect their daily lives; from where they work to how they collectively manage shared resources across scales...Reimagining and realigning the very shape of governance with living systems is a key feature of a Just Transition toward the ‘deep democracy’ needed for a Regenerative Economy.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement](https://nyupress.org/9780814715376/from-the-ground-up/) <https://nyupress.org/9780814715376/from-the-ground-up/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>

<sup>15</sup> From Banks and Tanks to Cooperation and Caring: A Strategic Framework for a Just Transition, Movement Generation, [https://movementgeneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/JT\\_booklet\\_English\\_SPREADs\\_web.pdf](https://movementgeneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/JT_booklet_English_SPREADs_web.pdf), pages 18-19

## CENTERING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES IMPROVES CLIMATE POLICY

Centering equity is a critical component to developing effective solutions to the climate change crisis. By protecting and upholding the rights of our most vulnerable communities, equity creates stronger, more effective policies that benefit everyone. And in order to truly center social equity, we must create practices and structures that enable equitable governance and community participation, at all levels.

*“Recognition of the knowledge, innovations and practices, institutions and values of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and their inclusion and participation in environmental governance often enhances their quality of life, as well as nature conservation, restoration and sustainable use. Their positive contributions to sustainability can be facilitated through national recognition of land tenure, access and resource rights in accordance with national legislation, the application of free, prior and informed consent, and improved collaboration, fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use, and co-management arrangements with local communities.”*

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>

Community engagement leads to better policies. The benefits include: providing the local, context-specific information that decision-makers often lack that may be more accurate than information coming from far-removed sources; highlighting other important values and potential policy goals that may have been left out of a technical debate, such as accountability and equity. There is additional evidence that shows community engagement is more likely to lead to consensus and a deeper understanding of any particular decision, and more likely to generate buy-in for a particular program or policy, which supports its long-term success.<sup>16</sup> Community engagement is an essential part of our democratic process. It is an intrinsic good, and a core piece of the liberal democratic model used in the U.S.<sup>17</sup>

Diversifying the voices included in environmental and climate decision-making can also develop policies that are more relevant to the changing demographics of the country. Not only are both Washington state and the nation diversifying and becoming increasingly non-white, polling consistently shows that people of color support strong action to protect the environment.<sup>18</sup> Equitable governance can not only make policies more relevant to a growing political constituency, it is a constituency already likely to support strong action on climate change.

The benefits of equitable governance are underscored by the crisis the status quo has produced. Our current system of governance has not led to significant action on climate change and has only enabled the extractive economy to grow. We need solutions that create a radical shift, and directly engaging the people who are most impacted in governance will help generate those solutions and create broader buy-in.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/making-space-how-public-participation-shapes-environmental-decision-making.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/making-space-how-public-participation-shapes-environmental-decision-making.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/405753-young-voters-and-voters-of-color-are-key-to-halting-climate-change>



## OVERCOMING INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM AND HIERARCHIES IN POLICY

Policy design has historically excluded low-income people and people of color. Policies have overwhelmingly not been designed with the interests of the most vulnerable in mind. Resource protection, conservation, and environment-related expenditures historically favor policy-based objectives benefitting relatively privileged communities while systematically undervaluing the needs of already marginalized communities.<sup>19</sup> Other policy objectives have used the misguided notion that benefits will “naturally” flow down to those most impacted, which overwhelmingly fails to occur.

Racism and economic marginalization are deeply entrenched in society, so if the policy design and implementation process does not pay deliberate attention to issues of race and class, injustices are perpetuated and replicated. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change notes that the traditional, technocratic policy mode of addressing climate change can reinforce “dominant political-economic structures and processes, and narrowing option spaces; this leads to maladaptive pathways that preclude alternative, locally relevant and sustainable development initiatives and increase vulnerabilities...A narrow view of adaptation decision-making, for example focused on technical solutions, tends to crowd out more participatory processes, obscures contested values and reinforces power asymmetries.”<sup>20</sup>

*Much of environmental policy-making has focused on a technocratic approach, which also explicitly devalues the wisdom of people with on-the-ground knowledge of an issue. “At its most basic level, the greatest challenge of environmental justice implementation is ensuring that lawmakers, policymakers, and implementing officials recognize the legitimacy of the concerns voiced by affected communities and make the appropriate inquiries before committing internal institutional resources toward a particular objective. Those inquiries must be made, however, at the beginning of the decision-making process, not after a preferred course of action has already been selected.”*

<https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1521&context=sdlp>

Compounding the problem is an overwhelming lack of diversity among decision-makers. The Green 2.0 study, headed by long-time environmental justice professor Dorceta Taylor, is one of the few studies conducted on diversity within environmental government agencies, found that only 15.5% of the staff at environmental agencies were people of color.<sup>21</sup> While diversity in and of itself does not automatically lead to more equitable outcomes, it can ensure a wider range of needs are surfaced and addressed.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1521&context=sdlp>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/SR15\\_Chapter5\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/SR15_Chapter5_Low_Res.pdf) pg 458

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1521&context=sdlp>

The traditional environmental movement has also struggled to diversify. Comprised mostly of white, middle and upper-middle class people, it has both directly and indirectly perpetuated environmental injustices. The EJ movement has long pushed for deeper accountability, diversity and anti-racist practices within environmental organizations, including issuing a public letter in 1990 to the ten largest environmental organizations outlining patterns and instances of racism,<sup>23</sup> and six years later, developing the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing to outline specific practices and agreements that environmental groups must uphold in order to support the self-determination of people of color.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, in 2014, the Green 2.0 study still found a “green ceiling,” and that “despite increasing racial diversity in the United States, the racial composition in environmental organizations and agencies has not broken the 12% to 16% ‘green ceiling’ that has been in place for decades.”<sup>25</sup> In 2017, an updated look at the top 40 environmental organizations found that while 27% of full time staff are people of color, only 14% are senior staff and only 22% are Board members.<sup>26</sup>

Overcoming the patterns of discriminatory biases in the policy planning process, systemic disregard for community knowledge, exclusion of community participation, and lack of diversity within decision-making and environmental organizations are core steps on the path to achieving equitable governance.

## THE STATE OF EQUITABLE GOVERNANCE IN WASHINGTON

The growing diversity of lawmakers has somewhat paralleled the growing diversity of Washington state. The 2019 cohort was the most diverse group of legislators in Washington’s history, with the first Native American woman, Debra Lekanoff, elected to the legislature, and the first refugee to be sworn in, My-Linh Thai, while two women of color held Senate democratic leadership positions.<sup>27</sup> 2019 was also the first year that Democrats held a supermajority across both houses and in the Governor’s seat, including multiple legislative seats that were flipped by Democrats from Republican control.

This has resulted in more proactive efforts to enact democratic reforms that support equitable governance at an institutional level. In 2018, Washington passed a sweeping set of voting laws aimed to increase access to voting, such as automatic voter registration, Election Day registration, and pre-registration for teens.<sup>28</sup> Washington also passed its own state-level Voting Rights Act to address the issue of at-large voting, which allows local governments to change their voting system, which previously restricted to just charter cities and counties. Many local elections use an at-large system, which disempowers minority voters, leading to local governments that are not reflective of the community.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/swop.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/>

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.diversegreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/BeyondDiversity\\_NGO\\_Scorecard.Final\\_.pdf](http://www.diversegreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/BeyondDiversity_NGO_Scorecard.Final_.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/women-and-people-of-color-in-the-legislature/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/04/washington-states-sweeping-voting-rights-reforms-should-be-a-model-for-the-entire-country.html>

For example, in Yakima, which held at-large elections, no Latino official had ever been elected to the city council despite the fact that over 40% of the city's population is Latino. Once the city switched to district-based elections, three Latina candidates were elected to the city council.<sup>29</sup> Most recently, in 2019, the legislature overturned a ban on affirmative action within public institutions. These efforts all support the democratic participation of people of color in all levels of governance.

However, there are many pervasive barriers to equitable governance in the state. One major barrier is Washington's regressive tax code, which places a huge cost burden on low-income residents through its reliance on regressive taxation measures for revenue. This reduces the amount of funding for programs that could benefit low-income communities and communities of color and reduces economic opportunity for low-income residents, which also impacts participation in governance.<sup>30</sup>

Statewide, Washington is also not very advanced in its' institutional acknowledgement of environmental justice. It has yet to adopt a codified definition of what is Environmental Justice. The most recent effort to create a definition, adopt an EJ screening tool, and ensure state agencies are developing EJ state policies faced significant business association opposition. The result was the creation of a task force to recommend strategies for how state agencies can incorporate environmental justice principles their responsibilities. While this creates a solid platform to build from in the coming years, it also reflects the need to build stronger institutional support and commitment by the government for Environmental Justice. In comparison, at least nine other states (Virginia, California, Michigan, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Illinois, New Jersey, and Minnesota) have a codified definition of EJ, a task force or program established.

Very few Washington state agencies have specific EJ policies or programs. A non-exhaustive survey of publicly available information found just two state agencies that include public information explicitly on environmental justice: the Washington Department of Public Health, through the Washington Tracking Program, collaborated with Front and Centered to develop the Environmental Health Disparities online mapping tool;<sup>31</sup> and the Washington Department of Transportation has a section on their website on how to include environmental justice in project planning, including an online EJ training for staff.<sup>32</sup>

Some regional and city governments have taken a more proactive approach: Puget Sound Clean Air Agency has designated "focus areas," communities that have a high pollution burden, for targeted agency activities.<sup>33</sup> The City of Seattle has an Environmental Justice Committee,<sup>34</sup> and through community conversations and engagement, has developed an Equity & Environment Agenda.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/blog/voting-rights/voting-rights-act/democracy-just-got-stronger-washington-state>

<sup>30</sup> <https://allinforwa.org/article/our-tax-code-doesnt-generate-sufficient-resources-our-communities>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/EnvironmentalHealth/WashingtonTrackingNetworkWTN/Resources/EnvironmentalJusticeIssues>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/technical/disciplines/social-and-land-use-effects/environmental-justice>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.pscleanair.org/372/Community-Equity-Access>

<https://www.pscleanair.org/DocumentCenter/View/3207/HI-C-Report---Final?bidId=>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.seattle.gov/environment/equity-and-environment/environmental-justice-committee>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Environment/EnvironmentalEquity/SeattleEquityAgenda.pdf>

## EQUITABLE GOVERNANCE POLICY APPROACHES

Decades of environmental justice organizing and advocacy across the country have articulated a clear set of solutions to ensure that the policy formation and implementation process centers those most impacted. However, the climate justice and Just Transition frameworks have also emphasized a distinct element of equitable governance: the idea of participatory, or deep, democracy; a vision for localized management of resources needed to move from the extractive to the regenerative economy.<sup>36</sup> Front and Centered's vision for equitable governance includes both solutions that center those most impacted in the policy process, and the participatory practices outlined by the climate justice movement. Both governance strategies are needed to spur the shift towards a regenerative economy at local, state, and national levels.

### A Centering People Most Impacted in Public Policy Decision-Making

Over the past several decades, due to the hard work and organizing of community-based organizations across the country, there have been a proliferation of environmental justice specific laws, policies, and programs intended to help institutionalize the principles of equitable governance in state and federal law. These solutions articulate the core elements needed to ensure environmental decision-making centers the people most impacted, which are broadly outlined below.

## IDENTIFYING COMMUNITIES MOST IMPACTED

Policymakers need a tool to identify communities most impacted by pollution and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. Without such tools, despite the lived experience of communities on the ground, it can be difficult to direct policy benefits and protections to most vulnerable communities. Many EJ groups have used a “cumulative impact” framework to identify highly impacted communities, which encompasses “exposures, public health or environmental effects from the combined emissions and discharges, in a geographic area, including environmental pollution from all sources, whether single or multi-media, routinely, accidentally, or otherwise released. Impacts will take into account sensitive populations and socioeconomic factors.”<sup>37</sup>

Front and Centered has worked closely with the Washington Environmental Tracking Network and the University of Washington to create the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map tracking tool.<sup>38</sup> Such tools can be a foundational step towards targeting benefits and increased protections into overburdened communities.

<sup>36</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxqkHpiiFq\\_eWk9QR1JwNFRDSndzZEVwRmtWZkZFcXdWWTBn/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxqkHpiiFq_eWk9QR1JwNFRDSndzZEVwRmtWZkZFcXdWWTBn/view)

<sup>37</sup> <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/081910cidraftreport.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/>

While mapping can be an effective starting point for geographic based communities, additional identification is needed on a population basis for people most impacted. African American and Indigenous communities are dealing with intergenerational trauma that must be specifically addressed. No quantitative tool is a substitute for direct community organizing, rather it is a starting point for where to begin work on the ground that should include qualitative, community-based participatory research.

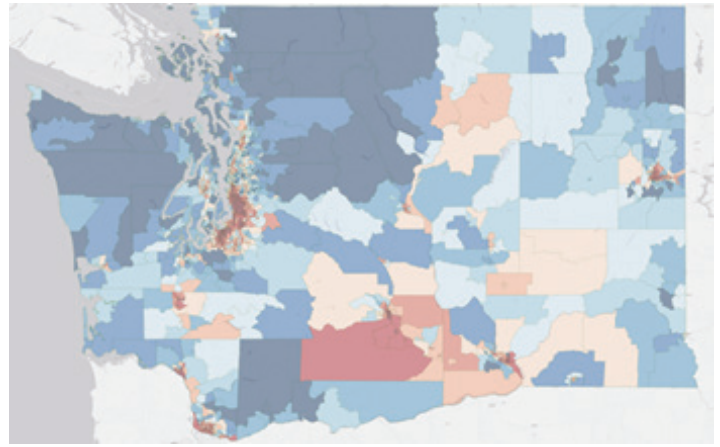


Figure 14: Screen shot from Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map. More info at <https://frontandcentered.org/ej-map/>

## ENSURE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

People, especially those most impacted, must have the ability to participate meaningfully in environmental decision-making. The federal Environmental Protection Agency defines “meaningful involvement” as:

- People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
- The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
- Community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and
- Decision-makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.”<sup>39</sup>

## ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION, DECISION-MAKING VENUES, AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Environmental justice communities have long fought for information on decisions that are timely; written in a way that is accessible to the average person; distributed specifically in the areas that would be impacted by a decision; and translated into language other than English most commonly spoken in the impacted area. In addition, other core EJ demands include having meetings and hearings during hours when working people can attend, in the potentially impacted community, with interpretation. EJ groups have also pushed for agencies to be clear in “(a) detailing the processes by which all decisions are made and regularly reviewing the processes to ensure accessibility by communities most impacted by environmental hazards; (b) disclosing all factors and stakeholders that inform and influence all decisions affecting all policies and projects; and (c) describing decisions made, in addition to upholding the principles of engagement and responsiveness outlined above.”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice>

<sup>40</sup> [https://caleja.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CEJA\\_AgencyAssessment\\_2017\\_FinalWeb.pdf](https://caleja.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CEJA_AgencyAssessment_2017_FinalWeb.pdf)

## ENSURE REPRESENTATION OF THOSE MOST IMPACTED IN DECISION-MAKING

While representation by people of color does not automatically lead to environmental justice outcomes, in order to more meaningfully appreciate and consider issues critical to people of color, poor communities, immigrant communities, language minorities, and Tribes, policymakers must be able to meaningfully engage in dialogue on the issues they care about. This requires a range of perspectives outside the box of mainstream environmentalism.<sup>41</sup> EJ groups have thus advocated for various ways to ensure communities most impacted are directly included in decision-making, from the creation of stand-alone committees to inclusion of EJ into other, existing bodies.

## ENSURE AGGRESSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Even when there is community engagement and access to information, it must be accompanied by rigorous implementation of policies. Despite the proliferation of environmental policies over the past several years, and significant progress, without strong implementation by regulatory agencies, they still fail to change the lived reality of pollution.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Even with the strongest policies established, there are multiple ways that the voices of those most impacted can be undermined within the policy process. Public participation requirements can either become symbolic to an agency, or engagement can quickly take up significant time and resources from community-based organizations without having clear results. As the California Environmental Justice Alliance's Environmental Justice Principles for Policy Implementation outlines, even after extensive community engagement, it is not uncommon that agencies fail to "alter any decisions even after hearing significant feedback.... Agencies must respond, and be willing to address, community concerns once they have been articulated rather than simply noting them in the public record. Without a clear commitment to responsiveness, community engagement efforts become a 'check box' rather than a meaningful attempt to work with stakeholders in policy design and implementation."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1521&context=s-dlp>

<sup>42</sup> [https://caleja.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CEJA\\_AgencyAssessment\\_2017\\_FinalWeb.pdf](https://caleja.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CEJA_AgencyAssessment_2017_FinalWeb.pdf)



Ensuring representation in decision-making bodies can help alleviate this concern; if community recommendations are made and there is an EJ representative or advisory committee, it can be a vehicle to ensure support for the community recommendations. However, an EJ vote on a decision-making body may have limited influence. For example, a committee or regulatory Board might also include industry representatives, or elected officials who are not necessarily supportive of EJ. And while securing an EJ representative on a decision-making body can create an opportunity to articulate often overlooked equity issues from a position of relative power, the representative is usually appointed by an elected official. This creates an opportunity for someone who is not authentically representing environmental justice interests to occupy the seat.

Statewide Environmental Justice Task Forces or Advisory Committees usually—though not always - have the benefit of being comprised entirely or mostly of EJ representatives. While these important bodies also provide a critical platform to highlight equity issues and develop solutions, they are often limited in their authority. While they can develop recommendations that have more weight, than for example, an individual's public comment, there is often no requirement that a state agency accept the recommendations or implement them. In addition, lack of adequate staffing or prioritization at government agencies can slow the pace of work; without a dedicated staff person to convene meetings and move the work forward, or significant support from agency leadership, progress can come to a stand-still.

Similarly, many of the statewide or even city or regional level EJ policies issued are only “recommendations.” For example, an EJ policy might direct a state agency to develop recommendations for how to include EJ in their work. The value of having official recommendations from a state agency or other decision-maker can be a powerful point of leverage for community groups or advocates, but often there is not a legal requirement to comply with any recommendations, creating ample opportunity for the policies to be ignored. And, just like under-resourced task forces, often state EJ recommendations are not attached to dedicated funding for implementation, which can prevent their adoption.

A final challenge to navigate is the strategic question of whether to create EJ stand-alone policies, or to integrate EJ considerations into existing policies and programs. Both have benefits and drawbacks. Creating EJ specific bodies, policies, and programs ensures dedicated attention, elevates the profile of the issues, and can result in more targeted policy solutions. However, it can also result in the “siloeing” of EJ concerns, and the implementation process can then be bogged down by recalcitrant or inattentive agencies and decision-makers or starved to death through a lack of resources. It can create the sense that the obligation to address EJ considerations have been fulfilled simply by having the program or body in place, regardless of the effectiveness. On the other hand, integrating EJ into existing bodies or policies can be a way to embed EJ considerations at a foundational level, creating more opportunities to show how it can and should be a part of policy or program formation from the get go, and is related to many other program design issues. However, the EJ focus can also get watered down or diluted, or one EJ representative may be overruled or simply overshadowed by other stakeholders or issues with more power.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*For details see Appendix A.*

- Require state agencies to create EJ policies
- Require identification of communities that face a disproportionate burden of pollution
- Require analyses of impacts in overburdened communities
- Target statewide investments to most impacted communities
- Create a dedicated Office of Equity or Environmental Justice and/or staff positions within agencies
- Create Environmental and Climate Justice Task Forces or Advisory Groups
- Require Environmental Justice representatives on decision-making boards
- Train individuals to join Boards and Commissions
- Support Community Capacity-Building, Technical Assistance or Grant Programs
- Provide Environmental Justice training for agency staff
- Require public participation, outreach, and language access

## B Enhancing Grassroots Participatory Democracy

Participatory democracy involved building and spreading practices and institutions that enable individuals and groups to better determine the conditions in which they act and relate to others. Key features include: (1) collective determination; (2) capacity development and delivery of economic, social, and/or political benefits to members or constituents; (3) the replacement of unequal power relations with relations of shared authority; and (4) the creation and interconnection of movements and organizations with overlapping beliefs. Participatory democracy goes beyond the traditional democratic notion of community participation, which can often overlook race, class, gender, and other power hierarchies that influence whether people are actually able to participate in the opportunities presented. It is rooted in the notion of sharing power, not just representation or participation in decision-making processes.<sup>43</sup>

The Climate Justice Alliance's Just Transition Principles clearly describe how participatory democracy applies to resource management: a Just Transition "requires a re-localization and democratization of primary production and consumption by building up local food systems, local clean energy, and small-scale production that are sustainable economically and ecologically."<sup>44</sup> The energy cooperatives and the energy democracy framework discussed in Chapter VI are examples of participatory democracy in resource management.

<sup>43</sup> <https://truthout.org/articles/participatory-democracy-a-tool-for-social-change/>

<sup>44</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxqkHpIIFq\\_eWk9QRlJwNFRDSndzZEVwRmtWZkZFcXdWWTBn/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxqkHpIIFq_eWk9QRlJwNFRDSndzZEVwRmtWZkZFcXdWWTBn/view)

One significant strand of climate justice organizing has combined these notions of participatory democracy with an effort to more clearly develop the vision for a “New Economy” that “supports regeneration of both human and natural systems. It builds community resilience by rooting wealth and power in place and in service of human needs on a finite planet; A new economy incorporates democratic principles into the management of economic and civic life.”<sup>45</sup> The work includes a proliferation of efforts to start and support sustainable worker cooperatives, which are discussed more in depth in the Regenerative Economy Chapter.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

While participatory processes can certainly enable more participation, they can also be plagued by the same systems of oppression that manifest in the policy process. People engaging in a process may be racist, or exercise white privilege in a way that is alienating to people of color. People without many resources may be unable to participate in a time-consuming set of meetings needed to determine how to manage a particular resource, consumed with the stress of providing for the basic needs of themselves and their families. Gender hierarchies may influence if or how women or other gender non-conforming people have access to a public process.

In addition, many of the participatory models still operate on a relatively small-scale and may not directly challenge the structural issues at stake. For example, localized food production using the model of agroecology, discussed in Chapter IV, can be a powerful way to meet place-based food needs, provide an ecological benefit to the community, potentially create local economic opportunities, and grow food in a non-extractive way. However, it will not alone undue the power and impact of industrialized agriculture, which flows from a system designed to support the large-scale, corporatized model through a complex interaction of state, national, and international policies.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*For details see Appendix A.*

- Local climate action plans and other types of localized resource management
- Community Listening Sessions and Assemblies
- Participatory budgeting
- Increasing community control over land, resources, businesses, and infrastructure
- Supporting community-based participatory research (CBPR)
- Decriminalizing civil disobedience

<sup>45</sup> <https://neweconomy.net/about/what-is-the-new-economy>

## Chapter IV: Communities Connection to Place

At the heart of a Just Transition are communities that can practice self-determination, care for their social and economic well-being, and honor ecological stewardship and sustainability. By creating conditions which allow these elements to thrive in low-income communities and communities of color on the frontlines of pollution and climate change, it can not only further social equity and justice, but also reduce pollution and further a transition off fossil fuels.

A place-based approach focuses policy, programmatic interventions, and innovations in specific geographic areas that are suffering from environmental and social injustices. It can combine strategies for increased green space, energy efficiency, strengthened food systems, clean transportation, sustainable land-use planning, and affordable housing all together. In doing so, place-based approaches can reduce greenhouse gases and improve health and economic outcomes for low-income communities and communities of color.

Place-based approaches can embody many aspects of the regenerative economy envisioned in a Just Transition. They can be a critical way for communities that have long suffered from racism and systemic marginalization to create the localized conditions for dignified, safe living and working conditions. They can meet specific community needs and build community institutions rooted in justice and ecological sustainability. Through this work, the process can help communities reclaim culturally-rooted traditions of land stewardship and interpersonal connection that have been decimated by colonization and systemic oppression. Finally, by engaging all residents in localized planning to determine how they want resources used and manifest their vision for development as a community, a place-based approach can foster self-determination and democratic practices.

Place-based approaches also demonstrate the potential impact of policies that are grounded in our Principles of Climate Justice. Through a deep focus on low-income communities and communities of color, it foregrounds the specific attention that is needed to overcome the legacies and ongoing impacts of systemic racial and economic injustice. Through localized decision-making, policies follow the lead of those most impacted and ensure policies and programs are addressing the needs of the most vulnerable. Finally, place-based approaches are a targeted strategy to direct benefits into those areas that have been too long disproportionately burdened by pollution and economic marginalization.

Front and Centered's goal is to reduce pollution through urban and rural place-based strategies. In this Chapter, we provide some context on the opportunity and need in Washington state for Place-Based strategies, discuss key themes central to a Washington-specific approach, and conclude with policy recommendations to advance Place-Based Approaches.

### ***Indigenous People and the Sustainable Management of Place***

For millennia, Indigenous people have lived along the Pacific Northwest Coast, from what is now Oregon into British Columbia. Indigenous people managed natural resources to meet their subsistence needs, while maintaining ecological balance. These practices are inextricably linked to spiritual and cultural traditions.

Along the Puget Sound, salmon provided an abundant food and occupied an important spiritual position for Tribes.

In Eastern Washington, the Coeur d'Alene travelled seasonally to fishing spots along the Columbia and other rivers and hunted and gathered traditional foods like camas bulbs.

The close connection with the land resulted in sustainable resource management patterns that we can learn from today. Given this close connection with land and ecosystems, climate change and ecosystem degradation are already having disproportionately negative impacts on Indigenous lifeways and threaten the very fabric of Tribal communities.

European colonization led to genocide of Pacific Northwest Tribes through violence and introduced diseases such as smallpox. Estimates of how many people were killed range from two-thirds to 90% of the total Indigenous population. For example, before a smallpox epidemic struck in 1830 in the Columbia and Willamette Valleys there were estimated to be 13,940 Native Americans living there; afterwards, only an estimated 1,175 people remained. Even after forced into signing treaties at Medicine Creek, Indigenous peoples in Washington state faced discrimination, theft of land (even though guaranteed by treaties), direct violence from colonizers, and forced assimilation through practices such as the Indian Boarding Schools. Despite this, Native Americans are central to Washington's communities today. There are 29 federally-recognized Tribes in Washington, while several other Tribes do not have official recognition, such as the Duwamish.<sup>46</sup>

## HEALTHY, THRIVING COMMUNITIES REDUCE EMISSIONS

Research over the years has documented how place matters. Both the public health and community development fields have demonstrated how neighborhoods influence many aspects of community and individual health, including: food security; proximity to crucial services such as health care, parks, and open space; the social environment, including social capital, cohesion, economic opportunities; and the physical environment, including air quality, traffic density, and housing quality. There is also a growing understanding of the importance of place in promoting both economic vitality and health.<sup>47</sup>

Now, there is increasing recognition that place also matters in reducing greenhouse gases and fighting climate change.<sup>48</sup> Our built environment - which includes all the infrastructure around us, such as homes, roads, water and wastewater services, green spaces, commercial and public buildings - in both urban and rural areas is simultaneously a driver of climate change, inequality, and poor health outcomes, and is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

<sup>46</sup> [http://nie.seattletimes.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2016/10/WIGA\\_10-16-16\\_8PageTab\\_final.pdf](http://nie.seattletimes.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2016/10/WIGA_10-16-16_8PageTab_final.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2014.0640>

<sup>48</sup> See for example: [https://movementstrategy.org/b/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/MS-Community\\_Driven\\_Climate\\_Resilience\\_Plan-ning.pdf](https://movementstrategy.org/b/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/MS-Community_Driven_Climate_Resilience_Plan-ning.pdf)

Across the country, low-income communities and communities of color are using place-based approaches to bring sustainable, equitable development to communities that have faced a disproportionate burden of pollution, disinvestment, and racism for years. These efforts have an explicit focus on addressing environmental justice, climate mitigation, and green development, shifting inequitable land-use planning practices and working towards a regenerative built environment. For example, the Our Power Communities of the Climate Justice Alliance are working to build localized Just Transition plans that advance solutions for zero waste, regional food systems, public transportation, community clean energy, affordable and efficient housing, and ecosystem restoration.<sup>49</sup>

All locally specific, place-based initiatives share “an authentic, community-based planning process that gives residents an opportunity to articulate the need and vision for their neighborhood,”<sup>50</sup> centering resident leadership and community self-determination. They are working towards land-use planning and projects that achieve a regenerative built environment: one that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and promotes healthy ecologies and green spaces, creates stable housing options for low-income residents with clean transportation nearby, and increases local economic opportunities. Place-based approaches can also be a powerful tool to foster ecosystem restoration, which is a critical part of shifting away from an extractive to regenerative economy. In doing so, these approaches can improve health outcomes, fight climate change and restore ecological stewardship more broadly, increase economic security, and create more cohesive and connected communities.

## REDUCING TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS

Land-use planning, transportation, and housing are all key elements to ensuring healthy communities. One framework that integrates all of these is sometimes called “equitable transit-oriented development” (eTOD). The framework emphasizes “compact, often mixed-use development with access to jobs, neighborhood-serving stores and other amenities that also serves the needs of low- and moderate income people,”<sup>51</sup> and can have significant GHG benefits.<sup>52</sup> Housing developments that are located near services, amenities, and transportation (sometimes called “location efficient” housing) can result in a 20 - 40% reduction in vehicle miles travelled, which also equates to a significant decline in GHGs.<sup>53</sup> Another estimate shows that such compact development could reduce transportation emissions 7 - 10% by 2050.<sup>54</sup>

There are significant climate benefits to preserving affordable housing near transportation, jobs, and services. Lower income households drive 25 - 30% fewer miles when living within 1/2 mile of transit than those living in non-transit oriented development areas.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> <https://climatejusticealliance.org/workgroup/our-power/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://calgreenzones.org/about-the-green-zones-initiative/common-roots-and-core-principles/>

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/promoting\\_opportunity\\_through\\_etod\\_-\\_cnu\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/promoting_opportunity_through_etod_-_cnu_-_final.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> [https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/cit\\_07092401a.pdf](https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/cit_07092401a.pdf), pg 26

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-research/plans-reports/docs/pb04housing\\_climate\\_change0214.pdf](http://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-research/plans-reports/docs/pb04housing_climate_change0214.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> [https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/cit\\_07092401a.pdf](https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/cit_07092401a.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.transformca.org/sites/default/files/CHPC%20TF%20Affordable%20TOD%20Climate%20Strategy%20BOOKLET%20FORMAT.pdf>



People of color, low-income households, and renters are all more likely to use transit than Americans as an average,<sup>56</sup> and Blacks, Latino and Asian people all rely more heavily on transit than whites.<sup>57</sup> Lower-income and working-class households use transit far more than upper-income Americans, and lower-income households are also less likely to own a car.<sup>58</sup> In Washington state, 28% of people live in or near poverty, and these households are 6.8 times less likely to own a car than higher income households.<sup>59</sup> GHG savings can be further maximized if investments are made in energy efficiency upgrades in multifamily affordable housing buildings, which have additional economic and health benefits.<sup>60</sup>

A deep investment in clean public transit, located near protected and preserved affordable housing, can provide energy-efficient, cost-effective transportation options.<sup>61</sup> On average, light rail systems produce 62% less and bus transit produces 33% less greenhouse gas emissions per passenger mile than private vehicles.<sup>62</sup> While places like Seattle have greatly expanded public transit services, there are many low-income communities that still lack adequate service.<sup>63</sup>

Increasing accessibility of housing and transportation options can also increase economic security. The average American family spends 20% of its monthly budget on transportation, but this can be as high as 30% for low-income households.<sup>64</sup> Transportation costs can range from 15% of household income in location-efficient neighborhoods to over 28% in inefficient locations.<sup>65</sup> Families who live near transit spend just 9% of their income on transportation, while those who live in auto-dependent neighborhoods spend an average of 25%.<sup>66</sup>

An equitable, comprehensive approach to mobility also entails increasing walking and biking infrastructure, known as “active transportation.” Active transportation both improves health outcomes and reduced GHGs. For example, research from the Bay Area showed that increasing median daily walking and bicycling from 4 to 22 minutes reduced the burden of cardiovascular disease and diabetes and decreased greenhouse gas emissions by 14%.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> [https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN\\_Equity\\_final.pdf](https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN_Equity_final.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN\\_Equity\\_final.pdf](https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN_Equity_final.pdf) pg 12

<sup>58</sup> [https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN\\_Equity\\_final.pdf](https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN_Equity_final.pdf) pg 13

<sup>59</sup> [http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EF00F16E-472D-43FE-AFF6-935DF809274B/0/WashingtonStatePublicTransportationPlan\\_Section50871816optimized.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EF00F16E-472D-43FE-AFF6-935DF809274B/0/WashingtonStatePublicTransportationPlan_Section50871816optimized.pdf) pg 33

<sup>60</sup> [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-07/documents/final\\_affordablehousingguide\\_06262018\\_508.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-07/documents/final_affordablehousingguide_06262018_508.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.c2es.org/site/assets/uploads/2017/11/electrified-transportation-for-all-11-17-1.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EF00F16E-472D-43FE-AFF6-935DF809274B/0/WashingtonStatePublicTransportationPlan\\_Section50871816optimized.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EF00F16E-472D-43FE-AFF6-935DF809274B/0/WashingtonStatePublicTransportationPlan_Section50871816optimized.pdf) pg 35

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.seattlemet.com/articles/2017/11/20/what-s-it-like-taking-the-bus-in-seattle-s-transit-deserts>

<sup>64</sup> <https://aceee.org/blog/2016/07/america-s-transportation-energy>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.seattle.gov/documents/departments/seattleplanningcommission/seattletransitcommunities/professionalprojectfinaljuly13.pdf> pg 12

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/preservingaffordablehousingneartransit2010.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23409903>

However, the climate benefits of compact, location-efficient transportation and land-use planning can only be achieved if equity is centered. This means ensuring that low-income communities and communities of color are able to live in affordable housing near transit options. Too often, transit-oriented development, which has become increasingly desirable for more people, has led to the displacement of low-income people and people of color. Transit oriented development without equity can actually increase GHG emissions for two main reasons. People who are displaced are often forced to drive more, thus leading to higher emissions. These same people are also those that rely on transit the most. Research has shown that low-income people and people of color are less likely to own a car and use public transit more than higher income households.<sup>68</sup> Even those higher income households that choose to live near transit have been shown to use public transit less, drive more, and have higher carbon footprints overall.<sup>69</sup>

## **CLIMATE BENEFITS OF GREEN SPACE, HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE**

Integrating practices that lead to healthy, resilient, and balanced ecologies is a critical strategy within a comprehensive Place-Based Approach and in the fight against climate change. Many of the planet's ecosystems are severely degraded, leaving them imperiled and increasingly showing signs of collapse.<sup>70</sup> This degradation will be worsened by climate change, which is but one aspect of a broader ecological crisis caused by our current extractive economy.

An equitable Place-Based Approach fosters an abundance of green and open space. Increased green, open space and green infrastructure can support both climate mitigation and adaptation. They reduce GHGs through direct sequestration and accumulation of carbon by trees and shrubs and decrease building heating and cooling needs, thus reducing energy consumption. Increased use of green infrastructure can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, better manage stormwater runoff and increase groundwater recharge, reduce the urban heat effect, improve wildlife habitat, improve air quality and health, and even have economic benefits.<sup>71</sup>

Equitable Place-based Approaches also include expanded opportunities for local agriculture, as both a strategy to increase open and green spaces and to increase local food security. Supporting localized food production has multiple benefits: it helps alleviate urban heat intensity and reduce the need for energy intensive cooling systems; helps manage stormwater; supports increased ecological functioning in an area; enhances overall urban livability; and provides increased food security for many communities.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> [https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/promoting\\_opportunity\\_through\\_etod\\_-\\_cnu\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/promoting_opportunity_through_etod_-_cnu_-_final.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> <https://atltransformationalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/Promoting-Opportunity-through-ETOD.pdf> pg19

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/new-un-decade-ecosystem-restoration-offers-unparalleled-opportunity>

<sup>71</sup> [http://www.envirothon.org/pdf/2012/04\\_EPA\\_green\\_infrastructure.pdf](http://www.envirothon.org/pdf/2012/04_EPA_green_infrastructure.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> <https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/2017EF000536>

Healthy ecosystems support food and agricultural production, including the supply of fresh water and providing habitat for pollinators. They provide habitat for aquatic life that many communities and economies depend upon.<sup>73</sup> The loss of natural resources that many people and economies rely on will not only lead to increased economic costs, but will undermine subsistence, cultural, and spiritual practices, particularly for Indigenous people.

Ecosystem restoration efforts seek to reverse “the degradation of ecosystems, such as landscapes, lakes, and oceans to regain their ecological functionality...this can be done by allowing the natural regeneration of overexploited ecosystems, for example, or by planting trees and other plants.”<sup>74</sup> Ecosystem restoration is broadly needed to restore balance into our natural resources, maintain biodiversity, and protect subsistence livelihoods and cultural practices.

There is growing recognition of the importance of “Natural Climate Solutions” (NCS), which draw upon ecosystem restoration efforts, but have a specific focus on measures that have GHG benefits. NCS are defined as “conservation, restoration, and/or improved land management actions that increase carbon storage and/or avoid greenhouse gas emissions across global forests, wetlands, grasslands, and agricultural lands.”<sup>75</sup> Global and regional ecosystems play an important role as climate regulators, often acting as either a source of naturally occurring carbon emissions or as a carbon sink—places that sequester carbon. Both land and ocean ecosystems currently absorb about half of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but because of human interference, their capacity to absorb GHGs is declining, and through their degradation, ecosystems are releasing increased amounts of GHGs into the atmosphere.<sup>76</sup> However, new research has shown that focused and purposeful ecosystem restoration could help us keep global temperature rises at 1.5°C.<sup>77</sup>

## UNRAVELLING LEGACIES OF UNSUSTAINABLE LAND USE PLANNING

A major factor (though not the only one) in determining the environmental and equity impacts of our built environment are the underlying land-use planning patterns, in which local governments create a blueprint for how development will happen in an area through the use of planning documents and zoning. These tools can shape communities by choosing what kinds of activities are incentivized, those that are prohibited, what types of land uses get sited near each other, and provision of basic services.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately, land-use planning overall has not encouraged ecological sustainability, and is rooted in discriminatory practices, which we discuss below.

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<sup>73</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/new-un-decade-ecosystem-restoration-offers-unparalleled-opportunity>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/new-un-decade-ecosystem-restoration-offers-unparalleled-opportunity>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.pnas.org/content/114/44/11645>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.wri.org/our-work/project/world-resources-report/ecosystem-management-need-adopt-different-approach-under>

<sup>77</sup> <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/4/8/eaau9981>

<sup>78</sup> [https://tishmancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NRDC\\_Report.pdf](https://tishmancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NRDC_Report.pdf)

Unsustainable land-use planning has resulted in communities where homes, jobs, services, community institutions, and transportation are not located near each other, leading to increased dependency on cars and related greenhouse gas emissions. This pattern is perhaps most clearly evidenced by the dominant model of suburban sprawl, which is highly carbon intensive.<sup>79</sup>

The dominant mode of land-use planning has not only perpetuated unsustainable development, it has a legacy and continued pattern of discrimination. Land-use planning has historically been used as a tool to enact and maintain racial segregation.<sup>80</sup> This has played out on many levels: from restricting the places where people of color could live or buy homes through “red-lining,”<sup>81</sup> siting industrial facilities next to low-income communities and communities of color; and perpetuating patterns such as the lack of adequate services in low-income areas and lack of affordable, accessible housing and transportation options.<sup>82</sup>

Another ubiquitous facet of our built environment today is the large quantity of impervious surfaces (e.g. concrete, pavement), which has a range of climate, environment, and quality of life impacts. Urban areas with high quantities of dark, impervious surfaces actually have higher temperatures, known as the ‘urban heat effect.’<sup>83</sup> Multiple studies have found that low-income people and people of color are at greater risk of the impacts of the urban heat effect, both disproportionately exposed to higher temperatures and having fewer resources, such as cooling systems and access to adequate health care, to mitigate health impacts.<sup>84</sup> Finally, paving over natural lands exacerbates urban run-off during storm events, causing a “cascading effect”: it can lead to overflowing sewage systems, localized flooding, which then leads to disruptions in business, transportation, and lives, as well as expensive damage.<sup>85</sup>

Place-based vulnerabilities also correlate to our unsustainable built environment. Much of our infrastructure was not built to withstand the impacts of climate change, and is outdated and in need of improvements.<sup>86</sup> From the impacts of severe weather events and increased flooding, to rising sea levels, to increased costs of service provisions or loss of basic services, the costs of climate change impacts on our infrastructure are in the hundreds of billions of dollars.<sup>87</sup> Because low-income communities and communities of color are more likely to live in areas with poor infrastructure and crumbling built environments and have the fewest resources to adapt, they will be disproportionately burdened by these impacts.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> <https://news.berkeley.edu/2014/01/06/suburban-sprawl-cancels-carbon-footprint-savings-of-dense-urban-cores/>

<sup>80</sup> [https://tishmancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NRDC\\_Report.pdf](https://tishmancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NRDC_Report.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> [https://www.usdn.org/uploads/cms/documents/usdn\\_guide\\_to\\_equitable\\_community-driven\\_climate\\_preparedness\\_high\\_res.pdf](https://www.usdn.org/uploads/cms/documents/usdn_guide_to_equitable_community-driven_climate_preparedness_high_res.pdf)

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-01/documents/equitable-development-report-508-011713b.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(08\)00682-X/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(08)00682-X/fulltext)

<sup>84</sup> <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/10/11/115005> see also file:///Users/amy/Downloads/ijerph-15-00640-v2.pdf

<sup>85</sup> <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/11/>

<sup>86</sup> <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/11/>

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/climate-change-economic-cost-united-states>

<sup>88</sup> <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25335>

## THE CRISIS OF PLACE IN WASHINGTON

As the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map Report states: “People living in Washington state experience environmental risks and their related health effects in measurably different ways, depending on the neighborhood where they live. People in communities that have lower incomes, less access to education and health care, and poorer overall health also shoulder a disproportionate share of the burden of environmental pollution....In short, where you live, your income, your race, or your language ability may put you at greater risk for exposure to the harmful health effects of environmental pollution.”<sup>89</sup>

In Washington, the impact of place shows up in numerous ways. Life expectancy varies widely by county; if you live in Asotin, Mason, Grays Harbor, Ferry, Lewis, Pacific, or Clallam Counties your life might be shortened by ten years.<sup>90</sup> In King County, people living in Southeast County and Auburn live almost 18 years less than people living in Mercer Island and Bellevue.<sup>91</sup> Poverty also has disproportionate impacts, such as a concentration in rural areas.<sup>92</sup> Within the 11 counties with the highest poverty rates in the state, 60% of the population is rural. Several of these counties also have large Latinx and Indigenous communities.<sup>93</sup> Rural counties also face persistent health disparities; the 20 counties comprising eastern Washington suffer from higher rates of cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer’s disease, unintentional injuries, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, diabetes, suicide, chronic liver disease, and flu.<sup>94</sup>

These place-based differences map onto race and income. There is a differential pollution burden across race; with higher rates of exposure among people of color generally than white communities, with significantly higher rates of exposure in Black and Asian communities.<sup>95</sup> White adults live an average of ten years longer than Black adults, 12 years longer than Hispanic adults, and three years longer than Asian/Pacific Islander adults.<sup>96</sup>

## HOUSING AND DISPLACEMENT

There is a growing housing affordability crisis across Washington state that is exacerbating transportation emissions and depreciating community resilience. Housing costs have grown 18% in the past several years, while incomes have only grown 3%, and for low-income residents, not at all.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> [https://deohs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/images/Washington\\_Environmental\\_Health\\_Disparities\\_Map.pdf](https://deohs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/images/Washington_Environmental_Health_Disparities_Map.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/78945-SHA.pdf> pg 8

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.healthdata.org/news-release/life-expectancy-varies-18-years-king-county>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/78945-SHA.pdf>

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1500/Context-SEP2016-DU.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> <https://news.wsu.edu/2019/01/29/college-medicine-report-shows-higher-mortality-rates-worse-health-outcomes-eastern-vs-western-washington/>

<sup>95</sup> <http://frontandcentered.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Fossil-Fuel-Pollution-Communities-of-Color.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> <http://frontandcentered.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Fossil-Fuel-Pollution-Communities-of-Color.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/AHAB-2017-Report.pdf>

Throughout the state, housing prices are at an all-time high,<sup>98</sup> leading to an increase in homelessness and displacement. The housing affordability crisis has hit communities of color, low-income communities, and renters the hardest.

Seattle has been particularly hard hit by displacement and gentrification, especially because of high rates of in-migration for jobs in the technology sector.<sup>99</sup> Combined with a lack of affordable housing options and rising housing costs, many people of color and low-income residents have been pushed out of the city, particularly towards South King County and outside city limits.<sup>100</sup>

Displacement increases GHG emissions because often people move to places that are further away from jobs, families, and services. As a result, people drive more, increasing GHG emissions.<sup>101</sup> As Enterprise Community Partners notes, there will not be decreased automobile use "if higher-income residents who may occasionally utilize transit take the place of core transit riders who no longer can afford to live in a neighborhood. Furthermore, a lack of housing affordable to people with low or moderate incomes within the urban core can push these households farther from the urban core, potentially exacerbating sprawl and increasing vehicle miles traveled (VMT)."<sup>102</sup>

Unfortunately, the framework of high density, compact land-use planning, meant to curb GHG emissions has been a driver of displacement in many areas, such as Seattle. As the Dukakis Center notes, "with the addition of transit, housing became more expensive, neighborhood residents wealthier and vehicle ownership more common. Many [transit rich neighborhoods] therefore experience gentrification, a pattern of neighborhood change marked by rising housing costs and incomes...the most likely potential transit riders are being crowded out by car owners less likely to be regular users of transit."<sup>103</sup> In their study of 42 neighborhoods across the country, this pattern was found to be more pronounced in low-income, high-rental areas that got new rail stations.<sup>104</sup> The light rail expansion in Seattle is a perfect example of the type of displacement that can occur through transportation investments; many of the neighborhoods surrounding new stations have seen a rise in housing prices. For example, between 2004 and 2009 there was a sharp increase in assessed property values surrounding the planned Othello Station in Rainier Valley, and a corresponding increase in property sale prices, most of which was purchased by out of the area speculators.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/AHAB-2017-Report.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> [http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/HALA/Policy/MHA\\_FEIS/3-1\\_HousingSocioecon\\_MHA\\_FEIS\\_2017.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/HALA/Policy/MHA_FEIS/3-1_HousingSocioecon_MHA_FEIS_2017.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/HumanServices/CDBG/2017%20AFH%20Final.4.25.17V2.pdf>; [http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/HALA/Policy/MHA\\_FEIS/3-1\\_HousingSocioecon\\_MHA\\_FEIS\\_2017.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/HALA/Policy/MHA_FEIS/3-1_HousingSocioecon_MHA_FEIS_2017.pdf)  
<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/FinalGrowthandEquityAnalysis.pdf>

<sup>101</sup> <https://psmag.com/news/can-curbing-gentrification-help-stop-climate-change>

<sup>102</sup> <https://atltransformationalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/Promoting-Opportunity-through-ETOD.pdf> pg 19

<sup>103</sup> [https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN\\_Equity\\_final.pdf](https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN_Equity_final.pdf) pg 33

<sup>104</sup> [https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN\\_Equity\\_final.pdf](https://www.northeastern.edu/csshresearch/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/03/TRN_Equity_final.pdf), pg 3

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.seattle.gov/documents/departments/seattleplanningcommission/seattlettransitcommunities/professionalprojectfinaljul13.pdf> og 15 - 16

The theoretical GHG savings gained from this kind of high density, compact development can in fact be cancelled out by the lifestyles and transportation habits of higher income people that move into these areas; new research shows that “in dense but prosperous neighborhoods, the reduced GHGs achieved by residential density are mostly—although not entirely—offset by high consumption of goods and services and leisure plane travel”<sup>106</sup> by high income residents.

The housing crisis is not just impacting urban areas. Displacement, and the related suburban areas where people move to, equates to loss of open space in rural areas, which also leads to increased infrastructure needs and services that are hard to finance.<sup>107</sup> Washington’s rural areas have high percentages of renters, not enough rental housing, and are facing increased development pressure from both overall population growth as well as overflow from people displaced from urban areas.<sup>108</sup> The loss of farmland can increase GHG emission for two reasons: farmlands can act as carbon “sinks,” and land that is urbanized has a higher GHG footprint.

## UNSUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND GROWTH

The extreme dependency of many people on cars is a major facet of unsustainable land-use planning. Transportation emissions are the largest source of emissions in the U.S. overall,<sup>109</sup> and they comprise almost half of Washington’s GHG emissions.<sup>110</sup> While most policy efforts to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions have focused on fuel efficiency and carbon content of fuel, these gains are threatened to be cancelled out because we continue to drive more, and have more people driving, as measured by vehicle miles travelled,<sup>111</sup> thus leading to increased transportation emissions.<sup>112</sup> This has been compounded by rapid growth in the state, leading to more cars on the road.

Washington has a statewide VMT reduction target of reducing per capita VMT by 18% by 2020 and 50% by 2050,<sup>113</sup> but current law does not require that the regional planning agencies demonstrate how they are planning for reduced VMTs and monitoring implementation.<sup>114</sup> From 2013 - 2017, both aggregate and per capita amount of VMTs on all public roads has risen.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>106</sup> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12740>

<sup>107</sup> <https://washtransplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/WTPPhase2-2017-web-Plan-1.pdf> pg 38

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.wshfc.org/newsletter/2017.09index.htm>

<sup>109</sup> <https://rhg.com/research/preliminary-us-emissions-estimates-for-2018/>

<sup>110</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1802043.pdf>

<sup>111</sup> [https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/cit\\_07092401a.pdf](https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/cit_07092401a.pdf)

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions> see also: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/pressroom/fhwa1905.cfm>

<sup>113</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=47.01.440>

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.jtlu.org/index.php/jtlu/article/viewFile/1173/1020>

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/LegReports/17-19/2018AttainmentReport.pdf>



Washington state's transportation funding stream prioritizes highways over public transit. The vast majority of Washington's state transportation funding comes from a highly-restricted fuel tax.<sup>116</sup> The second largest source of revenue is federal transportation funding.<sup>117</sup> Uses of the fuel tax as a funding source are limited to highway-related expenditures by the State Constitution. As a result, most transportation expenditures go to highway maintenance and preservation.<sup>118</sup>

The state has provided little funding for transit capital or operations. Transit agencies largely rely on sales tax, a volatile source of funding.<sup>119</sup> As the Washington State 2040 Transportation Plan notes that "there is inadequate funding to both maintain and expand the transportation system....Transportation funding is frequently divided up into silos that make investments in the transportation network challenging and create barriers to meeting performance expectations for issues such as travel time reliability, multimodal connections, equity, and modal choice."<sup>120</sup>

The state does have a range of other programs to support multimodal transportation planning, particularly through the Connecting Washington program, which includes grant programs such as the Rural Mobility Grant program, bicycle and pedestrian safety program, the Vanpool Investment Program, and Safe Routes to School Program.<sup>121</sup> For the most part however, these programs lack a focus on equity and have not been fully coordinated with housing funding or land-use planning.

## LACK OF COORDINATION WITH LAND-USE PLANNING

Statewide transportation and housing planning is not closely coordinated with land-use planning. Under Washington's Growth Management Act, the state sets broad goals for growth and resource management, which local governments then determine how they will meet through what is called a Comprehensive Plan.<sup>122</sup> While the act includes goals to curb suburban sprawl and increase affordable housing, it does not include explicit language around addressing equity or environmental justice or even require inclusion of climate change.<sup>123</sup> There is currently an effort underway for a comprehensive and collaborative look at the GMA through the University of Washington's William D. Ruckelshaus Center. The project gathered data, conducted stakeholder interviews and issued a report, but did not emphasize equity or target participation by communities of color.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2018/03/20/FinancialPlanning-Publication-FuelTaxAnalysisJanuary2017.pdf>

<sup>117</sup> <https://washttransplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/WTPPhase2-2017-web-AppendixB.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> <https://washttransplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/WTPPhase2-2017-web-AppendixB.pdf>

<sup>119</sup> [https://www.gglo.com/wp-content/uploads/Blueprint\\_for\\_Transit-Oriented\\_Communities.pdf](https://www.gglo.com/wp-content/uploads/Blueprint_for_Transit-Oriented_Communities.pdf) pg 63

<sup>120</sup> <https://washttransplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/WTPPhase2-2017-web-Plan-1.pdf> pg 54 and 60

<sup>121</sup> <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/funding/connecting-washington-multimodal>

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.futurewise.org/growth-management-act>

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/growth-management-topics/climate-change/>

<sup>124</sup> <https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/a-roadmap-to-washingtons-future/>

## ECOSYSTEM DEGRADATION

Washington's ecosystems are under stress. The state has lost 4.7% of forest land over 30 years—an annual rate of 0.2%, the equivalent of losing a football field-sized area every 42 minutes.<sup>125</sup> Important fisheries runs such as Columbia River sockeye salmon have been impacted by low stream flows and wildfires have increased.<sup>126</sup> The waters of the Puget Sound are already experiencing acidification, and sea level rise has already been documented in multiple locations.<sup>127</sup>

## UNSUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The predominant model of industrial agriculture is energy-intensive, depletes ecosystems and croplands, and is highly dependent on chemical inputs. It also relies on the systemic exploitation of farmworkers, who are paid extremely low wages and have few labor protections. It is extremely globalized as most people in the U.S. rely on products grown very far away. Conventional agriculture is highly subsidized—farms receive federal payments for production of commodity crops like wheat, corn, and soy, using ecological harmful monoculture practices.<sup>128</sup>

This dominant system of agriculture in Washington state has serious climate impacts. Nationally, agriculture contributes 9% of overall GHG emissions; in Washington state, agriculture contributes 6.8% of total GHG emissions.<sup>129</sup> The largest source of direct agricultural emissions is methane from livestock. Application of synthetic fertilizers and fossil-fuel-powered farm machinery and irrigation are the two other main sources of emissions.<sup>130</sup> However, agricultural emissions in Washington state are not directly regulated.

Washington's many large-scale dairies have led to wide-spread contamination. The estimated 200,000 adult dairy cows in Washington produce over 20 million pounds of manure each day, collectively. It is estimated that 2,500 dairy cows produce a waste load equivalent to a city of 411,000 people.<sup>131</sup> Waste from dairies has led to widespread contamination of groundwater, the predominant source of drinking water for many communities in rural Eastern Washington. This has impacted many small, low-income communities, as well as Native Americans on the Yakama Reservation.

<sup>125</sup> [https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw\\_gtr881.pdf](https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw_gtr881.pdf)

<sup>126</sup> [https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/NoTimeToWaste\\_CIG\\_Feb2019.pdf](https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/NoTimeToWaste_CIG_Feb2019.pdf)

<sup>127</sup> [http://cses.washington.edu/picea/mauger/ps-sok/ps-sok\\_cover\\_and\\_execsumm\\_2015.pdf](http://cses.washington.edu/picea/mauger/ps-sok/ps-sok_cover_and_execsumm_2015.pdf)

<sup>128</sup> <https://civileats.com/2018/06/14/this-is-our-moment-to-zero-in-on-the-farm-bill/>

<sup>129</sup> <https://washtransplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/WTPPhase2-2017-web-Plan-1.pdf> pg 54 and 60

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/216137/icode/>

<sup>131</sup> <https://environmentwashingtoncenter.org/programs/wac/factory-farms-fouled-waters>

Indirect agricultural GHG emissions are also quite substantial, though often not factored into agricultural emission data. These include emissions from agricultural food supply chains—the transport and storage of agricultural products from far-away places.<sup>132</sup> The main source of indirect agricultural emissions is deforestation to make way for agriculture and loss of cropland to other, more incentive land-uses.<sup>133</sup> Agricultural lands in Washington have declined at a rate of 0.7% per year, for a net loss of 22% over 30 years.<sup>134</sup> In the Puget Sound region, the loss of farmland has been as high as 14,000 acres per year, and Pierce, King, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties each lost more than 100,000 acres of farmland between 1950 and 2007.<sup>135</sup> The amount of land dedicated to urban land-uses is rapidly expanding in nearly all Washington counties,<sup>136</sup> which is also much more GHG intensive.

## PLACE-BASED POLICY APPROACHES

### A Local Accessibility: Integrated Housing and Transportation Provisioning

A core element of a Place-Based Approach is increased pollution-free accessibility, broadly defined. This includes stable and healthy housing and affordable, extensive, and clean mobility options. It also includes land-use practices that site homes, businesses, services, and community facilities all within proximity to each other. Planning with these principles can address both the housing crisis in the state, as well as significantly ratchet down Washington’s large transportation emissions.

As Got Green and Puget Sound SAGE note in their report *Our People, Our Power, Our Planet*, “when low-income people can thrive in place with access to transit, both vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.”<sup>137</sup> The report also highlights the social cohesion benefits: “Beyond major reductions in GHG emissions, sustainable communities foster the social, cultural, and economic opportunities that we need to thrive in a climate-changing world....Moreover, workers who live near their jobs spend less time commuting and more at home, which supports healthier, happier and more connected families.”<sup>138</sup>

<sup>132</sup> <https://www.ceres.org/news-center/press-releases/measure-chain-managing-ghg-emissions-agricultural-supply-chains>

<sup>133</sup> <https://www.nature.com/news/one-third-of-our-greenhouse-gas-emissions-come-from-agriculture-1.11708>

<sup>134</sup> [https://www.fs.fed.us/research/highlights/highlights\\_display.php?in\\_high\\_id=513](https://www.fs.fed.us/research/highlights/highlights_display.php?in_high_id=513)

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/AFTLosingGroundReportWeb-1.1.pdf>

<sup>136</sup> <https://washtransplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/WTPPhase2-2017-web-Plan-1.pdf> pg 54 and 60

<sup>137</sup> <https://pugetsoundsage.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/OurPeopleOurPlanetOurPower.pdf>

<sup>138</sup> <https://pugetsoundsage.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/OurPeopleOurPlanetOurPower.pdf>

As housing and transportation are planned in closer coordination, safeguards against displacement are of paramount importance. Many researchers have documented “environmental gentrification” - where environmental and sustainability improvements lead to rising land values and thus the displacement of low-income residents - has already been documented in many areas.<sup>139</sup> Efforts to improve local accessibility simply must include preservation of existing affordable housing and anti-displacement measures, both from an equity and climate perspective.

The state does have a program to encourage location-efficient transportation planning,<sup>140</sup> but there are no legislative requirements associated with it and there is not a significant focus on equity within the program.

Even when local governments make commitments to affordable housing, such as Seattle’s recently passed Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) policy, there are multiple equity concerns. Often the requirements on developers to build affordable housing are not high enough to offset the already occurring displacement. The MHA requires new developments to include 5% – 11% affordable housing or contribute per square foot fee to an affordable housing fund run by the city. The policy applies primarily to areas that are transit rich and also at risk of gentrification.<sup>141</sup> However, the MHA was accompanied by land-use changes that increased allowable density across the city, and there are concerns that the housing affordability requirements will be outweighed by the loss of affordable units under the upzone, and the requirements will not lead to the number of affordable housing units needed to address the housing crisis.<sup>142</sup>

If given the option, most developers opt to pay a fee in lieu of building affordable housing. This means that any new units built will not be built in the same area, which displaces people from their neighborhoods and communities. It also takes a long time to build new affordable housing, so people whose units are demolished for a new development are unlikely to be directly linked to new affordable housing construction. A final equity consideration is that often affordable housing income limits are set fairly high, such as 80% of Area Median Income, which reduces housing availability for very low-income people who need it the most.

It is also important to note the preserving existing affordable housing is the most cost-effective solution to the housing crisis, and the strategy with the largest potential GHG benefits, particularly if combined with energy efficiency retrofits. While many local governments have focused on building new housing, and are trying to increase funding for new affordable housing construction, the vast majority of affordable housing stock is older, private-market housing, or “naturally occurring affordable housing.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6210586/>

<sup>140</sup> <https://transportationefficient.org/>

<sup>141</sup> [http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/HALA/Policy/MHA\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/HALA/Policy/MHA_Overview.pdf)

<sup>142</sup> <http://www.pugetsoundsage.org/why-we-need-comprehensive-strategy-to-stop-displacement-alongside-mha/>

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.theurbanist.org/2019/03/08/could-preserving-affordable-rental-housing-stop-displacement-in-seattle/>

It is often in need of upgrades, and located on very desirable sites close to transit and other amenities. While more new affordable housing is certainly needed, it is very expensive to build and can take a long time to do so. In addition, as more market-rate housing is built, it continues to drive up the prices for housing overall, and thus price people out of existing housing stock much faster than it can be replaced. Preventing this housing stock from being demolished to make way for new, more expensive developments, is critical for long-term housing affordability.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*For details see Appendix B.*

### INTEGRATED HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- Increase the percentage of transportation funding for equitable transit-oriented development that includes affordable housing and displacement protections
- Include anti-displacement and location-efficient construction criteria or requirements in transportation and housing funding grant programs
- Create statewide requirements for transit-oriented developments that include affordable housing
- Increase funding for equitable transit-oriented development planning
- Increase funding and support for innovative funding programs for equitable transit-oriented development
- Authorize new local housing and transportation financing mechanisms, such as tax increment financing
- Establish special districts or zones to create a focal point for healthy, equitable transit-oriented investments
- Prioritize publicly-owned land for transit-oriented development with affordable housing protections
- Create community benefit agreements / districts (CBA's)
- Encourage ETOD joint development projects
- Require considerations of equity, environmental justice, and climate impacts in the Growth Management Act
- Require consistency between Comprehensive Plans, Regional Transportation Plans, and statewide climate policies

### HOUSING

- Legalize rent control
- Support increased tenant protections
- Create and fund implementation of localized anti-displacement strategies
- Provide increased, stabilized source of state funding for new affordable housing construction
- Support community right to purchase

- Expand funds for acquiring land and protecting existing affordable housing
- Require one to one replacement of any affordable units lost during new housing construction
- Implement inclusionary zoning
- Require impact fees
- Moratorium on new real estate development
- Support community land-trusts
- Support commercial building stabilization
- Ensure that planning meets community needs in place
- Create a stable, long-term funding source for combined energy efficiency and healthy home upgrades in affordable housing
- Direct a percentage of statewide clean energy and energy efficiency funds into low-income communities and communities of color

## TRANSPORTATION

- Expand local, regional, and statewide public transportation funding
- Prioritize equitable public transit projects in public transportation funding
- Create regional VMT reduction targets
- Expand land-use authority to require location efficient and multimodal planning within transportation plans
- Require clear goals and increase funding for transit reach and affordability for low-income, youth and disabled residents
- Create fare assistance programs for low-income public transit users and other vulnerable communities
- Create and implement active transportation plans
- Enhance planning for and funding of accessible shared mobility

## B Clean Up and Prevention of Pollution

Just under half of all toxic sites in Washington state are located in areas that are disproportionately non-white, and just over half of all toxic sites are located in areas that are disproportionately low-income.<sup>144</sup> The environmental justice movement has its roots in resistance from low-income communities and communities of color to the construction of new polluting facilities in their neighborhoods.<sup>145</sup> Communities of color have used creative strategies to fight the construction of new polluting projects, from the use of statewide environmental laws to local land-use planning restrictions to civil disobedience to passing new legislation or regulations. Across the country, these site fights have prevented new pollution and increased community capacity and power.

<sup>144</sup> [https://frontandcentered.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MTCA-Report\\_1-25-17.pdf](https://frontandcentered.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MTCA-Report_1-25-17.pdf)

<sup>145</sup> From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement, <https://www.amazon.com/Ground-Up-Environmental-Movement-Critical/dp/0814715370>

Fighting localized pollution can also be a powerful tool to reduce GHGs and push forward a transition off fossil fuels. For example, re-use of brownfields can be an important method for mitigating climate change and its health implications, as well as fostering community economic development. Cleaning up these sites and using them for mixed-use, affordable housing and community-oriented development, creates GHG benefits and breaks patterns of unsustainable development and can be a catalyst for community connection.

Increasingly, environmental justice communities across the country are also looking at the place-based impacts of fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure. Driven by the longstanding impacts on health, as well as the increasing urgency of climate change, communities are fighting to get existing infrastructure—pipelines, oil or gas drilling, or refineries - out, and stopping the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure.

There is a clear climate imperative to stop the development of new fossil fuel projects. Research shows that we need to keep a majority of fossil fuels in the ground in order to prevent catastrophic climate change. One study has shown that using the reserves in currently operating oil and gas fields alone, even with no coal, would take the world beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius. Despite the clear need to prevent new oil and gas extraction and limit existing operations, most climate policies have focused on reducing the demand for fossil fuels, while policies that address the “supply” of fossil fuel have been slower to gain traction.

However, local communities have been advancing a range of their own efforts to tackle the demand for fossil fuels, including fighting back against new pipelines in their communities or working to restrict or stop oil and gas drilling locally. These efforts not only have the potential to improve local health and reduce pollution, they demonstrate a path to a Just Transition, led by the communities most impacted.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the most important issues to grapple with when considering policies that phase out polluting industries—whether they be fossil fuels or other industrial facilities - are the economic impacts and potential job losses. Industry often uses an inflated threat of job losses to prevent strong action on environmental protection. We must counter this false narrative when communities are fighting to stop certain polluting practices as there can be impacts that must be addressed. In particular, we must address the impacts on small businesses, workers, and potential loss of tax revenue which goes to local services. It is important to have a rigorous, data-driven process to quantify what the impacts are, particularly because industry so often inflates potential losses. For example, the Washington State Labor Council commissioned a study on the employment impacts of meeting state GHG emission reduction goals.

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<sup>146</sup> <https://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/life-after-oil/why-we-need-to-keep-80-percent-of-fossil-fuels-in-the-ground-20160215>

<sup>147</sup> <http://priceofoil.org/2016/09/22/the-skys-limit-report/>

<sup>148</sup> <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2018/climate-change-talks-need-address-fossil-fuel-supplies/>



They found that about 5,400 jobs would be impacted, which would almost entirely be offset by the number of workers who voluntarily move into retirement during the same timeframe. The study included a series of policy proposals to further address employment and economic development.<sup>149</sup>

Plans to phase-out polluting industries can be accompanied by financial support for small businesses, impacted workers, or the surrounding community, which can include dedicated training, job placement services, retirement funds, or community economic development grants. The Clean Up Green Up ordinance in Los Angeles created a program to help small businesses in designated zones, subject to more protective environmental and health standards, green up their practices. The settlement that resulted in the closure of the Centralia Coal Plant, slated for 2020, includes a Centralia Coal Transition fund, with annual contributions adding up to \$55 million by 2023. The fund supports \$10 million for weatherization and energy efficiency projects; \$20 million for education, job training, and economic development projects (and \$5 million set aside for Centralia plant workers); and \$25 million for energy technology investments, all focused on the geographic area surrounding the plant.<sup>150</sup>

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*For details see Appendix B.*

- Use the Polluter Pays principle to guide policy decisions
- Use the precautionary principle to guide policy decisions
- Increase land-use protections or restrictions in EJ communities
- Require buffer zones between sensitive land uses and polluters
- Increase environmental review in EJ communities
- Increase environmental protections in EJ communities
- Prioritize clean-up in EJ communities
- Prioritize funding for environmental clean-up in EJ communities
- Enact a ban on polluting industries
- Prohibit development of new fossil fuel infrastructure or specific projects (oil pipelines and terminals, coal ports, etc.)
- Limit extraction, production, or export
- Phase out fossil fuel production

<sup>149</sup> A Green New Deal for Washington State, Political Economy Research Institute, <https://www.peri.umass.edu/component/k2/item/1033-a-green-new-deal-for-washington-state>

<sup>150</sup> <https://energytransition.org/2018/01/washington-state-leaves-coal-behind-but-not-its-workers/>

## C Green Infrastructure, Open Space, and Healthy Ecologies

There is a well-documented disparity in access to green space and open space; many low-income communities and communities of color are park poor.<sup>151</sup> Often times, parks or open space facilities that do exist in low-income areas are dilapidated and poorly maintained. While this disparity in access is particularly pronounced in urban areas, rural areas also face challenges in ensuring access to open spaces and parks for residents. Many rural Washington areas have few economic resources, and thus little to spend on developing parks or playing fields.<sup>152</sup> Compounding this is the ongoing pressure of development and related loss of open space in rural areas.<sup>153</sup>

“Green infrastructure” can be used to move communities towards a regenerative built environment. According to the American Planning Association, “Green infrastructure is the integration of nature and ecosystems in cities, towns, and regions to generate multiple benefits, such as clean air, better stormwater management, and public health. At the regional scale, it is a planned network of natural areas and open spaces, such as parks and nature preserves, river corridors, greenways and trails, and forests and wetlands. At the neighborhood and site scales, it includes parks, rain gardens, green streets, green walls and roofs, community gardens, and the urban forest.”<sup>154</sup>

Similarly, policies that support healthy ecologies are critical pieces to the overall transition away from our current extractive economy, and a Place-Based Approach can help communities foster new practices of ecological stewardship while enjoying and benefiting from restored ecosystems.

### EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

As with transit-oriented development, investments in green and open space or green infrastructure can lead to displacement and gentrification as neighborhoods become more desirable to higher-income people. Investments in green space, infrastructure, and localized agriculture must be accompanied by preservation of affordable housing and anti-displacement protections.

While there are great potential benefits to natural climate solutions and ecosystem restoration, these strategies cannot be pursued without the broader transitions off fossil fuels and shifts in overall energy consumption outlined elsewhere in this report.

<sup>151</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0169204614000310>

<sup>152</sup> <https://crosscut.com/2019/03/wa-makes-it-easier-rural-towns-and-tribes-build-parks>

<sup>153</sup> <https://openspacepugetsound.org/sites/default/files/final-report/Regional-Open-Space-Strategy.pdf> and <http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Planning/Development-Types-and-Land-Uses/Farmland-Preservation-Techniques-and-Sustainable-A.aspx>

<sup>154</sup> <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9148357/>

There are many examples of where policies that are supposed to preserve natural resources actually do the opposite. For example, “sustainable forestry” policies can often promote large-scale timber harvesting. Offsets, which are often seen as a way to spur investments in natural land protection and are commonly used in forest management, can enable polluters to avoid reducing emissions.

Even as we encourage the pursuit of ecosystem restoration and natural climate solutions, they also must be combined with local community development needs, particularly in areas with chronic poverty. We must support policy approaches that promote ecosystem restoration while meeting local community needs through sustainable measures, not one over the other.

Finally, given the specific relationship that Indigenous people have with resource management, their leadership is critical. They not only have unique knowledge of ecosystem management that can provide incredible insights, but their cultures are also uniquely vulnerable to the degradation of natural resources.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*For details see Appendix B.*

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE

- Prioritize funding for parks, open space preservation, and greening in low-income areas
- Create goals for open space access in underserved communities as part of land-use planning
- Increase requirements for implementation of green infrastructure in development
- Expand green infrastructure funding and financing programs with a focus on implementation in EJ communities

### HEALTH ECOLOGIES

- Recognize legal rights of Nature
- Include full valuation of the role of healthy ecosystems in environmental and economic policies
- Increase ecosystem protection, particularly in areas with high potential to sequester carbon
- Phase out activities that lead to a loss of carbon sequestration capacity
- Encourage resource management policies and practices that use an integrated approach
- Require reporting of emissions from ecosystem losses and ecological events in statewide GHG accounting
- Increase funding for ecosystem restoration projects
- Support Indigenous leadership in ecosystem restoration

## D Regenerative Agriculture

Agroecology focuses on small-scale, natural farming techniques that do not deplete ecosystems and can enhance carbon sequestration.<sup>155</sup> “Research shows that organic and regenerative practices, like cover cropping, crop rotation, composting, and managed livestock grazing can foster biodiversity, natural soil fertility, and water conservation. These practices also contribute to higher yields and make diversified organic farming systems more resilient in the face of climate-related weather impacts like drought and floods.”<sup>156</sup>

### KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*For details see Appendix B.*

#### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE

- Regulate agricultural emissions
- Include urban agriculture-friendly policies in Comprehensive Plan and adopt urban-agriculture-friendly zoning policies
- Provide financial support for start-up or operating costs through grants on a variety of issues and low-interest loans, available at the local, state, or federal levels
- Support the development of agricultural cooperatives
- Expand funding for agroecology
- Expand farmland conservation programs
- Improve agricultural land-use protections
- Increase programs that encourage healthy soil management practices
- Encourage more sustainable livestock waste management practices
- Increase farmworker protections and right to organize

<sup>155</sup> <http://inthesetimes.com/features/green-new-deal-food-production.html>

<sup>156</sup> <https://foodtank.com/news/2019/02/opinion-green-new-deal-must-transform-our-food-system-to-save-our-climate/>

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## Chapter V: Regenerative Livelihoods

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### AN ECONOMY IN SERVICE TO PEOPLE AND PLANET

A regenerative economy focuses on overall goals such as social, economic, and environmental well-being. A regenerative economy is one that is structured to prioritize sustainable consumption within ecological limits, eradicating inequality, ensuring all basic needs are met, and fostering an overall sense of individual and community happiness and health. These values are at odds with the current economic model, which prioritizes growth and profits. In doing so, it exploits both people and the planet, and is driving cause behind the twin crises of inequality and climate change.

A regenerative economy is one that lives within the Earth's ecological capacities. As the Climate Justice Alliance states, a "Just Transition must advance ecological resilience, reduce resource consumption, restore biodiversity and traditional ways of life, and undermine extractive economies, including capitalism, that erode the ecological basis of our collective well-being. This also means producing to live well without living better at the expense of others."<sup>157</sup>

We must decouple our economy, production, and consumption, from sources of greenhouse gas emissions, like the use of fossil fuels, as much as possible. Yet we also must address scale of production and consumption and the nature of our current economic system, which requires extraction and growth in consumption – which is coupled with climate pollution. Science and the degree of change required has made it clear we also need to create a new system that is not dependent on churning through resources.

### ECONOMIES WITHIN ECOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES & REDUCING ABSOLUTE CONSUMPTION

The Earth has an "ecological limit": a given amount of ecological benefits and services that it can sustain. But humanity's demands keep growing and each year we use more resources than the Earth can replenish, called "ecological overshoot," which "occurs when human demand exceeds the regenerative capacity of a natural ecosystem. The biosphere's renewable capacity includes the replenishment of resources and the absorption of waste, such as carbon dioxide from fossil fuel. The estimated level of resources and ecosystem services required to support human activities today is just over 1.7 Earths. Global overshoot occurs when humanity demands more than what the biosphere can renew. Our planet went into global overshoot in the early 1970s."<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> <https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/>

<sup>158</sup> <https://www.overshootday.org/newsroom/media-backgrounder/>

The global carbon footprint is a driving force behind ecological overshoot and climate change, and a major contributor to the outsized carbon footprint is consumption. A 2016 study found that globally, between 60% and 80% of the climate impacts come from household consumption, and that much of this is from the indirect environmental impacts of consumption, such as the resources used to produce goods we consume.<sup>159</sup>

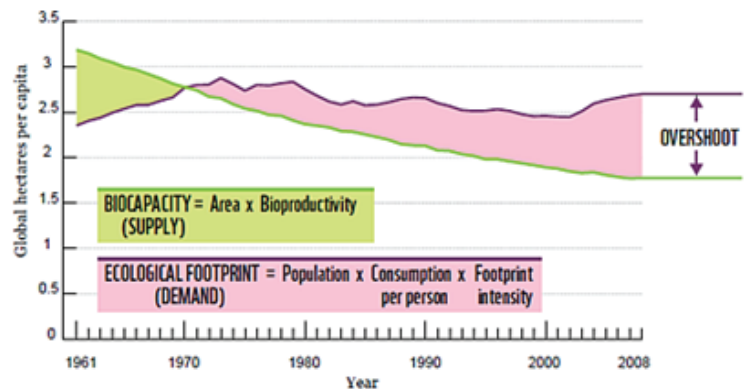


Figure 15: Example of overshoot where ecological footprint exceeds biocapacity

It is also large extractive corporations and the wealthy who are primarily responsible for global GHGs. One hundred companies have been the source of more than 70% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions since 1988. Around 50% of global emissions can be attributed to the richest 10% of people around the world, who have average carbon footprints 11 times as high as the poorest half of the population. The richer a country is overall, the more it consumes, and the higher its GHG footprint; countries with the highest rates of consumption had up to 5.5 times the environmental impact as the global average.

For decades, the U.S. was the world's largest carbon emitter and, although now second to China in annual emissions, we still carry the greatest historical responsibility for the causes of climate change. The U.S.'s emissions have been largely driven by extremely high rates of consumption of both natural resources and goods. As both income inequality and the climate crisis has worsened, the U.S. has been steadily rolling back publicly-run programs that provide a social safety net to our most vulnerable and needy residents.

*In the U.S., the top 10% of polluters are responsible for 25% of total emissions, and the carbon footprint of the top 2% of wealthiest Americans is more than four times than those of people in the bottom 10% income bracket*

Most of the services are available only to people making below a certain income level.<sup>160</sup> However, range of programs has faced steady roll backs since the 1980's, most prominently with massive welfare reform enacted in 1996.<sup>161</sup> The end result are the high rates of poverty, food insecurity, lack of economic mobility, and other indicators of inequality that are now common across the country.

Some climate impacts can be reduced through modal shifts and efficiency improvement, such as switching from fossil fuel power to renewables or car to transit. But ultimately, we likely need large-scale reductions in the volume of overconsumption to achieve the necessary scale of change as illustrated in Figure 16 for transportation on the x axis as lower travel demand.

<sup>159</sup> <https://norwegianscitechnews.com/2016/02/household-consumption-significant-driver-of-climate-other-environmental-impacts/>

<sup>160</sup> <https://norwegianscitechnews.com/2016/02/household-consumption-significant-driver-of-climate-other-environmental-impacts/>

<sup>161</sup> [https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online\\_articles/a-tattered-safety-net-social-policy-and-american-inequality](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/a-tattered-safety-net-social-policy-and-american-inequality)

## IMPLICATIONS OF MOVING BEYOND GROWTH-BASED, EXTRACTIVE ECONOMY

Economic growth in recent years has reinforced, rather than decreased historic inequities based on geography, race, wealth, etc. Historically, economic growth has been a substitute for economic equality; as the pie grows bigger everyone can imagine they have a shot at a bigger piece; and government and philanthropy has more ability to redistribute. To move beyond growth-based extraction and consumer economy requires social foundation to which everyone can meet their fundamental needs and equitable distribution of resources to achieve that.

We need to redesign our economy completely. This includes everything from interest-bearing debt as a system of finance to public services which rely on sales taxes, work hours, industrial policy, and labor productivity. The policies that facilitate economic transition also need to ensure that the next economy ends exploitative relationships, restores commons, and fosters stewardship and cooperation. One illustration of that economy is the idea of Doughnut Economics by Kate Raeworth (see Figure 17), where the economy has two fundamental purposes: 1) to provide a universal foundation for a good life, and 2) to ensure we're not exceeding critical planetary boundaries. Practical strategies that conform to this framework are described in the policy approaches.

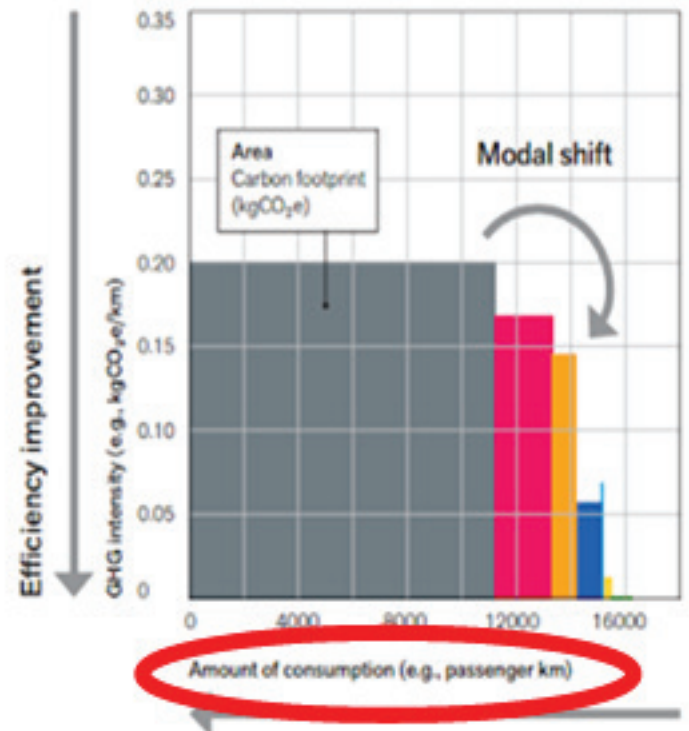


Figure 16: We can improve efficiency and change fuel types, but the amount of consumption is a key, but often ignored driver of our total carbon footprint.



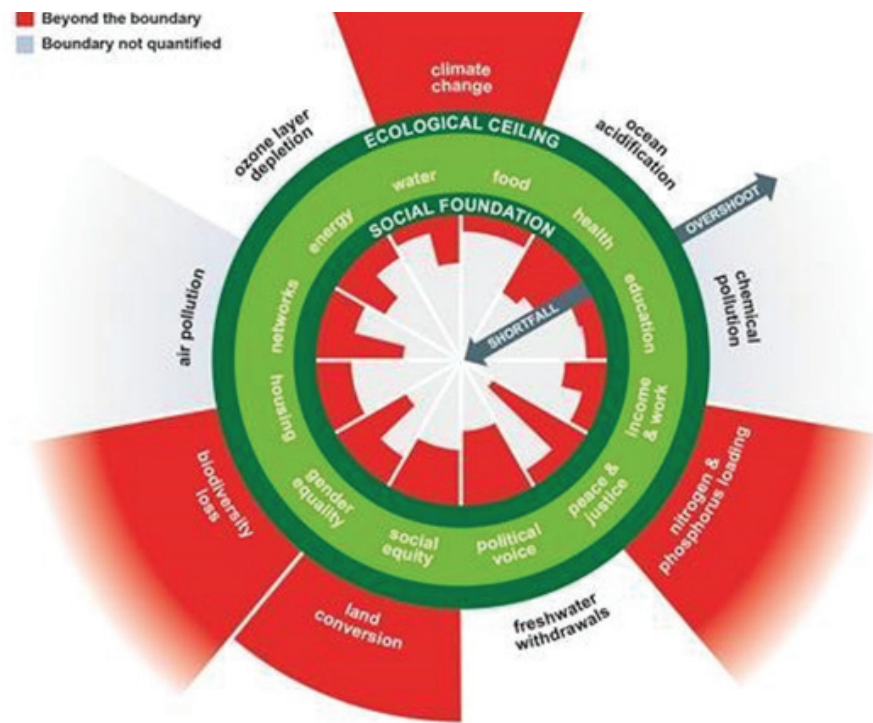


Figure 17: Doughnut Economics illustration by Kate Raeworth with the Planetary Boundaries illustration by Rockstrom et al etc.

## PRINCIPLES FOR A REGENERATIVE ECONOMY

A regenerative economy is rooted in democracy and self-determination, is sustainable and equitable, and creates shared economic well-being. This is a fundamental reorientation away from an economy rooted in growth, commodification, extraction of labor and resources, and exclusion based on race and gender. We envision a Washington where all people's fundamental needs are met, including having free time for important things like family and participation in community life. Where all work is dignified, rewarded, where all workers have a voice at work, and where everyone can afford to live a good life. Where the air, water, and land are clean and healthy. Three core principles that economic policy must follow are:

### Equitable

Builds power for those excluded from decision-making and eliminates barriers to opportunity, including barriers based on race, gender, class, and geography, towards the aim of universal well-being. Boldly claims participation and agency for all to democratically build, operate, and manage our livelihoods and the economy.

### Transformative

Moves toward a fundamental shift in the way our economy works with the ultimate goal that everyone can meet their fundamental needs. Shifts both the purpose and the worldview of the economy. Recognizes interconnectedness of people and earth, values culture and the many different aspects of people's lives, and allows new dreams and visions to flourish. Advances an economy that is diverse, democratic, and community centered.

## Regenerative

Restorative of place, people, and resource use. Emphasizes care, dignity, and collective well-being within the means of healthy environments and a safe planet. Undermines current emphasis on scarcity, growth, and extraction which relies on exploitation of workers and the environment.

## WASHINGTON'S ECONOMY IS NOT MEETING OUR NEEDS

In 2018, Washington had the fastest growing economy in the nation, topping several years of rapid expansion, as measured by Gross Domestic Product.<sup>162</sup> Washington has also experienced some of the highest levels of overall job growth in the nation.<sup>163</sup> The industries driving this growth include aerospace, agriculture, technology, forest products, the military, maritime industries, and healthcare.<sup>164</sup>

Washington's top industries are part of a globalized consumer economy, with significant climate impacts that are not included in any state GHG inventories. For example, while Amazon has not publicly disclosed its overall carbon footprint, independent estimates put it around 19.1 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, the equivalent of 4.7 coal-fired power plants operating for one year, mostly from shipping related emissions.<sup>165</sup> Nationwide, aircraft emissions are growing and are still the single largest source of transportation emissions that are unregulated.<sup>166</sup> The U.S. military is the single largest consumer of energy in the world; if measured independently it would rank in the top 25 carbon emitting countries.<sup>167</sup> Washington's economic engines are inextricably linked to a global, fossil-fuel, and consumption based economy, which has been a fundamental driver of climate change, and our economy is not prepared for a future that centers climate justice.

The economic growth has other negative impacts. According to a 2018 report, the top 1% of earners in Washington take home almost 20% of all income in the state, ranking 10th in the nation for income inequality. While the average income of the top 1% of earners is around \$1.3 million, the rest of Washingtonians are earning around \$57,000 per year.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2019/05/02/fast-growing-washington-state-knocks-massachusetts-out-top-largest-state-economies/?utm\\_term=.53a0e73f38d3](https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2019/05/02/fast-growing-washington-state-knocks-massachusetts-out-top-largest-state-economies/?utm_term=.53a0e73f38d3)

<sup>163</sup> <http://www.auburn-reporter.com/business/report-washington-experienced-continued-economic-growth-in-2018/>

<sup>164</sup> <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/key-sectors>

<sup>165</sup> <https://350seattle.org/amazon/>

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.c2es.org/content/reducing-carbon-dioxide-emissions-from-aircraft/>; <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2019/1/11/18177118/airlines-climate-change-emissions-travel>

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/christian-stirling-haig/budget-deal-could-fuel-pentagon-green-energy-blitz>

<sup>168</sup> <https://www.epi.org/multimedia/unequal-states-of-america/#/Washington>

This wealth gap mirrors the overall extreme racial wealth gap in the U.S. The median white family has 41 times more wealth than the median Black family and 22 times more wealth than the median Latino family;<sup>169</sup> and while white median wealth has steadily increased, it has stayed the same for households of color, or even worsened, as it has for Black families.<sup>170</sup>

In fact, more than 60% of Washington's tax base is dependent on people consuming.<sup>171</sup> With no income tax, the state heavily relies on sales and excise taxes, which not only needs consumption to bring in revenue, but places a significant burden on low-income households. The state's wealthiest households spend about 3% of their income on taxes, while the poorest families spend 17.8%, making Washington one of the most regressive tax structures in the U.S.<sup>172</sup> And despite all the economic growth, poverty rates have remained overall the same in the state.<sup>173</sup> Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by poverty: Native Americans and African Americans make up only 1.9% and 4.2% of the total population, respectively, comprise 25% and 19.5% of those in poverty.<sup>174</sup>

## REGENERATIVE ECONOMY POLICY APPROACHES

The New Economy Washington Report identified four areas of potential exploration. These strategies inform and overlap in some areas with strategies to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. They include Participatory and Purposeful Governance and to Govern Capital, Land, and Public Infrastructure Toward Public Goals and Values, these strategies are covered for the most part in the Equitable Governance and Place-Based strategies sections. They also include to Ensure Everyone's Fundamental Needs Are Met, Govern for Good Business and Worker Self-Determination, and reducing Income and Wealth Inequality which will be covered here.

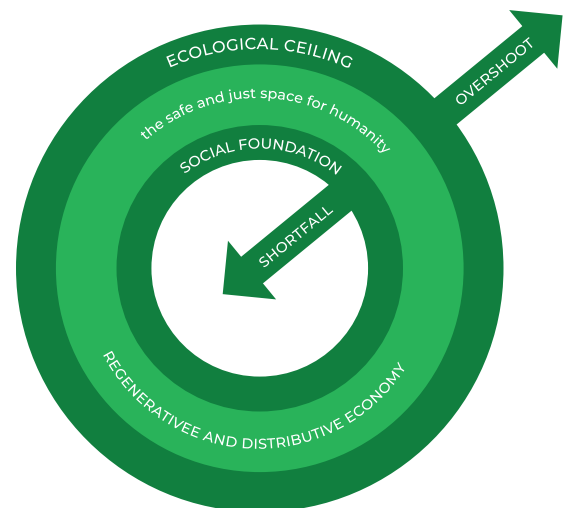


Figure 18: Doughnut Economics model by Kate Raeworth

<sup>169</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/23/opinion/closing-the-racial-wealth-gap.html>

<sup>170</sup> [https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/IPS\\_RWD-Report\\_FINAL-1.15.19.pdf](https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/IPS_RWD-Report_FINAL-1.15.19.pdf)

<sup>171</sup> <https://www.kuow.org/stories/why-washington-ranks-as-the-worst-state-for-poor-residents>

<sup>172</sup> <https://www.kuow.org/stories/why-washington-ranks-as-the-worst-state-for-poor-residents>

<sup>173</sup> <https://www.washington.edu/news/2018/09/13/poverty-rates-hold-steady-average-incomes-continue-to-increase-in-seattle-area-and-washington-state/>

<sup>174</sup> <https://talkpoverty.org/state-year-report/washington-2018-report/>

## A Meet Universal, Fundamental Needs, Create a Social Foundation

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2018 assessment notes that "Ending poverty in its multiple dimensions is often a highly effective form of climate adaptation... A model... which depicts broader 'sustainability' as well as enhancing equity and poverty reductions – is the only pathway where all models could reach 1.5°C." Ensuring that all people in Washington have their basic needs met is both critical to taking aggressive action on mitigating and adapting to climate change as well as a fundamental component of a regenerative economy.

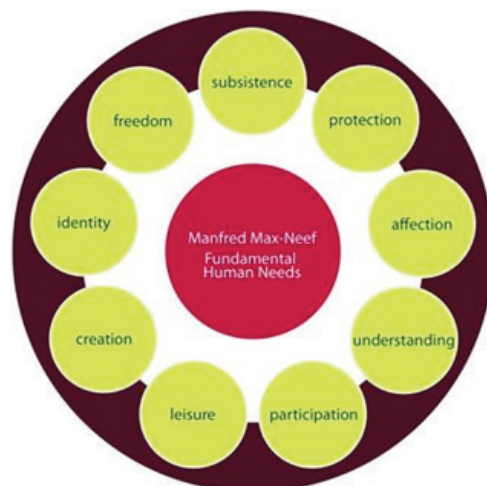


Figure 19: Fundamental Human Needs by Manfred Max-Neef

### EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Defining fundamental human needs is still contested and with limited resources and meeting universal fundamental needs can be confused with treating everyone the same, rather than targeted universalism.

### KEY POLICY APPROACHES

See Appendix C for details.

- Expand Social Safety Net Programs
- Ensure universal basic services
- Support basic income
- Remove barriers for previously incarcerated people
- Expand homeownership opportunities for low-income communities and communities of color
- Substantially expand existing savings vehicles for low-income residents
- Establish state-funded "baby bonds"

## **B Create an Economic Model That Lives within Ecological Limits**

There are multiple frameworks that have offered alternative ways of structuring society to ensure we are living within ecological boundaries. One is the Latin American Indigenous concept of “Buen Vivir.” “Buen Vivir is based on the belief that true well-being (‘the good life’) is only possible as part of a community. The good of the community is placed above that of the individual. Furthermore, this is community in an expanded sense; it includes Nature, plants, animals, and the Earth. Nature itself must be cared for and respected as a valuable part of the community. The land cannot be owned; it should be honored and protected.”<sup>175</sup> It rejects the growth-dependent, traditional model of development, it also recognizes that we must live simply and in community to achieve human well-being.

Unfortunately, instead of focusing on this type of holistic and ecologically balanced notion of development, the U.S. political economy has promoted a highly consumptive lifestyle that deemphasizes both ecological sustainability as well as community and individual well-being. On average, each American emits around 16.1 tons of carbon annually, and in order to reach the goals set in the Paris Climate Accords, we would need to limit individual carbon emissions to around 2.1 tons per person by some accounts.

Another study has found that individual carbon footprints are highly dependent on per capita living space, energy used for household appliances, meat consumption, car use, and vacation travel. And wealthy people — even those who self-identify as green — consume more and do more of all those things.

Another useful framework is the concept of “degrowth.” Degrowth is defined as a “voluntary transition towards a just, participatory, and ecologically sustainable society,” which focuses on three core principles: “reduce environmental impacts of human activities, redistribute income and wealth both within and between countries; promote the transition from a materialistic to a convivial and participatory society.”<sup>176</sup>

### **EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS**

Even with an economy that is centered on people and the planet, not profit, systems of social oppression will continue to exist. Even as we work to create new economic values, programs and policies, they must be built with explicit recognition and focus on addressing historical legacies of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, as well as building in mechanisms to address these dynamics as they continue to emerge.

Any efforts to reduce consumption must foreground the need to meet everyone’s fundamental needs, first and foremost. Reducing consumption should not be approached in an across-the-board fashion; those with the most resources should be required to reduce first and the most, while at the same time proactive efforts to meet universal needs are pursued.

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<sup>175</sup> <https://blog.pachamama.org/buen-vivir-new-era-great-social-change>

<sup>176</sup> <https://inequality.org/great-divide/degrowth-movement-economic-health/>

Reducing consumption must also be coupled with aggressive efforts to reign in corporate power. A driving factor in U.S. consumption is the advertising efforts of companies and the various ways these companies are able to manipulate policies and access to markets to promote products and increase profit. Thus, while rolling back individual consumption is necessary, it is not a substitute for also rolling back the power and influence of large corporate producers.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

See Appendix C for details.

### WELL-BEING ECONOMY: EQUITABLE WELL-BEING OVER TRICKLE-DOWN GROWTH

- Measure well-being, not just growth
- Restructure public budgets around metrics of social and ecological well-being
- Establish comprehensive metrics that address equity and well-being and their application in legislative and programmatic analysis
- Base economic development strategies on community-defined need rather than just tax revenue or aggregate number of jobs

### LIVING WITHIN ECOLOGICAL LIMITS

- Limit overconsumption
- Enact limits on resource consumption by sector
- Promote localized, independent reuse and repair of goods
- Promote a people-powered sharing economy
- Promote zero waste
- Extend producer responsibility
- Require product reliability and longevity
- Eliminate producer waste & toxics
- Increase culturally competent education on the benefits of a plant-based diet

## C Equitable Distribution of Wealth and Work

Washington's highly inequitable system over-relies on regressive forms of taxes, like sales and other excise taxes, that create a significant burden for low and middle income people while putting little cost burden on the wealthy.<sup>177</sup> It creates a fundamental economic inequality whereby those with the most resources pay the least, and thus starve the entire state of funding for education and services that are desperately needed to alleviate inequality, which in turn is needed to ensure the dignity of all people.

<sup>177</sup> <https://budgetandpolicy.org/schmudget/unacceptable-washington-still-has-the-nations-most-inequitable-state-tax-code/>

Progressive taxation is a way to ensure that resources are distributed equitably throughout society. Equitable distribution of resources is a necessary condition for action in other areas, such as limiting societal extraction and consumption, as well as a direct strategy to reduce pollution based on competition or insecurity. Progressive taxation will also be needed in order to fund adaptation to climate change.

Central to a regenerative economy is the creation of living wage jobs in industries that do not rely on or promote fossil-fuel use and have a limited environmental impact overall. Employment opportunities need to provide a family-sustaining wage, be permanent, and have a strong set of benefits. This also includes ensuring that communities most impacted by both pollution, poverty, and chronic unemployment have access to these jobs.

The other major component is developing the types of community-centered work and enterprises that are deeply aligned with the Just Transition framework. Yet a Just Transition cannot leave a generation of workers – particularly low-income workers of color — behind and left out of the new employment opportunities. We have already seen this pattern occur with automation and the tech industry, whereby millions of people—mostly people of color – have been effectively locked out of well-paying jobs because of a lack of access to quality education, training, racism, gender-based discrimination, and other structural barriers. Similarly, workers who currently work in fossil fuel industries must also not be left behind. Workers must not pay the price of a Just Transition with their livelihoods.

Another key part of ensuring good jobs is protecting and supporting the right to unionize. Unions are a critical way for workers to build their collective power and improve working conditions. Unions have been under attack for the past several decades and supporting the right to unionize is critical to advancing economic justice, closing the racial wealth gap, and ensuring dignified working conditions.

We need new models of economic development that meet community needs and create jobs and income—while limiting resource inputs and outputs. A Just Transition requires a “re-localization and democratization of primary production and consumption by building up local food systems, local clean energy, and small-scale production that are sustainable economically and ecologically. This also means producing to live well without living better at the expense of others,” according to the Climate Justice Alliance.<sup>178</sup>

Locally-owned businesses have been shown to have multiple benefits: Local, small businesses are linked to higher incomes and less inequality; locally-owned businesses in dense, mixed-use commercial districts generate more tax revenue for cities than sprawling shopping centers, while also costing less in public services; they foster community cohesion and well-being because the social fabric of a community is tightly coupled with the health of its independent businesses; and community-scaled businesses reduce pollution and improve environmental sustainability. Finally, studies have shown that people who live in communities where small, locally-owned businesses are the norm are healthier than those who live in places where large corporations predominate.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> [https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA\\_JustTransition\\_Principles\\_final\\_hi-rez.pdf](https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA_JustTransition_Principles_final_hi-rez.pdf)

<sup>179</sup> [https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA\\_JustTransition\\_Principles\\_final\\_hi-rez.pdf](https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA_JustTransition_Principles_final_hi-rez.pdf)



To move towards a regenerative economy, we must stop investing resources in the extractive economy. A Just Transition requires that we move our resources — including money and labor—away from the activities that are the underpinnings of an extractive economy, and into activities that are regenerative; ones that promote ecological sustainability and community well-being.

*The Ujima Project in Boston project provides an overview of the main components of one potential vision for community-centered work and enterprise. It includes building a solidarity ecosystem of good businesses, community capital through a dedicated fund, leveraging anchor institutions, accessing the power of arts and cultural organizing, creative consumer organizing, all driven by equitable governance and deep democracy.*

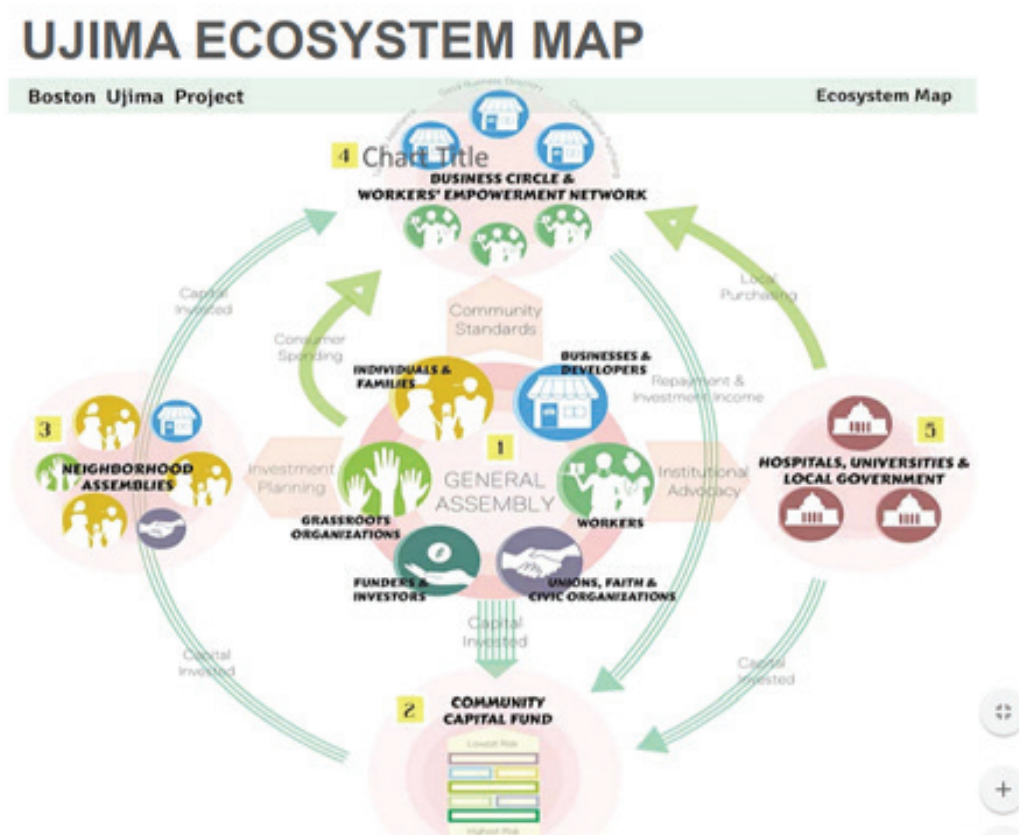


Figure 19: Fundamental Human Needs by Mandred Max-Neef

As Movement Generation writes, “the combination of resource extraction and labor exploitation creates a system of industrial production we call dig-burn-dump. We dig up resources, primarily energy, burn it, and then dump the waste. Dig-burn-dump plays out in many ways: we dig up oil, burn it in cars, and dump the waste everywhere—into the water, the atmosphere, and even the lungs of our children.”<sup>180</sup>

<sup>180</sup> [https://movementgeneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/JT\\_booklet\\_English\\_SPREADs\\_web.pdf](https://movementgeneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/JT_booklet_English_SPREADs_web.pdf)

The extractive economy includes the fossil fuel industry, which is driving the climate crisis, but it also includes industries that extract human labor while leading to ecological destruction, such as the military and mining more broadly. It also encompasses forms of “extractive finance” that prioritize profit and returns over human, community, or ecological well-being, such as debt financing and predatory lending. These financial practices not only exploit the wealth and labor of communities, in doing so, they exacerbate inequality, which further undermines the effort to achieve climate justice.

The framework of “moving the money” thus includes not only starving the fossil fuel industry specifically, by eliminating public and private investments and support for oil extraction and production, but also reinvesting in activities that have social justice, sustainability, and democracy at their core.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

The renewable energy sector lacks diversity and strong job standards. This is particularly pronounced in the residential solar market, where the workforce is less representative of people of color than the population in Washington, not unionized, and there are no clear workforce standards, leading to lower-paying jobs that are often short-term.

Another challenge is that often times job-training programs are not directly connected to job opportunities. Additionally, many job opportunities are short-term, low-wage, or even volunteer jobs, none of which are viable options for low-income job seekers.

Finally, to ensure that a generation of people are not locked out of jobs, there must be a specific emphasis on engaging, hiring, and training people from environmental justice communities and people who face a range of employment barriers, such as people who are formerly incarcerated. Without these types of clear targeted hire efforts, people who have been systematically locked out of good jobs will face the same issues, just repeated in the green economy. For example, the solar workforce is 73% white and 74% male.<sup>181</sup>

Research has also documented the negative impact of having many corporations in an area; counties dominated by a few big firms have lower levels of social capital and less engaged citizens than those in which economic activity is dispersed across many locally-owned businesses, and other research has linked the regional market share of large retail chains with higher rates of poverty, infant mortality, and crime, as well as more hate groups.<sup>182</sup>

Community-based enterprise must be financially, culturally, linguistically, and logistically accessible to low-income communities and communities of color. Without building these programs and initiatives around the vision and needs of communities of color, they can become exclusive efforts that cater to those that can afford to participate or become culturally irrelevant and inaccessible to communities of color.

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<sup>181</sup> National Solar Jobs Census, pg 49

<sup>182</sup> <https://ilsr.org/local-ownership-healthier-wealthier-wiser/>

Moving resources away from the extractive economy must be done in a way that protects and supports low-income communities and communities of color. This includes protecting against any dramatic price shocks, but also ensuring alternative financing models are available to communities most impacted and are not exclusionary.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

See Appendix C for details.

### PROGRESSIVE TAXATION & WEALTH REDISTRIBUTION

- Enact progressive income taxes
- Tax the wealthy
- Close tax loopholes, such as enacting a Capital Gains tax
- Reform the state property tax code
- Enact a Working Families Tax Credit and other tax breaks for low-income residents
- Support innovative local tax reform efforts
- Reform the Business & Occupation tax
- Explore new strategies to tax large corporations

### TRANSITION TO GOOD JOBS IN NON-EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- Ensure financial support and job placement for workers in fossil fuel industries that phase out
- Funding to support new, sustainable community-based development in areas surrounding fossil fuel infrastructure
- Support priority and local hire
- Support Workforce Training & Apprenticeship programs
- Ensure workforce standards
- Support worker organizing and the right to unionize
- Support a living wage
- Prevent enclosure and privatization
- Shift jobs toward care and craft
- Keep work local or in-state

### COMMUNITY CENTERED WORK AND ENTERPRISE

- Facilitate the start-up and operation of neighborhood and locally-owned businesses
- Provide financial support and technical assistance for small businesses that meet sustainability and equity criteria
- Expand and reform Community Development funds to better meet sustainability and equity goals
- Support co-operatives
- Support local purchasing preferences
- Support a living wage
- Guarantee and finance rights of workers to collectively buy and own businesses
- Restrict formula businesses

- Eliminate subsidies for corporation operations and re-locations
- Reduce the work week or create flexible work hour policies
- Guarantee and finance rights of workers to collectively buy and own businesses

## MOVE THE MONEY

- Divest from fossil fuels
- Support financial transaction taxes
- Prohibit or limit interest bearing debt
- Support public banking
- Democratize the ability to put savings toward local and community-owned businesses, enterprises, and institutions
- Support lending circles

## Chapter VI: Renewable Resources & Energy

Energy is a dominant resource issue in climate change work because the burning of carbon-based fuels for energy is the largest contributor to the greenhouse effect. We recognize that forests and agricultural land are also critical but often ignored, especially in a state such as Washington that is abundant in natural resources. Using a narrow lens to only promote a rapid transition to renewable energy can create additional extraction pressures, such as increased mining for raw materials needed to produce solar panels and wind turbines. In this first version of our strategy, we focus on energy. In future versions of our strategy, we hope to address the broader set of very important resource questions.

Ensuring a transition to renewable, equitable energy can and must be a tool to achieve environmental and climate justice and can serve as a cornerstone to building the new regenerative economy we envision. Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the renewable or circular model of energy and resources used in a regenerative economy builds economic, natural, and social capital. In this chapter, we provide some context about Washington's energy sector, identify the various policy approaches that have the potential to lead an equitable, renewable energy transition, and conclude with recommendations for Front and Centered's energy policy priorities.

### DESPITE PROGRESS, IT'S A LONG JOURNEY TO 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

Understanding Washington's energy landscape requires looking at the dominant sources of energy, how energy is consumed, and the related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of these activities.

## SOURCES OF ENERGY

According to state data from 2016, the most recent year data is available, petroleum supplies 45.6% of Washington's primary energy needs.<sup>183</sup> Natural gas, the second largest source, provides 20% of the state's energy needs,<sup>184</sup> with coal and nuclear energy together providing 9.5%.<sup>185</sup> Fossil fuel sources (petroleum, coal, and natural gas) accounted for 67.7% of primary energy use in 2016.<sup>186</sup>

A large portion of the state's petroleum is imported from Alaska, with a growing amount imported from Canadian oil sands and the Bakken region of North Dakota via rail.<sup>187</sup> Washington has five refineries, with the fifth largest refining capacity in the country. As of 2015, about half of what the state refines is used in Washington, and the rest of it is exported.<sup>188</sup>

## ENERGY USE AND GHG EMISSIONS

According to the most recent state GHG inventory, which tracks emissions through 2015, transportation is the largest source of GHG emissions, accounting for 42% of total emissions.<sup>189</sup> Transportation emissions largely come from the combustion of oil in cars, trucks, marine vessels, and planes.<sup>190</sup> Residential, commercial, and industrial emissions account for 23.5% of emissions, and are generally from fuel combustion for both residential and process heating.<sup>191</sup> Electricity consumption is the third largest source of emissions, which accounts for 19.5% of the state's total.<sup>192</sup> The largest source of electricity (69%) is hydroelectric power.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Commerce-Biennial-Energy-Report-2017.pdf> pg 69

<sup>184</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 69

<sup>185</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 69

<sup>186</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 69

<sup>187</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Commerce-Biennial-Energy-Report-2017.pdf>, pg 98

<sup>188</sup> [http://www.energytrans.org/uploads/4/7/9/7/47971323/2015-08-20\\_jones\\_refineries.pdf](http://www.energytrans.org/uploads/4/7/9/7/47971323/2015-08-20_jones_refineries.pdf) pg 2

<sup>189</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1802043.pdf> pg 14

<sup>190</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1802043.pdf> pg 14

<sup>191</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1802043.pdf> pg 11

<sup>192</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1802043.pdf>

<sup>193</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 70

Washington has a baseline of energy policies, but many are in need of updating to be more aggressive and include a clearer focus on equity considerations. The state has targets for reducing vehicle miles traveled, but no clear mechanism to achieve them, including a clean car standard without a mandate to expand electric vehicles. The state has a range of energy efficiency measures for both consumer goods and buildings, and is discussing a new efficiency requirement for commercial buildings.<sup>194</sup> For several years, the state legislature has discussed a fuel standard for vehicles, but have not passed any laws.<sup>195</sup>

- In 2008, Washington adopted economy-wide greenhouse gas limits, but they are generally insufficient to meet Washington's commitment to aligning with the United Nations climate change commitments made in Paris,<sup>196</sup> or help drive reductions in state as aggressively as the challenge of climate change demands.
- The 2016 "Clean Air Rule" requires 40 of the largest GHG emitters in primary sectors, to reduce or purchase reductions of 1.7% per year until 2035, but there are pending court challenges.<sup>197</sup>
- In 2019, Washington passed a new Clean Energy Standard that requires the state to power 100% of its electricity from carbon-free resources by 2045. The legislation phases out coal entirely by 2025 and requires all electricity sales to be carbon-neutral by 2030.

## GHG EMISSIONS FROM THE MILITARY

*The US military is the single largest consumer of energy in the world; if measured independently it would rank in the top 25 carbon emitting countries. Washington has six active duty military installations as well as a major homeland security installation, two Department of Energy facilities, and two world-class universities performing defense-related research within its borders. Washington is 6th in the nation in the number of active duty military, with 69,125 military personnel and another 90,246 dependents and 19,474 reservists. The amount of fuel and energy these activities use is unknown and not regulated by or reported to the state, but a Just Transition will ultimately require a massive scale-back of military overall, and certainly a reduction in GHG emissions.*

<sup>194</sup> <https://nwenergy.org/featured/wa-senate-committee-hears-testimony-on-clean-buildings-bill/>

<sup>195</sup> <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/washington-house-passes-clean-fuels-legislation-sought-by-inslee/>

<sup>196</sup> <https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/washington-teams-states-and-provinces-worldwide-committing-cut-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

<sup>197</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf>, pg 8

## ENERGY POLICY APPROACHES

Transitioning from extractive to regenerative resources equitably and effectively will require taking action in many policy arenas. Front And Centered has identified various policy approaches to achieve this goal, including ‘stopping the bad’ strategies through the slowing of energy emissions and consumption to ‘building the new’ approaches that deploying renewables and electrifying end uses in ways that advance equity. The approaches are often overlapping and are interwoven together. Often even the specific policy levers within the five broad approaches are combined together and are rarely used in isolation. By developing policies that expand access and increase affordability for low-income residents, safeguard against negative impacts in low-income communities, and strengthen democratic and participatory practices, many of the policy approaches can directly improve the health and economic opportunities of low-income communities, while creating universal benefits for all Washingtonians and the climate. We have also identified Preventing Extraction as a key strategy to limit pollution, but this is covered in the Communities Connection to Place chapter of this report.

### A Pollution Limits

Pollution limits have been a backstop of environmental policy for years, as shown through formative federal legislation such as the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. This approach can apply to climate change; in 2014 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the EPA can regulate greenhouse-gas emissions under the Clean Air Act.<sup>198</sup> This cleared the way for the Clean Power Plan, which established a limit on carbon pollution from power plants under Clean Air Act authority.

Limits on pollution can provide both universal benefits to the climate, and targeted benefits to frontline communities by reducing immediate pollution burdens. Across the country, numerous studies have established the disproportionate burden of pollution that impacts low-income communities and communities of color.<sup>199</sup> Front and Centered documented similar patterns in Washington in a 2016 report; our findings show higher level of air pollution exposures among Black and Asian communities, as well as related health issues such as increased rates of asthma and lower life expectancies.<sup>200</sup>

Pollution limits can directly address these pollution burdens in communities of color. By directly addressing the needs of frontline communities and placing the burden of action on polluters, they foster equitable governance. If structured correctly, they can also support regenerative economies by restraining corporate actors that are driving the extractive economy. They are also one of the most effective and immediate ways to slow emissions of greenhouse gases specifically, thus achieving health and climate benefits all at once.

<sup>198</sup> [https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/mrcbg/working.papers/FWP\\_2018-04.pdf](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/mrcbg/working.papers/FWP_2018-04.pdf)

<sup>199</sup> See for example: Climate Gap; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16533111>; <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/13/6001>

<sup>200</sup> <http://frontandcentered.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Fossil-Fuel-Pollution-Communities-of-Color.pdf>



Pollution limits can directly address these pollution burdens in communities of color. By directly addressing the needs of frontline communities and placing the burden of action on polluters, they foster equitable governance. If structured correctly, they can also support regenerative economies by restraining corporate actors that are driving the extractive economy. They are also one of the most effective and immediate ways to slow emissions of greenhouse gases specifically, thus achieving health and climate benefits all at once.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Limits by themselves do not necessarily achieve the goal of phasing out dirty, polluting industries, but can be calibrated to decrease the impact of polluters over time. Ideally, limits prevent the inclusion of dirty energy sources in the operation of any regulated entities. But if not structured correctly, limits can allow for overall expansion. Some limits may focus on per unit of emissions, not setting an absolute cap on pollution, in which case a facility can expand and thus lead to an overall increase, while still meeting per unit emission limits. In other cases, the regulatory process to establish a limit factors is impacted by industry lobbying, and a limit is set at a low level, allowing a facility to continue emitting as long as they are under the threshold.

Most limits on pollution or polluting fuels look at emissions on a pollutant-by-pollutant level, rather than cumulatively. For communities who face a range of pollution burdens and vulnerabilities, this approach can fail to capture the full breadth of localized health impacts or the full range of ecologically destructive activities from an industry.

Another consideration with limits is how they are actually achieved and what penalties exist to enforce them. They can be a way to avoid more complicated and less effective market-based mechanisms. However, effectiveness of a limit can be impeded if a regulatory agency does not actively enforce the limits or sets penalties for noncompliance too low. For example, an agency can set limits lower than is needed to protect the environment or public health, based on over-consideration of how costly more strict limits may be for the polluters. Weak limits can allow pollution to continue in highly-impacted communities.

In some instances, limits can be enacted, but still create loopholes that prevent strict implementation. For example, the federal Environmental Protection Agency's attempt to limit carbon pollution from power plants, the Clean Power Plan (CPP), set a limit on carbon emissions from power plants - but it also relied on a system of trading credits for carbon emissions which would be given or sold to regulated entities, which could then be traded.<sup>201</sup> In fact, even though the Clean Air Act is considered a cornerstone of direct environmental regulations in the U.S., it also includes various pollution trading options within its provisions, most notably its program to address acid rain.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>201</sup> [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ourpower/pages/135/attachments/original/1456539064/Our-Power-Plan-FINAL-on-line\\_2016-01-15.pdf?1456539064](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ourpower/pages/135/attachments/original/1456539064/Our-Power-Plan-FINAL-on-line_2016-01-15.pdf?1456539064) pg 14

<sup>202</sup> <http://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Carbon-Pricing-A-Critical-Perspective-for-Community-Resistance-Online-Version.pdf> pg 26

A final consideration in any pollution limit is the ultimate cost to consumers. While industry often uses this argument to prevent increased regulatory action, hard limits can lead to increased costs. In these scenarios, low-income communities and communities of color must have price protections enacted so they do not bear the burden of any cost increases.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*See Appendix D for details.*

- Set a target for GHG reductions in the energy sector
- Set an absolute limit on GHG emissions from energy sources or industrial sectors.
- Limit the polluting sources used in energy generation
- Create performance standards
- Create technology standards:
- Set a limit on the intensity of pollution in energy sources

## REGARDING CARBON PRICING AND MARKET MECHANISMS

Placing a fee on carbon pollution is a common policy approach that seeks to increase the cost of pollution, thus disincentivizing it. This entails creating a cost on polluters or their pollution, which can be structured in a variety of ways. This theoretically makes it more expensive to pollute, which then drives the polluter to change to less-polluting practices to reduce production.

Because most, though not all, of these strategies rely on the market to achieve environmental outcomes, pricing strategies are often referred to as “market-based mechanisms.” Market-based mechanisms in particular are designed to be cost effective for businesses to comply with overarching greenhouse gas reduction regulations. In doing so, they create a revenue stream that can be invested in climate mitigation or adaptation efforts.

Other types of pricing strategies target individuals, seeking to make polluting actions more expensive at the consumer level, thus driving down demand for fossil-fuel based goods; these are mostly common seen as a strategy to ratchet down transportation emissions from gas-powered cars. A final type of pricing policy uses the opposite approach, seeking to reduce financial supports for fossil-fuel activities.

While market-based mechanisms have a range of equity concerns, pricing disincentives that target polluting corporations can be a strategy to change the rules of the current system and constrain the profit and power of corporate actors, and can help shift governance and resources to support regenerative economies.

However, market-based mechanisms prioritize economic efficiency. Economic efficiency, a pillar of the extractive economy, can come at the expense of environmental effectiveness and distributional justice. Pricing mechanisms create the opportunity to pay, but there is no requirement for direct reductions. For example, under the British Columbia carbon tax, oil companies as regulated entities pay a tax on the carbon pollution in their product, but do not need to sell less. Sales are determined by the market, which means companies can continue producing and emitting as long as they pay. Since many of the largest sources of GHG pollution, including highways and airports, are located in communities of color, ongoing emissions exacerbates already existing environmental health issues.<sup>203</sup>

The effectiveness of any pricing policy is dependent upon on several factors. One is how aggressive the fee or price is set: extremely high disincentives are often required to make changes when there are few easy, comparable alternatives available and demand is strong. Across the country—and even the globe - there has yet to be a fee or price that is high enough to drive the emission reductions needed at this point in time.<sup>204</sup> And while pricing theoretically can be a way to make polluters pay, this only works if polluters are required to pay in an amount that impacts their profits, rather than becoming just another cost of doing business. Oil companies operating under pricing policies, such as California's cap and trade system, have continued to enjoy record profits and expand operations.

Many pricing policies include a range of compliance options designed to benefit polluters and/or that polluters lobby to maximize. For example, in the 2016 legislative fight to reauthorize cap and trade in California, many polluters lobbied to receive a much higher quantity of free permits to pollute (called allowances) than the amount proven necessary by the state's own economic analysis.<sup>205</sup> Other compliance options, like offsets, have dubious climate benefits and in an international context, have led to documented human rights abuses.<sup>206</sup>

Pricing can also have regressive impacts on consumers. Polluters can pass the increased costs onto consumers, which would be disproportionately felt among low-income communities. Fuel providers may pass along costs at the pump, or public transit users may see a rise in fares. Additionally, demand for fossil fuels can leak from priced sectors (utilities, industrial facilities, fuel providers, etc.) to unpriced sectors (such as consumer goods or airline flights). Pricing is based on ability to pay, rather than degree of emissions. Pricing does bring in revenue, which can alleviate some of the consumer impacts. The revenue can be invested back into communities and other climate mitigation and adaptation measures.

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<sup>203</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1002604>

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/tax/tax-policy/few-countries-are-pricing-carbon-high-enough-to-meet-climate-targets.htm>

<sup>205</sup> <https://calmatters.org/articles/big-polluters-renew-doubts-california-climate-change-goals/>

<sup>206</sup> <http://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Carbon-Pricing-A-Critical-Perspective-for-Community-Resistance-Online-Version.pdf>

Many environmental justice groups oppose carbon pricing all together. Groups like the Indigenous Environmental Network oppose the commodification of air and nature broadly speaking, and have documented many Indigenous human rights abuses associated with international market-based mechanisms.<sup>207</sup> Many EJ groups also point to the numerous ways large corporations influence the development of market-based mechanisms, and even promote or help develop them, as a strategy to create a facade of action of climate, while making compliance as cheap as possible and maintaining their capacity to continue extracting fossil fuels.<sup>208</sup>

Front and Centered approaches pricing as a strategy to focus on fees on polluters for investment in communities rather than pricing as a mechanism. For example, the 2018 Initiative 1631 proposed a fee on carbon content to fund a robust investment strategy, which included a Clean Air and Energy Investments Fund, a Clean Water and Healthy Forests Fund, Healthy Communities Fund, and a Clean Up Pollution Fund, with a total of 45% of all revenues going to low-income communities and communities of color.<sup>209</sup> Front and Centered's approach was notably divergent from previous efforts to price carbon in Washington, in particular I-732, a revenue neutral ballot initiative sponsored in 2016. This initiative would have enacted a tax on carbon pollution, but the money would have flown directly back out of the state in the form of various tax cuts. This approach fails to create long-term investments in the most impacted communities. Overall, while Front and Centered does not believe in pricing as a long-term strategy, it can be effective as a strategy to raise revenues for much needed climate investments.

## **B Building Energy Conservation & Electrification**

A significant portion of GHG reductions can be achieved by reducing energy demand through increased efficiency and conservation, and in fact are a needed component in the overall effort to limit climate change.<sup>210</sup> This holds true both nationally and in Washington state; energy efficiency and conservation must be a core component of decarbonizing Washington's economy,<sup>211</sup> and there are great opportunities to do so. About half of all energy powering the state is lost as waste heat.<sup>212</sup> This section focuses on energy efficiency and electrification in buildings and consumer goods, and electrification of transportation is discussed in Section E.

<sup>207</sup> <http://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Carbon-Pricing-A-Critical-Perspective-for-Community-Resistance-Online-Version.pdf>

<sup>208</sup> <http://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Carbon-Pricing-A-Critical-Perspective-for-Community-Resistance-Online-Version.pdf>

<sup>209</sup> <http://www.pugetsoundsage.org/how-does-1631-work/>

<sup>210</sup> <https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Basav-report-final-online-1.pdf> pg 28

<sup>211</sup> Deep Decarbonization Pathways Analysis for Washington State: Executive Summary

<sup>212</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 10

Energy efficiency and conservation measures include improving the performance of consumer goods, such as appliances and homes, as well as creating new standards that require higher levels of energy efficiency in goods, buildings, and industrial operations. Energy efficiency and conservation designed around our Climate Justice Principles can maximize economic justice, public health, and climate benefits, with few negative impacts. Improving energy efficiency and conservation has the potential to reduce household energy costs, thus improving economic security for low-income residents and reduce overall energy usage, which ultimately lowers fossil fuel pollution.<sup>213</sup>

Buildings are one of the fastest growing sources of GHG emissions in the state, representing 27% of total emissions.<sup>214</sup> The primary source of residential energy uses are space and water heating, and over half of Washington's homes already rely on electricity for heating.<sup>215</sup> While overall household electrical consumption has declined, the use of natural gas for heating increased.<sup>216</sup> In 2019, Washington passed a new bill creating energy performance standards and incentives for large commercial buildings of over 50,000 square feet.<sup>217</sup>

Inefficient energy systems in residential buildings disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color. Low-income households pay up to three times as much as the average household on their energy bills,<sup>218</sup> and renting, multifamily, African American, and Latinx households also face disproportionately high “energy burdens.”<sup>219</sup> This can exacerbate mental and financial stress, as well as lead to higher rates of health problems.<sup>220</sup> Nationwide, 25 million households – including 11 million with children – reported reducing or forgoing food or medicine to pay for energy-related household expenses in 2015, impacting nearly half of all Black and Latinx households.<sup>221</sup> Rural households are also particularly impacted, facing higher energy burdens.<sup>222</sup>

In Washington, the 2018 Home Energy Affordability Gap found that households 50% below the federal poverty line spend 76% of their income on energy bills, and households with incomes between 50% and 100% of the federal poverty level face a home energy burden of 41%.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> <https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Basav-report-final-online-1.pdf>

<sup>214</sup> <https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/clean-buildings-policy-brief.pdf>

<sup>215</sup> <https://www.eia.gov/state/index.php?sid=WA>

<sup>216</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 79

<sup>217</sup> <https://nwenergy.org/featured/examining-washingtons-groundbreaking-climate-package/>

<sup>218</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf>, pg 30

<sup>219</sup> <https://aceee.org/files/proceedings/2018/#/paper/event-data/p390>

<sup>220</sup> <https://aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/u1602.pdf> pg 13

<sup>221</sup> <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/us-households-are-using-less-energy/>

<sup>222</sup> <http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/rural-households-spend-40-percent-more-their-income-energy-bills>

<sup>223</sup> [http://www.homeenergyaffordabilitygap.com/03a\\_affordabilityData.html](http://www.homeenergyaffordabilitygap.com/03a_affordabilityData.html), “Washington 2018 HEAG Fact Sheet”

Older, inefficient housing stock can not only be a driver of high energy bills,<sup>224</sup> and is much more likely to have substandard conditions such as mold, lead, pests, poor ventilation, inadequate heating and cooling, or dilapidated water and wastewater systems – all of which can have severe impacts on health.<sup>225</sup> Due to economic marginalization, people of color and low-income people are much more likely to live in housing with these types of issues. Many energy efficiency and conservation home improvements can also be paired with additional interventions that address substandard housing conditions.<sup>226</sup> Strategies to address the intersection of housing insecurity and climate change are discussed more in the Communities Connection to Place chapter.

While technology can play an important role, conservation is also about seeding a cultural shift in behavior and expectations that is needed to ultimately reduce overall energy consumption. For example, in a climate-impacted future, consumers, regulators, and utilities may have to accept less power availability at peak hours or less extreme standards for reliability. These shifts must be carefully designed to ensure that they do not create undue burdens for those with the fewest resources to adapt.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

To achieve both structural and distributional justice, energy efficiency policies must be crafted to expand access for low-income residents to the economic, health, and environmental benefits of efficiency programs. Too often low-income households cannot afford the higher upfront costs of more energy efficient consumer goods, such as cars and appliances, even though these items have lower lifetime operating costs.<sup>227</sup>

Financial incentive programs, such as publicly-funded weatherization or appliance rebate programs, can play a critical role in expanding access to energy efficiency benefits for low-income residents. Unfortunately, often publicly-funded programs that are targeted to low-income households, such as Washington's Low Income Weatherization and Energy Assistance programs, lack adequate funding needed to reach all eligible households,<sup>228</sup> and there are few resources for working poor households in state.<sup>229</sup>

Outside of publicly-funded programs, utilities often apply a surcharge to all ratepayers to fund energy efficiency programs. These utility-funded programs often face other barriers in reaching low-income households.<sup>230</sup> These include lack of accessible information on programs, as well as requirements such as upfront cash outlays, or are in the form of loans that households may be unable to take on due to poor credit or existing financial strains.

<sup>224</sup> [http://energyefficiencyforall.org/sites/default/files/Lifting%20the%20High%20Energy%20Burden\\_0.pdf](http://energyefficiencyforall.org/sites/default/files/Lifting%20the%20High%20Energy%20Burden_0.pdf)

<sup>225</sup> [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(08\)00682-X/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(08)00682-X/fulltext)

<sup>226</sup> <https://www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/home-and-health/elements-green-healthy-home/>

<sup>227</sup> <https://aceee.org/files/proceedings/2018/#/paper/event-data/p390>

<sup>228</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf>, pg 33

<sup>229</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf>, pg 38

<sup>230</sup> <https://ilsr.org/report-inclusive-energy-financing/#Executive>

In addition, many low-income people rent, but since they pay the utility bill, landlords do not have a financial incentive to make efficiency upgrades, which means renters lose the opportunity to benefit from efficiency and conservation.<sup>231</sup>

However, if low-income residents are not accessing these programs, it creates an unequal cost burden. Similarly, because industry has been able to profit from energy uses, they should be required to pay for their own efficiency upgrades, rather than requiring the public to shoulder the cost burden. Direct investments and incentives must be distributed equitably with attention to where they would make the most impact.

Broadly speaking, most energy efficiency and conservation measures are targeted to shift individual behaviors. While such shifts are undoubtedly needed, an overemphasis on these measures can overlook the underlying, structural drivers of climate change and pollution. Energy efficiency and conservation measures must not only tackle consumer choices, but also industry actions, such as improving industrial and commercial efficiency and improving efficiency within our largest and dirtiest sources of energy, such as natural gas.

Energy efficiency and conservation targeted on an individual level can also lose impact due to the “rebound effect,” whereby cost savings in one area due to energy efficiency, such as saving money on fuel because someone has an EV, leads to spending in another area, which may have GHG emissions that overwhelm the reductions from the original savings.<sup>232</sup>

Energy efficiency and conservation benefits should not become luxury items that reinforce the structural inequalities that lock-out the most vulnerable residents out of environmental and economic benefits, especially when the overall GHG savings can be maximized with low-income people. Analysis and modeling can be particularly helpful at offsetting these equity challenges. These tools, particularly within state implementing agencies, can be used to project the distributional impacts of any policy choices, and thus help design solutions that avoid reinforcing inequities.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*See Appendix D for details.*

- Limit excessive energy use
- Use pricing to discourage higher consumption energy source
- Set energy conservation standards
- Support performance, equipment and building code standards
- Support education and outreach
- Set mandatory targets for industrial efficiency
- Enact financial incentives for commercial and industrial electrification
- Direct investments in home energy efficiency and conservation
- Expand financial incentives for home energy efficiency
- Support PACE financing

<sup>231</sup> <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2016/04/electricity-bills-by-city-low-income-costs/478155/>

<sup>232</sup> [http://environment.yale.edu/gillingham/GillinghamRapsonWagner\\_Rebound.pdf](http://environment.yale.edu/gillingham/GillinghamRapsonWagner_Rebound.pdf)



## C Increase Renewable Energy Production

Increased renewable energy production is critical to Washington's overall decarbonization.<sup>233</sup> While the state has a relatively low-carbon electrical grid because of the large share of hydroelectric power, the state still relies significantly on natural gas and imports coal from other states. While the amount of wind power in particular has grown, excluding hydroelectric, renewables provide a relatively small amount of the state's overall electricity. As the state moves towards increased electrification of end uses (see Section E), ensuring that this power is drawing from non-fossil fuel sources and is accompanied by a strong conservation regime will be critical.

Equitable renewable energy requires not only a transition to 100% renewable energy, but also a democratic approach to controlling and managing energy systems. Energy Democracy is a framework that seeks to "create community-owned or controlled renewable energy and to invest that capacity with democratic principles that foster interdependence, conservation, wealth-building, political autonomy, and economic opportunity."<sup>234</sup> Energy Democracy can be used to strengthen all of Front and Centered's key strategies: strengthening equitable governance by intervening in utility dominance and expanding participatory resource management; increasing regenerative resources; and strengthening local communities through increased infrastructure, economic assets, and political power.

### EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Equitable renewable energy policies must dramatically expand both accessibility and affordability of renewable energy. Unfortunately, disparities in access to renewable energy are pervasive; a recent study found that majority Black, Latinx, and Asian census tracts show on average less rooftop photovoltaics (PV) when compared to majority white census tracts.<sup>235</sup> While governments have moved billions of dollars in clean energy tax incentives and credits, the bottom three fifths of income earners in the U.S. have received only 10% of the tax credits.<sup>236</sup> Residential renewable energy remains cost-prohibitive for most low-income people and communities of color. Many of these same communities do not own homes where PV can even be installed.

It is primarily utilities that will be required to replace fossil fuels and costs, if any, could be passed on to all ratepayers. Currently, low-income rate payers pay a higher share of their income on energy utilities than higher income customers, which would lead to disproportionate impacts by any rate increases associated with a transition off cheaper fossil fuels. Entities - from businesses to households—with access to clean energy technologies will be rewarded and those with less access may be more burdened by these policies.

<sup>233</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 11

<sup>234</sup> <https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Energy-Democracy-Report-WEB-1.pdf> pg 6

<sup>235</sup> Disparities in rooftop photovoltaics deployment in the United States by race and ethnicity

<sup>236</sup> <http://ei.haas.berkeley.edu/research/papers/WP262.pdf>

A framework for equitable renewable energy doesn't just focus on the consumer; it also looks at the broader system of energy production and control. The current system of large-scale utility energy provision is one of the barriers to more democratized renewable energy production. There are a range of types of energy providers, including Consumer Utility Districts (MUDs, which take several different forms, including Municipal Utility Districts), Investor Owned Utilities (IOU's), and rural co-operatives. All utilities have a monopoly on energy provision to their ratepayers, and have developed around a model of providing centralized, fossil-fuel energy. All IOU's in Washington are regulated by the Utilities and Transportation Commission.

IOU's are beholden to investors and have financial incentives to maintain and even expand their existing infrastructure. As a result, these entities have been recalcitrant to increase renewable energy and energy efficiency measures.<sup>237</sup> They have also opposed decentralized renewable energy projects that introduce new generators or providers to a service areas.<sup>238</sup> For example, one of the state's largest IOU's, Puget Sound Energy, has been trying to build a liquified natural gas plant in Tacoma that is strongly opposed by the community. Finally, many large-scale utilities have opaque and technocratic governance and decision-making processes that inhibit community engagement and participation.<sup>239</sup>

While publicly-owned utilities do not need to provide a return to investors, they have also developed around a centralized, fossil-fuel based model. They do not necessarily act in the public or the environment's best interests; they may still fight distributed generation or renewable energy mandates, and can also be opaque in governance, especially if their Board is appointed.

Small-scale, decentralized renewable energy production can expand accessibility and management of renewables. Small scale renewable generation, usually considered five megawatts or less, allows for a wider range of people, especially those living in often-neglected neighborhoods, to become renewable energy generators. This enables communities to meet their own energy needs, can be a vehicle for local investments, and include transparent, inclusive processes for rate design.<sup>240</sup> They are also more climate resilient and do not require the large-scale, environmentally destructive infrastructure that large renewable energy installations need.

A final structural consideration is what energy sources are defined as renewable. Under Washington's new clean energy standard, by 2030 utilities must supply 80% of their power from carbon-neutral sources,<sup>241</sup> but this includes nuclear, renewable natural gas, biomass, and hydroelectric, and there are significant environmental justice concerns with these sources:

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<sup>237</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2016/6/29/12038074/power-utilities-suck>

<sup>238</sup> <https://thenextsystem.org/learn/stories/energy-democracy-taking-back-power> pg 55

<sup>239</sup> <https://thenextsystem.org/learn/stories/energy-democracy-taking-back-power>

<sup>240</sup> <https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Energy-Democracy-Report-WEB-1.pdf>

<sup>241</sup> <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bill%20Reports/Senate/5116-S2.E%20SBR%20FBR%2019.pdf>

## Hydroelectric

The state's many large dams have decimated watersheds, flooded Indigenous lands, and limit access to subsistence sources of food, such as salmon, which are also important culturally. The broader impacts of hydroelectric are not considered in Washington energy policy, though there are limits to how hydro is counted towards the renewable energy requirement.

## Nuclear

Nuclear provides about 5% of Washington's overall energy usage, and while it does not have GHG emissions, the mining of uranium has wreaked havoc on many Indigenous communities, including the defunct uranium mine on Spokane Indian Reservation.<sup>242</sup> In addition, the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, surrounding Washington's one nuclear generator, has struggled to clean up the contamination from its plutonium production operations. Not only was the large-scale military complex built on Native American lands, widespread contamination of waters throughout the Columbia River basin that the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation relied on for traditional fishing rights was discovered in the 1980's.<sup>243</sup> Now a Superfund site, clean up at Hanford continues. Nuclear generation also produces toxic waste for which there are no safe methods of disposal.

## "Renewable natural gas" (RNG)

RNG is gas from landfills, wastewater treatment plants, food processing, and agriculture. In the state's Decarbonization Pathways study, RNG is promoted as a key resource<sup>244</sup> and, in 2018, Governor Inslee signed a bill supporting the production of RNG.<sup>245</sup> However, there remain concerns about the localized air quality impacts of many of these technologies, as well as their long-term sustainability. The conversion of landfill gas into energy can release harmful toxins in the process and is carbon-intensive.<sup>246</sup> Landfill gas is also not technically renewable since the gas comes from the burning of waste in landfills, which are an extremely unsustainable waste management strategy overall.<sup>247</sup>

## Biomass

Much encouraged in Washington, biomass energy comes in large part from the burning of wood leftover from logging harvests. However, burning biomass results in significant negative local air quality emissions. It also assumes that burning of wood is the same as the natural degradation of the wood, wherein carbon is returned to the atmosphere, but this carbon accounting does not take into account the ecological benefits of decomposing wood. Finally, its inclusion as a clean energy source can create a perverse incentive to actually log more, while undermining solar and wind generation.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> <http://shawlsociety.blogspot.com/>

<sup>243</sup> <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1518&context=elr>

<sup>244</sup> <https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/DeepDecarbonizationPathwaysAnalysisforWashingtonSt.pdf>

<sup>245</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Energy-Promoting-RNG-in-Washington-State.pdf>

<sup>246</sup> <http://www.energyjustice.net/files/lfg/factsheet-lfg.pdf>

<sup>247</sup> <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/lfg.pdf>

<sup>248</sup> <http://static.ewg.org/pdf/EWG-clearcut-disaster.pdf>

<sup>249</sup> <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/southeast-biomass-exports-report.pdf>

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

See Appendix D for details.

- Set standards for renewable energy
- Support progressive energy assistance
- Provide financial incentives for renewable energy
- Reform Investor Owned Utilities
- Expand public ownership of utilities
- Reform / start new rural electric cooperatives
- Expand community solar
- Support community choice and bulk purchase
- Provide incentives for low and moderate income residents
- Support distributed generation
- Support net metering

## D Electrification of Transportation and Buildings

As the electrical grid transitions off fossil fuels, more end uses of energy must be fully electrified. Increased electrification is a core strategy to achieve deep decarbonization in Washington state; there is no scenario in which the state significantly reduces GHG emissions without greatly increasing electrification of end uses.<sup>250</sup>

Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Washington and user of oil, and thus a major focus of electrification efforts. Washington state is not projected to meet the statutory goal of 37.5 million metric tons per year for transportation by 2020.<sup>251</sup> Transitioning to a fossil-free dependent system that includes accessible, affordable, and functional mobility options for all residents, especially low-income ones, has significant potential benefits, for not only communities of color, but all of Washington.

Equitable, sustainable transportation planning can strengthen communities and move towards regenerative resources. It can reduce oil consumption and related emissions by increasing access to and use of electric vehicles; reduce overall vehicle miles travelled through smart land-use planning that enable resident proximity to work and amenities; and lead to significant investments in public transit infrastructure that is both affordable, clean, and provides adequate service for residents. These shifts must be coupled with protections to prevent displacement, which also has climate and social benefits. Land-use planning measures that foster the development of equitable, sustainable communities are discussed in depth in the Communities Connection to Place chapter.

<sup>250</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 12

<sup>251</sup> <https://washtransplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/WTPPhase2-2017-web-Plan-1.pdf> pg

Transitioning gas-powered personal vehicles to electric vehicles (EVs) is one major focus of transportation policy. EVs overall have lower energy costs over the lifetime of their usage, which can benefit low-income communities.<sup>252</sup> EVs not only reduce greenhouse gases, but also lead to direct air quality improvements. Exposure to vehicle-related emissions causes a range of public health issues, including cancer, heart disease, and respiratory issues. About one in seven of all Washington residents live within ¼ mile of heavy traffic roadways.<sup>253</sup> Major transportation corridors throughout the state move goods between the Ports of Seattle, Everett, and Tacoma; the Puget Sound region experiences 80,000 heavy duty truck trips daily, resulting in significant diesel emissions.<sup>254</sup> The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency estimates that more than 100 premature deaths can be attributed each year to pollution from motor vehicles, along with many more cases of asthma, respiratory disease, and hospitalization.<sup>255</sup>

These impacts are felt differentially along lines of race and class. Current rates of asthma are highest among Native Americans or Alaskan Natives in Washington, with the Black population suffering the second-highest rate of asthma.<sup>256</sup> Investigators have documented high rates of asthma and poor air quality in the neighborhoods surrounded by freeways, such as the Duwamish River Valley, which is a lower-income, diverse neighborhood.<sup>257</sup> The health savings from improved air quality as a result of widespread adoption of zero emission vehicles are estimated to be in the tens of millions per year.<sup>258</sup>

Washington state is experiencing rapid growth, particularly in urban areas like Seattle, which exceeds gains in sustainable transportation improvements.<sup>259</sup> Even as electric vehicles become more widespread, unless transportation options beyond personal vehicles are created, it will be difficult to significantly ratchet down transportation emissions at the scale needed. More on the investments in public transportation needed are discussed in the chapter on place-based approaches.

Electrification can be a powerful approach to expand regenerative resource use, and if designed using our Principles of Climate Justice, can strengthen place-based communities. If targeted correctly, electrification can also help constrain the power and influence of fossil-fuel based industries, thus supporting more equitable governance.

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<sup>252</sup> Electric Power Research Institute. (2014). Total Cost of Ownership for Current Plug-in Electric Vehicles Update to Model 2013 and 2014 Model Year Vehicles. Retrieved from <http://www.epri.com/abstracts/Pages/ProductAbstract.aspx?productId=000000003002004054&Mode=download>

<sup>253</sup> <https://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/EnvironmentalHealth/WashingtonTrackingNetworkWTN/TrafficAirPollution>

<sup>254</sup> <https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/rtp-appendixj-freightandgoodsmovement.pdf>, pg 7

<sup>255</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf>

<sup>256</sup> <http://frontandcentered.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Fossil-Fuel-Pollution-Communities-of-Color.pdf>

<sup>257</sup> <http://www.invw.org/2011/06/13/breathing-uneasy-air-pollution-crisis-in-south-seattle/>

<sup>258</sup> [PSCCA Transportation GHG plan pg 17](#)

<sup>259</sup> [https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OSE/Reports/MTN2.0-Updated\\_Web.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OSE/Reports/MTN2.0-Updated_Web.pdf) and <https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/t2040finalplan.pdf>, pg 17

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the key equity considerations in electrification include affordability, accessibility, and targeting solutions to create structural—not just individual—energy usage shifts.

The experience of many communities in the face of Light Rail expansion in Seattle underscore some of the negative consequences of investments without displacement safeguards, discussed further in the chapter on place-based approaches. Expansion of bus service can lead to less gentrification, but even expansion of bus lines must also be accompanied by progressive fare assistance to ensure that bus fares do not rise dramatically, thus undermining their affordability. Finally, transit electrification should be targeted to high pollution areas and include an upgrade in service and reliability in order to create a meaningful benefit to communities.

Personal vehicles will continue to be a major part of Washington's transportation infrastructure for years to come, but unfortunately, despite continued growth in the EV market, they are not affordable to low and even middle-income households or individuals. Current financial incentive programs have generally been too small and not targeted to overcome the significant up-front costs of purchasing an EV, even though over the long-term EV's have lower costs. Many financial incentives are available for a wide range of income levels, which can be a barrier to getting the quantity of financial assistance that is needed to low-income individuals.

The accompanying build-out of EV infrastructure also needs to be planned with consideration. Certainly, low-income neighborhoods need more extensive and widely-available charging infrastructure, including in publicly-accessible places and on publicly-owned lands, as many low-income households will not be able to charge EVs from their own homes. However, careful attention should be given to how public utilities pay for customer EV charging incentives to avoid the scenario in which costs are shared by all ratepayers but the infrastructure is not reaching or benefiting low-income residents.

Electrification at ports and of the trucking industry should not be overlooked. Especially given the high impacts of diesel pollution in freeway-adjacent communities from port-related trucking, programs to electrify long and short haul trucks, and financially support truckers to make these improvements, are critical. Such incentives could also be made available to drivers in Transportation Network Companies, such as Uber and Lyft.

Rural areas need special consideration and infrastructure investments. In many rural areas, public transit will not be a viable option given the long distances between homes and services. However, before EVs can be a real alternative for rural households, either driving range would need to be extended or even more dense charging infrastructure will have to be installed. There are also opportunities to explore innovative options such as rideshares in rural areas.

Affordability is also a real concern when considering transportation-related mandates, such as a potential ban on the sale of fossil fueled cars. Transportation is the largest source of household energy costs.<sup>260</sup> If a ban were to reduce the availability of low-cost cars, it could have a severe impact on low-income households. The phase out of combustion engines would have significant GHG and air quality improvements, but this strategy must be accompanied by extremely robust and targeted financial support programs for low and moderate income individuals and households.

## KEY POLICY APPROACHES

*See Appendix D for details.*

- Enact Zero Emission Vehicle mandates
- Ban or restrict the sale or use of internal combustion engines
- Provide financial incentives for electrification
- Direct investments in electrification

## Looking Ahead

Washington state is at a pivotal moment. While we are winning small battles to shift our economy off extractive resources, we are losing communities to displacement, life expectancy to air pollution, and our future to climate change. The solutions that will allow us to break from business as usual are those that prioritize equity. There is no climate path forward that does not address the need to shift systems of governance, place, economy, and energy toward justice. We must temper the urge to put all our resources toward short-term wins based on what is politically possible right now to illuminate the full potential of where we can go if we pull together for a truly Just Transition to a regenerative economy. The growing power and influence of the Black Lives Matter movement and the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic along with the looming economic recovery all provide unique opportunities to realize transformative change.

Visit <https://frontandcentered.org/accelerating-just-transition-in-wa-state> for a downloadable PDF version of this report and for all of the Appendices.

<sup>260</sup> <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/COMMERCE-Biennial-Energy.pdf> pg 82