

## Living Rooms

### Event: Living Rooms (Summary Part 1)

**Location:** Various locations such as DeFremery Park, San Antonio Park, Grove Shafter Park (Marcus Garvey Park), and Alameda County Social Services Plaza

**Date/Time:** April - May

**Number of people reached: 70 (of 139)**



*The Village booth at the Malcolm X Jazz Arts Festival*

**Event Description:** The Village conducted community outreach at Living Rooms, 510 Day, and the Malcolm X Jazz Arts Festival. This is the first summary of 139 interviews conducted by the Village from April to mid-June. The second summary will analyze the remaining 69 interviews in addition to other interviews conducted in June and early July.

- **Living Rooms** are weekly pop-up hubs held at public parks and plazas for unhoused Oaklanders to access rest, respite, recreation, and resources. These pop-ups offer hot meals and clean drinking water, recreation and educational activities, and resources to legal, mental, health, educational, and medical resources. These pop-

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ups have occurred at various locations such as DeFremery Park, San Antonio Park, Grove Shafter Park (Marcus Garvey Park), and Alameda County Social Services Plaza.

- Along with Living Room events, The Village also conducted engagement at various community events, including 510 Day and the Malcolm X Jazz Arts Festival. **510 Day** is an annual outdoor event held on May 10 at Lake Merritt to celebrate Oakland locals, featuring community organizations, food, local artists, performances, and local vendors. The **Malcolm X Jazz Arts Festival** is an annual event that took place on May 21, celebrating jazz and Oakland culture through performances by Bay Area jazz artists, resource tabling from local organizations, and a Kids Court with fitness activities.

The team informed people what the General Plan is; conducted 70 in-person interviews; shared a 2-pager on housing and environmental justice conditions that people in Oakland are experiencing; handed out flyers and resources for the following topics: legal, mental, health, educational, and medical. ; and gathered questions regarding the General Plan and City services. The 2-pager on housing and environmental justice conditions presented racial displacement, housing affordability, pollution burden, past and future housing production in Oakland, and a call to action.

### **Engagement Approaches:**

- 1) Approach people to have a conversation rather than extracting information from them
- 2) Provide hot meals and clean drinking water, recreation and educational activities
- 3) A 2-pager on housing and environmental justice on the table in English

**Demographics:** The Deeply Rooted in Oakland Partnership is committed to reaching people who have not traditionally been part of planning processes. At this event we spoke with youth, older adults, unhoused folks, formerly incarcerated persons, tenants/renters, homeowners, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, and low-income persons. The following are demographic highlights based on the 70 in-person interviews we conducted:

- **Race/Ethnicity:** Majority are Black/African American (38%) or Hispanic/Latino (17%). *See Table 1 below for more information.*
- **Age:** Most of the people we spoke with are between the ages of 25-34 (31%), 35-44 (13%), or 45-54 (11%). *Table 2 below for more information.*
- **Gender:** 47% are male, 41% are female, 3% are non-binary, and 1% are transgender. *See Table 3 below for more information.*

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- **Housing:** Most of the people we spoke with are renters (52%), live in mobile housing or are unhoused (18%), or live in shared housing (11%). *See Table 4 below for more information.*
- **Disability:** 37% of people shared having a disability; having a mental health disorder (10%), sensory impairment (10%), learning disability (8%), mobility impairment (5%), and other disabilities (4%). *See Table 5 below for more information.*
- **Annual Personal Income:** Most have an annual personal income of \$0-\$10,000 (33%) or over \$50,001 (27%). *See Table 6 below for more information.*
- **Sexual Orientation:** 51% are heterosexual and 23% are LGBTQ+. *See Table 7 below for more information.*
- **Experience with Mass Incarceration:** 55% of people shared that they had some experience with mass incarceration; being a family member of someone who is formerly incarcerated (24%), a family member of someone who is currently incarcerated (11%), and being formerly incarcerated themselves (20%). *See Table 8 below for more information.*

The 70 interviews included the following 8 questions and demographic information:

- **General:** 1) When did you/your family arrive in Oakland? Where were you living before?; 2) What neighborhoods have you lived in?; and 3) What's your favorite memory of Oakland?
- **Housing:** 1) Have your family members struggled with housing problems? If so, what have been your major problems?; and 2) What are your ideas for solutions? What would you like to see as solutions?
- **Environmental Justice:** 1) Do any of your Oakland family members have trouble breathing, been involved in a car collision, been affected by wildfires (proximity or smoke), or flooding?; and 2) What are your ideas for solutions? What would you like to see as solutions?
- **Anything else you would like to share?**
- **Demographic Information:** Zip code, neighborhoods, age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, housing, disability, annual income, and formerly incarcerated

### Engagement Summary

The following is a summary of the main points that community members brought up during the event. Points under each topic are ordered by most to least mentioned.

#### FAMILY ARRIVED IN OAKLAND

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- A majority of individuals that we spoke to shared that their families arrived between 1950-1979 (27%), 1980-1999 (19%), 2000-2010 (16%), and 2011-2020 (23%). *See Table 9 below for more information.*
- Most people had previously been living in the Bay Area (43%), West Coast (21%), or the South (14%). Bay Area locations included: Berkeley, San Francisco, Castro Valley, San Jose, Santa Rosa, Alameda, Hayward, Emeryville, Fairfield, and Pleasanton.

## A FAVORITE MEMORY OF OAKLAND

"I don't think I have one favorite memory. Living in Oakland is beautiful everyday."

"Seeing the community get together and celebrate or demand justice"

- **Culture:** Many people enjoy that there are always community events, festivals, and fairs; highlighting festivals at Lake Merritt, First Fridays, Mosswood Park Festival, 510 Day, and Juneteenth. Several mentioned the history and culture of activism and organizing within the city, mentioning the Black Panthers, political movements in the 60s like Stop the Draft Week, demonstrations on the Bay Bridge, and George Floyd and Black Lives Matter protests. People mentioned the Hyphy Movement and music. People stated that Oakland is always lively with sideshows and block parties. Some spoke fondly of Oakland sports such as the Warrior Championships, A's victory at the 1972 World Series, and Raiders at the Superbowl.
- **People and Community:** Many expressed that Oakland is a place of creativity, dance, music, and culture made by the people, some mentioning local rappers. People enjoy spending peaceful days with family and friends, BBQing, playing soccer, skateboarding, playing in the streets, taking walks, and rollerskating in places like Cleveland Heights. People stated the strength in the community, seeing elders teaching youth, and the Black community coming together.
- **Parks and Nature:** Lil' Bobby Hutton Memorial Park, Bushrod Park, and Lake Merritt and specifically the Lake Merritt Labyrinth. People enjoy walking around outside and the sunset views.
- **Local Businesses and Food:** The Lux Theater, Acemont mall, taco trucks, Fruitvale farmers market
- **Youth:** Many mentioned the joy in growing up in Oakland, playing with friends, and meeting people at school. People today value family-friendly places and taking their own kids to places like parks.

## HOUSING

“[I’ve struggled with housing problems] for as long as I can remember”

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

- **Issues:**
  - **Renters** face increasing rent and lack of supply. People face evictions. “Affordable” apartments are not affordable.
  - **Homeowners** face the risk of foreclosure and struggle with liveable wages to support increasing housing costs. Prospective homeowners are unable to afford a place or access resources. Many are forced to look at options outside of Oakland.
  - Overall, people struggle with stable housing due to unreliable living conditions and high costs. This ultimately leads to displacement to different neighborhoods or cities. Many have to sacrifice quality for cost or have to live with family. People feel discomfort or powerless in knowing they don’t have stable housing.
- **Solutions:**
  - Shifting mindset to treat housing as a human right
  - Preserve affordable and low-income housing
  - Cap and limit rent control increase rates
  - Lower bar for assistance considering a realistic liveable wage
  - Increase rental vouchers
  - Support intensive wraparound housing services
  - Expand supply and access to Section 8 housing
  - Provide pipeline to buy homes rented for decades such as Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act
  - Better utilize vacant units and buildings

## HOUSING HABITABILITY

- **Issues:**
  - Overcrowding and living in older family members such as grandparents’ homes
  - Issues with slum lords and exploitation
  - Lack of green spaces in and around housing
  - Gang violence in neighborhoods
  - Mold and poor ventilation
- **Solutions:**

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- Affordable housing and low-income housing with adequate living space, including bedrooms and bathrooms
- Support developing sustainable housing
- Allocate space for outdoor areas, yards, and gardens on housing properties
- Invest in connectivity and transportation next to residential units to support commuting to work
- Support thriving community spaces and useable clean public places
- Cultivate housing that support wellness and safety for residents

## RESOURCES AND EDUCATION

- **Issues:**

- Single mothers, low-income families, and immigrants struggling with access and resources
- Misinformation and lack of experience with legal needs and housing requirements

- **Solutions:**

- Create intentional resource programs and plan for Oakland's most marginalized individuals
- Increase outreach about housing opportunities
- Ensure language access and housing support systems for immigrants
- Develop assistance for artists who seek mixed use spaces to live, create, and create revenue

## HOMELESSNESS

- **Issues:**
  - Unsheltered people on the streets as a public crisis
  - Low quality and lack of housing for unhoused people
  - People living in vehicles and facing risk for tickets and being towed
- **Solutions:**
  - Build and increase supply for housing and homes for currently unhoused, including permanent housing not just temporary
  - Provide COVID safety support for unhoused people
  - Invest in more tiny home projects
  - Support sustainable shelters by providing benefits and higher pay for social service workers and homeless shelter staff

## EQUITY

- **Issue:** Disadvantage for new and prospective homeowners in comparison to multigenerational homeowners
- **Solutions:**
  - Dedicate housing for low income families, immigrants
  - Dedicate housing specifically for elders and older adults
  - Create priority housing for adolescents, young adults, pregnant teenagers, and young parents
  - Cap housing prices for new homeowners
  - Increase shared housing, especially for formerly incarcerated people
  - Preserve Oakland culture and diversity
  - Utilize empty space and invest in underserved areas
  - Community consultation from Oakland natives to determine city density
  - Consider housing stipends for native Oaklanders

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

“[A]ccess to the proper environmental health solutions, they are available, just not accessible.”

## WILDFIRES

- **Issues:**
  - High rates of asthma and respiratory issues among residents, created and/or exacerbated by wildfire season

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- Hospitalizations caused by the long-term effects of wildfire smoke
- Disproportionate health effects on young children and older adults



## **CARS AND COLLISIONS**

- **Issue:**
  - High percentage of individuals, family, or friends impacted by car collisions

## **INDUSTRIAL**

- **Issues:**
  - Smoke stacks, industrial air pollution, and subsequent respiratory issues
  - Neighborhoods next to industrial areas, such as Brookefield Village built during WWII, facing pollution and contamination. One person mentioned resulting health issues in the family such as cancer.
  - High congestion on Highway 880 and particularly with commercial vehicles
  - Air pollution concentration in the flatlands from trucks on streets
- **Solutions:**
  - Allow commercial vehicles and large trucks on Highway 580 to decrease pollution on the 880 and on flatlands roads
  - Stronger regulation and monitoring on industries, specifically air quality control on the Oakland Port
  - Decrease truck presence in West Oakland
  - Look into direct air capture ('clean air') machines to mitigate CO2 pollution throughout the city

## **TRASH AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**

- **Issue:** Unclean and trash filled streets, disproportionately in lower income areas
- **Solutions:**
  - Create and strengthen a dedicated City team for clean up
  - Start and maintain community clean up programs with volunteers
  - Expand and improve waste management system
  - Decrease plastic use and utilize biodegradable utensils with a compatible waste management system
  - Promote green businesses through incentives and/or regulation

## **ENERGY**

- **Issues:** Power lines above ground lowering neighborhood quality and are unsightly.
- **Solutions:**
  - Build more and maintain parks and community gardens
  - Transition to 100% solar and wind power
  - Affordable renewable energy options and individual incentives

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- Bury power lines

## **FOOD ACCESS**

- **Issues:** Lack of access to healthy and affordable food choices
- **Solutions:**
  - Promote eating healthy with campaigns paired with increased food access
  - Support community gardens

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- **Issues:**
  - Unaffordable public transportation
  - Potholes and poor quality roads
- **Solutions:**
  - Free bus passes on Spare the Air Days
  - Promote riding bikes and walking for both recreation and commuting
  - Repair and maintain streets and roads

## **PARKS AND GREEN SPACES**

- **Issues:** Lack of green spaces in underserved areas
- **Solutions:**
  - Build and maintain parks and community gardens
  - Clean Lake Merritt and address its smell

## **WATER**

- **Issue:** High lead contamination in water
- **Solution:** Assess and manage Oakland water quality throughout the city

## CITY INVESTMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY, ECONOMIC, EQUITY, HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATION

“Curious on how we can build better networks and support for Oaklanders. How do we decentralize, but remain systematic about that resource?”

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- **Issues:**
  - Doubt that projects will get done
  - Disconnect between the elected officials and community
- **Solutions:**
  - Reinforcing accountability in leadership related to housing projects

## **ECONOMIC**

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- **Issues:**
  - Minimum wage is not a liveable wage
  - Not enough jobs for Oakland locals
- **Solutions:**
  - Invest in working class jobs in tech and security, not just for high-income residents (i.e., not requiring bachelor's and master's degrees, providing on the job training)
  - Amplify and financially support Oakland small Black businesses
  - Increase full time employment opportunities for native Oaklanders

## EQUITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Issues:**
  - Treating people like problems instead of citizens in traumatic situations
  - Police brutality and murder of Black and Indigenous peoples
  - Gentrification causing displacement of Oakland natives
  - Gang violence in neighborhoods
- **Solutions:**
  - Address history and present racial discrimination in policy
  - Adopt a compassion-centered approach in all City operations and projects
  - Consider free access to more public services
  - Value resident input from impacted communities, specifically Black multigenerational Oaklanders
  - Preserve Oakland culture and prioritize locals
  - Adopt awareness and prevention campaigns in topics such as violence, gun violence, and sexual assault

## HEALTHCARE

- **Issues:**
  - Unaffordable and low quality medical facilities and healthcare options
  - Underserved residents include those who are low-income, formerly incarcerated, unhoused, or struggling with substance abuse
- **Solutions:**
  - Support quality public and community medical facilities
  - Support natural healing and holistic care as well as prevention care methods
  - Increase healthcare options and availability for the elderly
  - Consider Medical Reimbursement Account stipends
  - Consider opportunities to add pressure to State to cover healthcare

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- Widen outreach for sobriety support programs
- Expanded rehabilitation programs for people reentry from incarceration

**EDUCATION**

• **Solutions:**

- Stop school closures in Black and Brown neighborhoods
- Center racially conscious and justice-focused curriculum
- Promote wellness and community support systems for students

Table 1. Engagement by Race/Ethnicity

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Black/African American	33	38.4%
Hispanic or Latino (non white or Black)	15	17.4%
White/European	9	10.5%
Native American/Indigenous or Alaska Native	7	8.1%
Asian	6	7.0%
Multi-racial	5	5.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3	3.5%
Caribbean Islander	2	2.3%
Middle Eastern	1	1.2%
Other	1	1.2%
Decline to state	4	4.7%

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Table 2. Engagement by Age

<b>Age</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
12-17	4	5.7%
18-24	5	7.1%
25-34	22	31.4%
35-44	9	12.9%
45-54	8	11.4%
55-64	4	5.7%
65+	6	8.6%
Decline to state	12	17.1%
Total	70	

Table 3. Engagement by Gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	29	41.4%
Male	33	47.1%
Non-binary	2	2.9%
Transgender	1	1.4%
Intersex	0	0.0%
Decline to state	5	7.1%
Total	70	

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Table 4. Engagement by Housing

<b>Housing</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Rent	38	52.1%
Mobile housing/unhoused	13	17.8%
Shared housing with family/roommates/partner	8	11.0%
Temporary with friends/family	5	6.8%
Own	3	4.1%
Temporary (in shelter, hotel)	2	2.7%
Decline to state	3	4.1%
Other	1	1.4%

Table 5. Engagement by Disability

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A mobility impairment	4	5.1%
A mental health disorder	8	10.1%
A sensory impairment (vision or hearing)	8	10.1%
A learning disability (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia)	6	7.6%
Other	3	3.8%
Decline to state	50	63.3%
None	0	0.0%

Table 6. Engagement by Annual Personal Income

<b>Annual Personal Income</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
\$0-\$10,000	23	32.9%
\$10,001-\$20,000	3	4.3%
\$20,001-\$30,000	4	5.7%
\$30,001-\$40,000	1	1.4%
\$40,001-\$50,000	1	1.4%
\$50,001+	19	27.1%



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Decline to state	19	27.1%
Total	70	

Table 7. Engagement by Sexual Orientation

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Heterosexual	36	51.4%
Queer	8	11.4%
Bisexual	6	8.6%
Lesbian	1	1.4%
Gay	0	0.0%
Other	1	1.4%
Decline to state	18	25.7%
Total	70	

Table 8. Engagement by Experience with Mass Incarceration

<b>Mass Incarceration</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Decline to state	32	45.1%
I am a family member of someone who is formerly incarcerated	17	23.9%
I am formerly incarcerated	14	19.7%
I am a family member of someone who is currently incarcerated	8	11.3%
None	0	0.0%

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Table 9. Family Arrived in Oakland

<b>Arrive in Oakland</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Before 1900	2	2.9%
1900-1950	5	7.0%
1950-1979	19	27.1%
1980-1999	13	18.6%
2000-2010	11	15.7%
2011-2020	16	22.9%
2021+	3	4.3%
Visiting	0	0.0%
Working	0	0.0%
Decline to state	0	0.0%
Other	1	1.4%
Total	70	