



City of  
**OAKLAND**  
California

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News from: **City of Oakland**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 13, 2022

**Progress Update on Community Driven  
Projects to improve East Oakland  
Neighborhoods while Avoiding Displacement**

*Oakland, CA* – Today, the City of Oakland and multiple community partners marked the second year of implementation of the “Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors” (BNSN) Initiative by providing a progress update. Funded by a \$28.2 million Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) grant from the California Strategic Growth Council, the Initiative brought together the City of Oakland, multiple community organizations, residents and business owners to implement five projects across four transformative elements in a five-square-mile area in deep East Oakland.

“Thanks to the vision and leadership of East Oakland stakeholders and the generous support of the Strategic Growth Council, the ‘Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors’ initiative has accomplished so much since its launch,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. “From distributing fruit trees to breaking ground on an affordable housing development and community clinic, transformative projects are underway to create healthy neighborhoods, build jobs and community wealth, and prevent displacement. Equitable neighborhoods are climate-resilient neighborhoods.”

“We’re extremely proud to be a part of the work led by the ‘Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors’ team and their partners, who are a testament to the power of community in transforming neighborhoods so that they are healthier, more inclusive and connected,” said Strategic Growth Council Executive Director Lynn von Koch-Liebert.

**Job Creation**

More than half (36) of the projected 60 jobs have already been created by BNSN partners since launch.

**Housing Units to be Completed Early**

Following a September 2021 groundbreaking, construction on the 55-unit, deeply affordable, mixed-use development at 95<sup>th</sup> & International is now a year ahead of schedule and will be completed by the end of 2022. In addition to much-needed housing, the development will have a community-serving health clinic, operated by La Clínica de La Raza, on the ground floor. The development’s extensive public-private partnership lead by ACTs Community Development Corporation includes Related California, the City of Oakland, California’s Strategic Growth Council

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(through the Transformative Climate Communities Grant), the California Department of Conservation, the Oakland Housing Authority, U.S. Bank and Citibank. The housing development will be for local residents who earn between 20% and 50% of Average Median Income, and 25% of the units are designated for unhoused populations.

### **Fruit Tree Planting takes Root**

The Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation in partnership with Planting Justice have planted exactly 200 fruit trees in the BNSN area and have directly contacted 2,000 people about the fruit tree planting project. The Initiative's goal is to plant 2,000 new residential and street trees to promote healthier surroundings and improve air quality, mitigating urban island heat effect, reducing runoff, and preventing blight.

### **Enrichment on Two Wheels**

Higher Ground in partnership with Scraper Bikes has served 135 youth through their bike lending program and afterschool classes at 5 schools and 1 recreation center. This BNSN element has also created jobs by employing 10 youth and 4 adults from East Oakland. The groups have also nurtured riders by leading 7 community rides. They're well on the way of achieving the goals of serving 560 youth and installation of a permanent bike shed for publicly accessible bike repair and programming.

### **Aquaponics Farm and Food Hub**

A historic 3-acre nursery has been acquired by Planting Justice to create one of the largest/most productive urban aquaponics farms in the U.S. able to produce hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh organic produce for East Oakland residents. They've completed site remediation and are awaiting permits to build the new greenhouses. Through the TCC grant, Planting Justice has created 12 full-time, benefitted, living-wage jobs – all of which are 100% filled by residents of the Plan Area.

### **Displacement Avoidance Strategy Underway**

An essential part of the BNSN Initiative is to improve the neighborhoods while retaining the existing residents and businesses to halt displacement and build community wealth. To date, BNSN partners have:

- participated in 6 community events
- hosted 1 Tenant Rights Workshop with the Oakland Rent Adjustment Program
- scheduled 4 events for the near future, including: an East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative orientation in August; a workshop in August by the Northern California Land Trust; a cultural and arts event in September, and a drop-in legal clinic in November with the Sustainable Economies Law Center.

This BNSN project has 3 new jobs to-date and conducted outreach to 700 residents resulting in 33 direct follow-ups that included 10 Resource Center walk-ins/ literacy program participants.

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### **Community Stakeholders Committee Launched**

To ensure the community continues to lead the BNSN Initiative, a Community Stakeholders Committee has been established. Building from the current 4 community members, an additional 8 nominees are being considered for committee approval this month.

### **Job Training Coming Soon**

Plans to help 200 to 300 local residents access jobs and training that lead to high-paying, in-demand jobs are underway with discussion about adding another partner organization. Targeted career sectors are clean energy, greenhouse gas reducing industries, health care, and horticulture.

### **Pivoting on the Community Project**

Due to unresolved issues with Union Pacific Railroad, the 1.2-mile multi-modal trail connecting East Oakland Neighborhoods and Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline Park will be replaced with another community priority project that can be completed before the end of the grant period.

To learn more about the BNSN Initiative and the individual projects, visit <https://eastoaklandca.com>.

Challenging the typical top-down approach to community development, the “Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors” Initiative builds on decades of activism in East Oakland, and the [East Oakland Neighborhood Initiative](#) (EONI). EONI focused on deep engagement in six East Oakland neighborhoods: Melrose, Highland/Elmhurst, Sobrante Park, Brookfield Village/Columbia Gardens, Stonehurst, Coliseum/Rusdale/Lockwood/Havenscourt.

“Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors” is supported by California Strategic Growth Council’s Transformative Climate Communities Program with funds from California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen the economy, and improve public health and the environment in disadvantaged communities.

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