

CASE STUDY: NORTHEAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Community-Controlled Solutions Built On Decades of Organizing



Fighting Redlining and Climate Change
with Transformative Climate Communities

THE GREENLINING INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 2021



GRID Alternatives staff and trainees preparing for rooftop solar installation. Credit: GRID Alternatives

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened awareness of structural inequities in the U.S., and it has become undeniable that the climate crisis does particularly severe harm in under-resourced communities, including communities of color and low-income communities. In order to build a future where all communities can build wealth, live in healthy places filled with economic opportunity, and are ready to meet the challenges posed by climate change, the U.S.'s efforts to combat the climate crisis must confront this reality.

California has pioneered a unique approach to fostering community-led solutions that meet the needs of those hit first and worst by climate change through a program called Transformative Climate Communities. TCC, managed by the Strategic Growth Council, is unique in two ways:

TCC puts community leadership first, requiring all projects to develop a collaborative governance structure between stakeholders such as local government, community-based organizations and residents. The process works to ensure that projects are derived from resident-identified needs, giving community members ownership over changes taking place in their own neighborhoods.

TCC then funds communities to develop and implement holistic, connected visions for how to transform their neighborhoods to reduce CO2 emissions and provide meaningful community benefits such as

cleaner air, improved health and job opportunities. For example, this might include building affordable housing near transit, planting an urban street canopy and installing solar on homes, all at once.

TCC was created by AB 2722 (Burke, 2016), cosponsored by The Greenlining Institute and the California Environmental Justice Alliance. Since then, it has provided Planning Grants to 18 communities to develop their projects, and eight Implementation Grants enabling on-the-ground work to begin.

Five years after the program's establishment, The Greenlining Institute is examining TCC's progress thus far, and is beginning to gauge both successes and areas for improvement. Greenlining conducted an intensive qualitative evaluation of how TCC's components work together to deliver equity outcomes, which is included as a separate report outlining best practices and recommendations for community-led transformation. This evaluation also includes four detailed Case Studies from Ontario, East Oakland, the Northeast San Fernando Valley and Stockton, examining specific local planning and implementation efforts in detail.

The Green Together Collaborative is the only TCC Implementation Grant thus far to be led by a nonprofit organization, offering the strongest example yet of community-controlled investments and transformation.

IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

Green Together: Northeast Valley

Award Amount: \$23 million

Leverage Funding from other sources: \$38.68 million

Award Year: Round 2 (2020 - 2026)



Pacoima Beautiful's youth leaders engaging in outreach around the TCC tree planting project. Credit: Pacoima Beautiful

For nearly 25 years, Pacoima Beautiful has been fighting to mitigate environmental injustices in Pacoima and Sun Valley, neighborhoods that sit in the Northeast San Fernando Valley in the City of Los Angeles. These suburban communities were constructed after World War II to house factory workers, and are typified by single-family homes, wide, auto-oriented roads and industrial facilities. Now home to a predominantly Latinx community, the Northeast Valley is surrounded by three freeways, a heavy rail line, a local airport and other industrially-zoned land. The community experiences some of the highest levels of air pollution in the state, lack of green spaces, and overcrowded housing conditions.¹ Moreover, Pacoima and Sun Valley suffer from some of the most severe heat in Los Angeles County, with temperatures regularly reaching into the triple digits during the summer months.

“ I got involved in it mostly because we are surrounded by so much pollution. The dumps are close by. We have the freeways, we have the electricity plants, we have junk yards. More than anything it was health-related, because my son was starting to develop asthma.”

— Anonymous

1 Moran-Perez, G. (2019, October 14). Pacoima Beautiful: The Voice for Environmental Injustice. *Daily Sundial*. <https://sundial.csun.edu/154919/news/pacoima-beautiful-the-voice-for-environmental-injustice/>

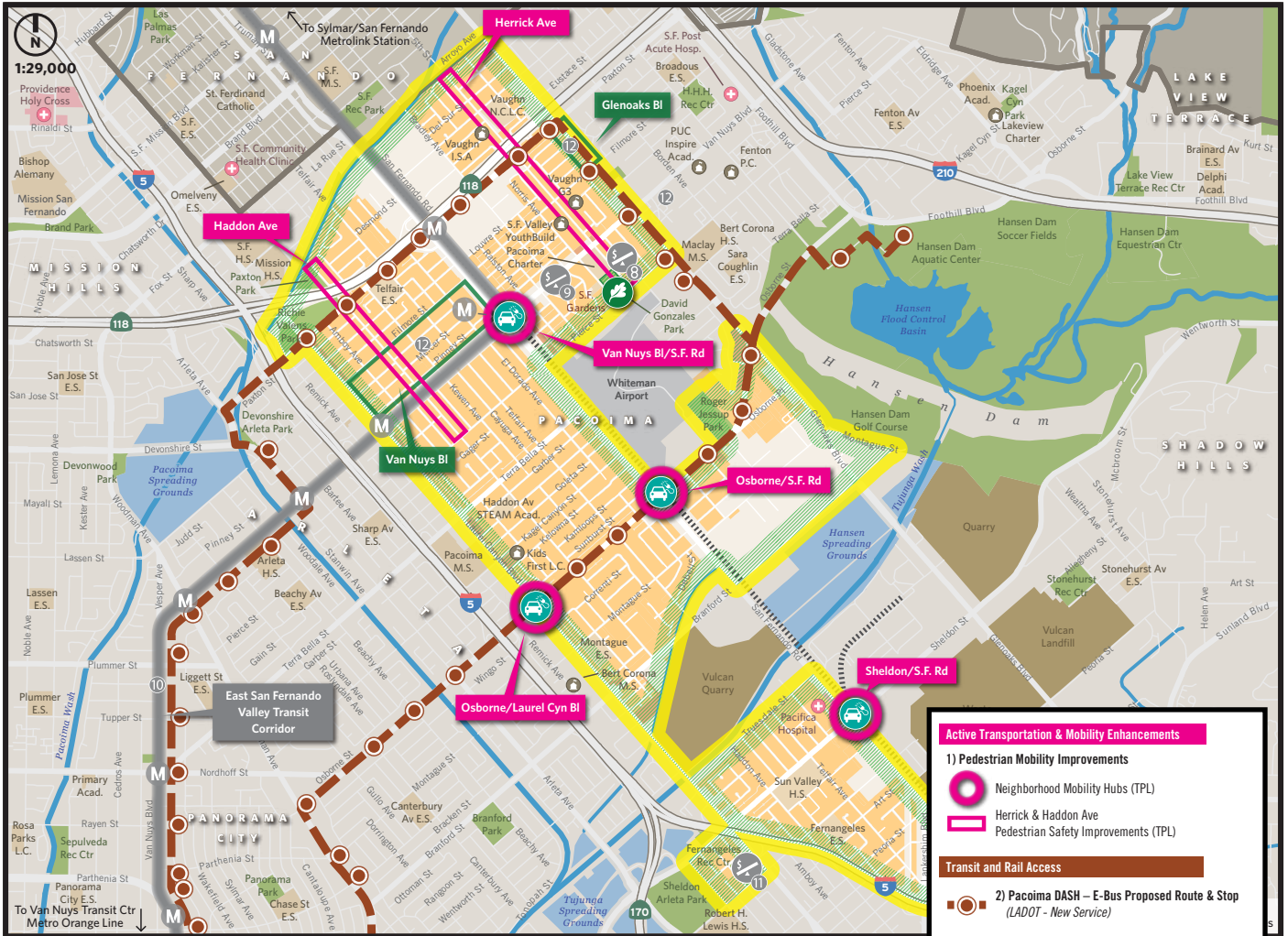


The completed Bradley Green Alley, a project to transform a neglected alley into a pedestrian-safe community asset. Credit: Trust for Public Land

Building off of shared community priorities developed over decades of organizing, Pacoima Beautiful identified a vision for TCC centered around pedestrian safety, street improvements, greening and climate resilience. Pacoima Beautiful then brought together the partners for the Green Together TCC project that could bring that vision to life and who shared an understanding of the importance of deep community organizing. This common vision has led to a collaborative process where partners are able to work together with both trust and efficiency.

Significantly, Green Together was committed to having the TCC collaborative anchored by a non-profit entity as the lead Grantee. For their second and successful application attempt, they brought on Community Partners, a nonprofit organization which provides fiscal sponsorship services, to serve as the Grantee. In this capacity, Community Partners acts as the administrative backbone, allowing the Green Together project to be the only TCC Implementation Grant thus far led by a nonprofit organization. In our evaluation, Green Together offers therefore the most tangible example of what community-controlled transformation and investments actually look like.

PROJECT AREA MAP



Prepared By



Active Transportation & Mobility Enhancements

1) Pedestrian Mobility Improvements

- Neighborhood Mobility Hubs (TPL)
- Herrick & Haddon Ave
- Pedestrian Safety Improvements (TPL)

Transit and Rail Access

- 2) Pacoima DASH – E-Bus Proposed Route & Stop (LADOT - New Service)

Car Sharing and Mobility Enhancement

- 3) EV Charging Stations (TPL)

Energy Efficiency, Energy Conservation & Renewable Energy

- 4) SF Solar Installations (GRID) (All Single-family Parcels)

Urban Greening and Green Infrastructure

- 5) David M. Gonzales Park Renovation (TPL)
- 6) Street Tree Planting (LACC) (Project Area-wide)

Leverage Only Projects

- 7) Cool Roof Retrofits - All Single-family Parcels (GRID)
- 8) Community Resiliency Center (GRID)
- 9) Bradley Ave Green Alley & Plaza Renovation (TPL)
- 10) East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor (LA Metro)
- 11) Fernangeles Park Stormwater Capture (LADWP)
- 12) Green Streets (LASAN)

MAP FEATURES

- Project Area
- City of Los Angeles
- Unincorporated/Other Cities
- Railway (Metrolink & Freight)
- Landfill/Quarry
- School Campus



Residents discuss the East San Fernando Transit Corridor project at Pacoima Beautiful's monthly community meetings. Credit: Pacoima Beautiful

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE ECOSYSTEM

Overview

The Green Together Collaborative² offers the only model thus far of a TCC project led by a nonprofit organization. In our evaluation, we identify Pacoima Beautiful as the “community anchor,” because they anchor the project in community-identified needs, visions and solutions. We then classify Community Partners as “technical assistance,” because we see Community Partners’ significant contributions as supportive of the underlying community vision. Community Partners leverages technical assistance,

in the form of financial and administrative capacity and expertise, in service of the community projects. Lastly, the Green Together TCC collaborative benefits from a pre-existing and overall supportive relationship with the Los Angeles Mayor’s Office. This strong working relationship is important in supporting coordination with other City agencies, which has been more challenging in project implementation.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE ECOSYSTEM

COMMUNITY ANCHOR

Pacoima Beautiful:

Environmental justice community-based organization with nearly 25 years of roots in the community.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LA Mayor’s Office:

Although the Mayor’s Office supported advancing the TCC application, mobilizing City departments to support TCC implementation has been challenging.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Community Partners:

A nonprofit organization that serves as the Grantee, responsible for overall grant administration and implementation. Community Partners fills the role normally played by local government.

2 Green Together Collaborative. <https://www.greentogethercollaborative.org/>

“ The strength is that Pacoima Beautiful has a deep relationship with community members. They have been there for decades now, and they are a well respected organization, and people trust the work that Pacoima Beautiful is doing in the community.”

— **Silvia González**
UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge

Community Anchor

Pacoima Beautiful has demonstrated deep relationships and trust with community members, advocating for safer, healthier and more resilient neighborhoods since 1996. Pacoima Beautiful's work spans from community and youth organizing to offering community services to local planning and advocacy efforts. They have also established strong working partnerships with other stakeholders and public agencies. The trust and consistent engagement that Pacoima Beautiful has built with community members ensures that Green Together's work remains accountable to resident needs, priorities and visions.

Local Government

For the TCC application effort, Green Together leveraged a supportive and pre-existing relationship with the Los Angeles Mayor's Office. While the Mayor's Office is not a formal TCC partner, this already established relationship was critical in putting together a successful TCC application.

Within the formal TCC partners, the Green Together collaborative also includes multiple City agencies that are responsible for or are collaborators on multiple transportation infrastructure projects. Without a local government entity as the lead Grantee, however, our interviewees reported that coordinating these projects from outside City government could be challenging. This was especially so for the government agencies who served as leverage partners. As leverage partners, these agencies don't receive funding from TCC and are therefore less internally integrated within the TCC process.

Instead of being able to rely upon the lead Grantee, Green Together has to instead utilize informal relationships with local government to manage

infrastructure projects within the City family. Thus, Green Together has relied on support from the L.A. Mayor's Office to manage relationships with other City departments.

Technical Assistance

Community Partners, an organization that provides fiscal sponsorship services, serves as the Grantee for Green Together. We classify them as “technical assistance,” since they bring significant administrative expertise and capacity to support the implementation of community-identified projects. Community Partners' mission is to support fiscally sponsored projects with administrative, finance and contract-related expertise, and is a rare nonprofit entity that can bring the needed resources and capacity to serve as the administrative backbone for large grants.³

For Green Together, Community Partners is responsible for overall grant management, including managing TCC's intensive fiscal, administrative and reporting requirements. Community Partners also acts as the primary point of contact for all the partners as well as SGC, and serves as the liaison between the partners and SGC.

Community Partners' Network Manager leads the TCC work, and staffing this position was critical. Interviewees praised the Network Manager for keeping the partners organized and coordinated. Moreover, the Network Manager is herself from Pacoima, and understands the importance of efficient grant management in delivering TCC resources to the community. To manage TCC's many requirements, the Network Manager also leverages Community Partners' staff from various departments, including finance, grants and contracts.

Lastly, SGC provides extra funding for technical

3 Community Partners. <https://communitypartners.org/>

“ As the Grantee, we’re fully responsible for the grant and the implementation and the management of the partners. So making sure that the partners are continuing to fulfill the project requirements, the deliverables that were agreed upon, meeting those deadlines and assuring that everything that is being completed is accurate and in compliance and submitted on time.”

—Jasmine Silva
Community Partners

assistance to Implementation Grantees. The Green Together collaborative used these technical assistance dollars to create a project management tool that serves as a central hub to collect information and updates from all partners. This tool helps to streamline information out of individual documents and email threads into one centralized project management system.

Anchored by Pacoima Beautiful, and leveraging the capacity and expertise of Community Partners, Green Together offers a model for community-led governance led by a nonprofit, with community engagement processes and outcomes built from the ground up. Green Together’s Collaborative Stakeholder Structure follows a tiered structure:

- Community Partners serves as the Grantee
- A small Steering Committee meets bi-weekly and is responsible for day-to-day coordination
- All Partners convene during monthly meetings
- The advisory Leadership Council provides oversight on a quarterly basis

PARTNERS

IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

1. Community Partners (Grantee)
2. Pacoima Beautiful
3. Trust for Public Land
4. GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles
5. Los Angeles Business Council
6. Los Angeles Conservation Corps
7. Los Angeles Department of Transportation
8. City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation
9. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
10. University of California Los Angeles (Site Evaluator)

Within this structure, Green Together's CSS functions relatively non-hierarchically, threading collaboration throughout with a rotating co-chair model and multiple venues for resident input. Decision-making is based on consensus. If there

is disagreement within the team, the Steering Committee uses a 2/3 vote to make decisions as a last resort. Pacoima's partners also meet on a monthly basis, allowing for frequent updates and troubleshooting.

COLLABORATIVE STAKEHOLDER STRUCTURE

Grant Administration: Community Partners, a nonprofit organization that provides fiscal sponsorship, serves as the Grantee. In this capacity, they are responsible for overall grant administration, accounting services, and management and coordination of the TCC partners. They also serve as the liaison between SGC and the TCC Partners.

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee is a small leadership group responsible for management of grant progress. The Steering Committee meets bi-weekly and consists of several entities:

- Grantee: Community Partners
- Permanent co-chair: Pacoima Beautiful
- Rotating co-chair: rotates yearly between each funded Partner
- 1-2 community representatives

Collaborative Meetings: All TCC partners meet in monthly meetings to coordinate and share updates on grant implementation. All TCC-funded partners are required to attend, and leverage-funded partners are invited but not required to attend.

Resident Leadership: Coordinated by Pacoima Beautiful, the Leadership Council is an advisory body made up of residents, small business owners and community groups. The Leadership Council meets quarterly to provide feedback on key decision points, and the feedback of the Leadership Council is a standing agenda item during Steering Committee meetings. Leadership Council members will be selected through a public nomination process.

“It's a pretty flat collaborative structure where there's not a ton of hierarchy. There's a chair obviously, and there's still the Grantee, Community Partners, that acts as a treasurer. But because of this structure, there aren't any weird power dynamics where it's like, 'Oh, it's that person's call because they're at the top of the hierarchy'... Everybody's say matters, and there's not just one person or one entity that everyone's deferring to for decisions.”

— Jason Karpman
UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The Green Together proposal grew out of Pacoima Beautiful's outreach for two major community planning efforts. In 2008, Pacoima Beautiful began work on the Pacoima Wash Vision Plan, a vision to transform the concrete Pacoima Wash tributary into a multipurpose greenway.⁴ In 2013, the organization started the Pacoima Urban Greening Vision Plan to identify a menu of multi-benefit green infrastructure projects.⁵ Since that time, Pacoima Beautiful has engaged residents through its monthly meetings, over 100 community planning meetings, house meetings, over 600 surveys, door-to-door canvassing by *promotoras* (community health workers) and community organizers, 50 focus groups and outreach to existing community groups.

Moving into implementation, Pacoima Beautiful is using a combination of outreach activities to ensure ongoing community engagement. Pacoima Beautiful organizers are working together with project leads to engage in door-to-door outreach to inform residents about TCC opportunities and incentives. Community meetings, charettes, educational workshops and quarterly workshops will be used to provide updates and solicit feedback on all projects. Lastly, a new Green Together Resource Center will be established where residents can learn more about project activities, obtain services, discuss concerns or complaints about project implementation and become more involved in volunteer opportunities.

At the time of this evaluation, resident input had already significantly shaped a green alley and plaza restoration project, the first project to be completed under TCC. The initial design sketches of the plaza didn't meet community needs, and residents instead created their own community design. Community members wanted the plaza to reflect how they used the space as a community gathering spot and outdoor exercise venue, and the plaza now includes exercise equipment, additional trash cans and hardy plants that can stand up to significant use. In addition, residents voiced that the construction of the alley has led to unintended consequences, which project partners are now working to correct.

“ The alley is built in a meandering way, which we thought would prevent the speeding of cars down the alley... But the meandering path is not doing much to slow down traffic. And kids have been playing there because it's so pretty and welcoming. But now the cars speeding through have become an issue and community members called us and videotaped what was happening. And so now we are quickly working with the designers and [Trust for Public Land] to put in new speed bumps...

Had we not had that engagement with the community, it would be like, 'Oh, we're done, we're outta here.' But we continue to be engaged. We're in the neighborhood. People know how to reach us, where to find us. And we're able to work through those problems even after the completion of a project.”

— **Veronica Padilla-Campos**
Pacoima Beautiful

4 County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Pacoima Beautiful. Pacoima Wash Vision Plan: Imagining a new multipurpose greenway for Northeast San Fernando Valley. http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/place/docs/Pacoima_Wash_Vision_Plan%20Book_FINAL.pdf

5 Pacoima Beautiful. Pacoima Urban Greening Vision Plan. https://issuu.com/mas4la/docs/160114_greening_vision_plan



Planting 2,000 street trees to green the neighborhood and reduce the urban heat island effect. Credit: Los Angeles Conservation Corps

PROJECTS

Green Together builds on a community vision that has been developed over two decades of planning and organizing. Residents envision neighborhoods that are safe, green and resilient to climate change. Project partners were selected because they brought essential expertise to implementation of the TCC projects, as well as their existing relationships with Pacoima Beautiful. Taken together, the 12 projects deliver integrated climate strategies with a focus on urban greening, energy efficiency and mobility.

“Residents actually get to see a physical difference in their community. I think that is the biggest thing, that’s the biggest way that we can really have residents trust us is, ‘Oh, we know in five years, we’re actually going to have all these things.’”

— **Dora Fietze-Armenta**
Pacoima Beautiful

PROJECTS

\$28 Million Funded Primarily Through TCC



Pedestrian Improvements:

Construction of 2.4 miles of pedestrian improvements, including new sidewalks, ADA ramps and high visibility crosswalks. Pedestrian improvements also include the creation of four mobility hubs with bicycle infrastructure and public art murals. This construction will increase pedestrian safety and options for walking and biking.



Electric Buses: Expands and electrifies a new DASH bus route with 14 new battery-electric buses and seven electric chargers, to increase clean and reliable transportation options.



Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:

Constructs EV charging infrastructure at mobility hubs as an alternative to polluting forms of transportation.



Rooftop Solar: Installation of rooftop solar on 175 single-family homes in the Project Area. Solar will lower energy costs for families, and opportunities for workforce training efforts will be targeted at local residents.



Park Renovation: Renovation of the 6.8 acre David M. Gonzalez Park, including planting shade trees, drought tolerant shrubs and a learning garden, as well as construction of new walking paths.



Urban Forestry: Planting and maintenance for 2,000 trees to reduce the urban heat island effect and heat-related illnesses. Youth participants will also be hired to help plant and maintain the trees.

\$38.68 Million Funded Through Additional Leveraged Funding Sources



Cool Roof Retrofits:

Installation of 35 cool roofs at eligible family homes within the Project Area to reduce energy costs.



Community Resiliency

Center: Retrofit of an existing community center with a solar system to ensure that the center has back-up power and can provide community cooling in the event of a major heat event.



Green Alley & Plaza

Restoration: Transformation of a blighted alley and plaza into a community asset, including shade structures, flexible seating, new lighting, and the installation of drought-tolerant climbing vines and fruit trees to create edible landscaping. Community input led to improvements in the original plan (see p. 10).



Light Rail Transit:

Construction of three Metro light rail stops within the Project Area that will provide residents, businesses and transit-dependent populations with improved mobility and access to the regional transit system.



Green Streets & Stormwater

Capture: Installation of bioswales along major arterials to capture and infiltrate stormwater.

TRANSFORMATIVE PLANS

To meet long-standing neighborhood challenges of overcrowded housing, high unemployment, lack of

green spaces and extreme heat, Green Together's Transformative Elements work together to protect residents and small businesses, provide jobs for at-risk youth and adults, and increase the resiliency of the built environment.

“ [The Transformative Elements] capture a lot of the work that has been going on in Pacoima for many years... It actually functions like a recognition for all those stakeholders in Pacoima that have been fighting for issues that relate to economic resiliency, environmental resiliency, workforce development, job creation... From a more emotional perspective, it was a validation of all the previous work that Pacoima and so many other leaders, both elected and non-elected, have been doing in that part of the San Fernando Valley now for 30, 40 years.”

— Jose Gardea
Urbanism Advisors

TRANSFORMATIVE PLANS



Community Engagement Plan (CEP): Multiple community engagement strategies are integrated across the various project types. Door-to-door outreach forms a central part of the engagement, and will be used to inform residents about solar systems, street tree plantings and other projects. The Green Together Resource Center, project website and quarterly forums will all provide up-to-date information and solicit feedback from residents. Youth and adult residents will also be engaged through a neighborhood-scale air quality and temperature monitoring program.



Displacement Avoidance Plan (DAP): The DAP weaves together five strategies to address overcrowded housing conditions while protecting residents, as well as supporting small business owners from the economic pressures that come with large-scale public investments. The plan includes the development of a Community Land Trust Feasibility Study, Accessory Dwelling Unit Legalization Action Plan, tenant protections workshops, small business development workshops, and an artists' business development workshop.



Workforce Development & Economic Opportunities Plan (WDEOP): The WDEOP provides two workforce training programs that will result in career pathways and quality jobs for low-income Project Area residents. GRID Alternatives's workforce program will train 96 program participants in receiving installation basics training certification with a 75% job placement rate. Los Angeles Conservation Corps will offer paid work experience on an urban forestry project followed by brownfields remediation job skills training, which will allow 50 opportunity youth participants to receive federal, state and industry-recognized certifications.



Climate Action and Resiliency Plan: The Project Area is already extremely hot, with average summer land surface temperatures of 118°F. Extreme heat days are expected to increase 600% over the next 33 years. Such extreme heat exacerbates the impacts on vulnerable residents who suffer from heat-related illnesses, chronic health conditions and have limited financial resources. In response, the CARP interweaves resiliency strategies throughout its projects, with extensive tree planting, reducing local sources of air pollution through a suite of low-cost zero-emission vehicles, improved active transportation, increased stormwater retention and infiltration, and the retrofit of a community resiliency center to serve as a cooling hub during extreme heat days.



Pacoima Beautiful's resident Community Inspectors. Credit: Pacoima Beautiful

The UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation serves as the lead evaluator for TCC's second round of funding, including Green Together. Evaluation focuses on key accomplishments and estimated benefits of TCC projects, with the goals of tracking TCC outcomes while also helping to improve the design of the TCC program.

TCC Evaluation teams provide annual progress reports. Green Together began implementation of TCC projects in early 2020, and UCLA Luskin has released the first Annual Report on Green Together, offering baseline data from which to compare future years of TCC implementation.⁶ Evaluation of Green Together remains relatively early, and we look forward to better understanding Green Together's impact and outcomes, as well as the project's evaluation methods, over the coming years.

6 University of California Los Angeles Luskin Center for Innovation. Tracking Groundbreaking Climate Action. <https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/tracking-groundbreaking-climate-action>



The completed Bradley Green Alley, a green alley and plaza restoration project. Credit: Trust for Public Land

Transformative Climate Communities offers a model for fighting climate change, building economic prosperity and redressing the historic oppression of our most under-resourced communities. The TCC program empowers the communities most impacted by poverty and pollution to choose their own goals, strategies and projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deliver multiple tangible benefits.

This approach represents a model for national climate change efforts that should be replicated at both the federal and state levels. For our full analysis of the Transformative Climate Communities program, see *Fighting Redlining and Climate Change with Transformative Climate Communities*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are so grateful to the nearly 50 stakeholders across 5 Transformative Climate Communities sites who we interviewed for this evaluation. These interviews form the backbone of this evaluation, and our interviewees included residents, community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, local government and other stakeholders who are pioneering what it means to make community-led transformation real. We are indebted to our interviewees for their deep work in community, and for sharing their wisdom, stories, expertise and critical insights.

Dora Fietze-Armenta, Pacoima Beautiful

Emily Petito, resident

Jasmine Silva, Community Partners

Jason Karpman, UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation

Jose Gardea, Urbanism Advisors

Karla Ramos, Los Angeles Conservation Corps

Robin Mark, Trust for Public Land

Silvia González, formerly with UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge

Sofia Maldonado, resident

Stella Ursua, GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles

Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful

We are also extremely grateful for the partnership of the University of California Los Angeles Luskin Center for Innovation. As the evaluator for five TCC sites, UCLA Luskin is conducting comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of the progress, challenges and outcomes of implementing TCC. We were lucky to be able to consult with them at every stage of this evaluation, from designing the interview methodology to reviewing our findings. Special shout-out to Kristen Soares, who supported in conducting interviews with the TCC stakeholders.

Colleen Callahan, UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation

Emma French, UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation

Jason Karpman, UCA Luskin Center for Innovation

Kristen Soares, formerly with UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation

Silvia González, formerly with UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge

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ABOUT

THE GREENLINING INSTITUTE

The Greenlining Institute works toward a future when communities of color can build wealth, live in healthy places filled with economic opportunity, and are ready to meet the challenges posed by climate change. To achieve this vision, Greenlining is committed to building a just economy that is inclusive, cooperative, sustainable, participatory, fair and healthy. Our multifaceted advocacy efforts address the root causes of racial, economic and environmental inequities in order to meaningfully transform the material conditions of communities of color in California and across the nation. We act as an incubator of new policy ideas, a bridge builder between people, communities and government, and an advocate to build momentum for transformative change.

AUTHORS

Emi Wang

Associate Director, Capacity Building,
The Greenlining Institute

Emi is a bridge-builder and policy advocate, dedicated to supporting community-led solutions. As the Associate Director of the Capacity Building team, Emi leads Greenlining's place-based work to meaningfully connect communities to the organization's policy strategies. To reverse decades of disinvestment and racist policies, we must double down on community ownership of the solutions. The Capacity Building team supports low-income communities of color from the bottom-up to gain equitable opportunity to lead their own transformations. The team also works to change systemic and policy conditions from the top-down so that our communities can thrive. Emi has significant experience supporting local stakeholders with strategy and partnership development, as well as extensive experience in developing and implementing policy strategies that center community capacity building and leadership. Emi graduated from Vassar College with a B.A. in History.

Rachel Lu

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Masters of Urban and Regional
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Rachel works to advance strategies that address the social, economic, and environmental impacts of pollution on low-income communities of color. She is currently pursuing a Master of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of California Los Angeles' Luskin School of Public Affairs, where she studies topics at the intersection of transportation equity, environmental justice, and land use. Prior to graduate school, Rachel worked at The Greenlining Institute where she leveraged talents in storytelling, fundraising, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to grow the organization's racial and economic equity policy programs. She launched her career in San Francisco at Mission Economic Development Agency, where she provided low-income Latinx families with essential services for economic stability. Today, Rachel serves on the board of a transportation advocacy non-profit called TransForm, the WTS-UCLA student chapter, and Planners of Color for Social Equity UCLA. She graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.A. in Environmental Studies.