Town Nights

Event: Town Nights
Location: Various locations
Date/Time: June - July
Number of people reached: 57 (54 in person, 3 online)

Event Description:

Town Nights is a city-wide event that took place across 5 community sites in Oakland, to create fun and safe spaces for families over the summer and holiday seasons. The first event started in honor of Juneteenth, and the movement towards Black liberation, from enslaved Africans to the mass incarceration of Black and Indigenous people in America. All events featured live entertainment, kids zone, local vendor marketplace, community resources, and lots of giveaways.

The team informed people what the General Plan is; conducted 57 interviews; shared a 2-pager on housing and environmental justice conditions that people in Oakland are experiencing; handed out flyers for resources for Emergency Rapid Assistance Program (ERAP), library, and maintenance; referred community members to direct service organizations or City Department to address current needs; 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) 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 57 interviews we conducted:
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Majority of the people we spoke to are Hispanic or Latino (49%). *See Table 1 for more information.*
- **Age:** Majority of the people we spoke to are between the ages of 25-34 (33%). *See Table 2 for more information.*

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- **Gender:** 56% are female, 28% are male, 4% are non-binary. S*ee Table 3 below for more information.*
- **Housing:** Majority of the people we spoke with are renters (53%). *See Table 4 for more information.*
- **Disability:** 30% of people shared having a disability. *See Table 5 below for more information.*
- **Annual Personal Income:** Most have an annual personal income of over $50,001 (32%) *See Table 6 below for more information.*
- **Sexual Orientation:** 58% are heterosexual, 14% are LGBTQ+. *See Table 7 below for more information.*
- **Experience with Mass Incarceration:** 33% of people shared that they had some experience with mass incarceration. *See Table 8 below for more information.*

The 57 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
- A majority of individuals we spoke to shared that their families arrived between 2011-2020 (30%) and 2000-2010 (23%). *See Table 9 below for more information.*
- Most people had previously been living in the Bay Area. Bay Area locations included: San Francisco, Union City, Richmond, San Jose, Berkeley.

<u>A FAVORITE MEMORY OF OAKLAND</u>

"Growing up next to Josie de la Cruz park"
"Enjoying food by Lake Merritt"
"My first time getting connected to community orgs here."

- **Oakland Locals and Culture:** Interviewees appreciate Oakland's cultural-based community events, such as the Black August Celebration at Bobby Hutton Park, Town Nights, 510 Day, and the Cinco de Mayo Parade. They also have pride in civic actions, like the 2016 Election protest and Occupy Oakland General Strike.
- **Cultural Arts and Food:** Interviewees appreciate musical events, such as the Malcolm X Jazz Festival. They also enjoy local food activities, such as eating by Lake Merritt or going to Carnicerías.
- **Nature and Parks:** Interviewees like going to parks, such as Josie de la Cruz park and Lake Merritt. They also enjoy being in nature, like looking for lizards and frogs in the creek.

<u>HOUSING</u>

" I was scammed out of a housing deposit. I had a landlord refuse to fix our house when raw sewage was pouring into the basement - he threatened eviction."
"Lost apartment. Raising rents in the last 3 years. Have to go out of Oakland to find something affordable. Outbidded. Gentrification."
"I was not being accepted for fixed income, and I have inconsistent/seasonal employment."

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
- **Issues:**
  - **Renters** face high and rapidly increasing rents. This market makes it challenging for people without a livable wage to find housing.
  - **Overcrowding:** Due to unaffordable housing, people are forced to live in overcrowded conditions.
  - **Lack of sufficient services:** Long wait periods for Section 8 Housing Vouchers. Others struggle with being accepted for fixed income, despite needing it.

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- - **Unsafe:** Renters and homebuyers who can only afford certain levels of housing are relegated to homes that are in unsafe conditions and areas.
    - **Homelessness:** People face a higher risk of becoming homeless due to the unaffordability of their neighborhoods.
- **Solutions:**
  - Create a stronger rent control policy.
  - Utilize more density when building housing.
  - Prioritize community-owned housing, like cooperatives and land trusts, as new housing.
  - Create more public housing.
  - Create more opportunities for subsidized housing.
  - Build mixed-income housing.
  - Prioritize people of color as recipients for solutions.

HOUSING HABITABILITY

- **Issues:**
  - **Landlord neglect** to fix property issues has made homes uninhabitable for tenants.
  - Homes are **not in healthy living condition,** and are dangerous to live in.
  - **Homelessness:** People who are unhoused do not have stable housing. Oftentimes, they are forced to live in unsafe and unhealthy conditions.
- **Solutions:**
  - Clean up transitional housing sites.
  - Ensure that repairs are made on homes in a timely manner.

DISPLACEMENT

- **Issues:**
  - **Gentrification** and increasing unaffordability has pushed longtime residents to move outside of Oakland. For some of those who attempt to return, they experience being outbid, outpriced, and not being called back during the housing application process.
  - **Eviction** is weaponized by landlords against tenants to avoid accommodating maintenance needs. They are also incentivized by the market to evict tenants.
  - **Homelessness:** Many people who become unhoused in Oakland are displaced from their community, and isolated from access to public spaces.
- **Solutions:**

- ○ Strengthen tenant protections.
- ○ Increase funding for youth programs and community organizations, like CURYJ.
- ○ Create community centers that hold diverse cultural celebrations.
- ○ Create services for the integration of refugees and immigrants into the community without forcing them to assimilate.
- ○ Create more services for families and individuals that are unhoused.
- ○ Allocate more funding to go to solving homelessness. Ensure everyone without housing is housed.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

"Air quality is poor, too many vehicle emissions. Developed allergies."
"We need access to free healthcare and safe spaces for teens."

POLLUTION
- **Issues:**
  - ○ **Poor air quality** is leading to **respiratory issues**, like asthma and allergies, especially in youth.
  - ○ **Wildfires** and smoke worsen air quality, making it harder to breathe.
  - ○ **Freeways and streets:** Emissions from vehicles contribute to more air and noise pollution. There are also a high number of **collisions** that put people in danger.
  - ○ **Lack of sufficient healthcare** perpetuates health disparities created by pollution.
- **Solutions:**
  - ○ Reduce emissions by increasing public transportation opportunities, encouraging bike riding, utilizing more solar power as an energy source, and regulating the routes that big trucks can take.
  - ○ Invest in the city by repairing roads, increasing nature in public spaces, and keeping the water supply clean and drinkable.
  - ○ Address disparities in neighborhoods like West Oakland, so residents don't have to drive far to fulfill their basic needs (ex. Grocery store distribution).
  - ○ Create fresh air/breathing centers and provide public shower access for unhoused people and low-income communities.
  - ○ Do better wildfire management (look towards Indigenous practices) and remediate the soil in neighborhoods, like West Oakland and Fruitvale.

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- ○ Take more action to keep streets and public spaces clean, sanitary, and void of trash.
- ○ Invest more in healthcare. Provide mental health services, like therapy.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ANALYSIS

Note: The tables listed below do not include a total count because respondents can select more than one response for subsections – Race/Ethnicity, Housing, Disability, Sexual Orientation, and Experience with Mass Incarceration.

Table 1. Engagement by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Number of People	Distribution (%)
Black/African American	10	17.5%
Hispanic or Latino (non white or Black)	28	49.1%
White/European	9	15.8%
Native American/Indigenous or Alaska Native	1	1.8%
Asian	10	17.5%
Multi-racial	1	1.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3	5.3%
Caribbean Islander	1	1.8%
Middle Eastern	1	1.8%
Other	0	0%
Decline to state	4	7.0%

Table 2. Engagement by Age

Age	Number of People	Distribution (%)

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12-17	0	0%
18-24	2	3.5%
25-34	19	33.3%
35-44	9	15.8%
45-54	9	15.8%
55-64	1	1.8%
65+	3	5.3%
Decline to state	14	24.6%
Total	**57**	

Table 3. Engagement by Gender

Gender	Number of People	Distribution (%)
Female	32	56.1%
Male	16	28.0%
Non-binary	2	3.5%
Transgender	0	0%
Intersex	0	0%
Decline to state	7	12.3%
Total	**57**	

Table 4. Engagement by Housing

Housing	Number of People	Distribution (%)
Rent	30	52.6%
Own	4	7%
Shared housing with family/roommates/partner	10	17.5%

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Temporary with friends/family	4	7%
Mobile housing/unhoused	2	3.5%
Temporary (in shelter, hotel)	1	1.8%
Decline to state	6	10.5%

Table 5. Engagement by Disability

Disability	Number of People	Distribution (%)
A mobility impairment	1	1.8%
A mental health disorder	8	14%
A sensory impairment (vision or hearing)	2	3.5%
A learning disability (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia)	2	3.5%
Other	4	7%
Decline to state	22	38.6%
None	21	36.8%

Table 6. Engagement by Annual Personal Income

Annual Personal Income	Number of People	Distribution (%)
$0-$10,000	12	21.1%
$10,001-$20,000	2	3.5%

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$20,001-$30,000	2	3.5%
$30,001-$40,000	4	7%
$40,001-$50,000	4	7%
$50,001+	18	31.6%
Decline to state	15	26.3%
Total	**57**	

Table 7. Engagement by Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Number of People	Distribution (%)
Heterosexual	33	57.9%
Queer	4	7%
Bisexual	3	5.3%
Lesbian	0	0%
Gay	1	1.8%
Decline to state	16	28.1%

Table 8. Engagement by Experience with Mass Incarceration

Mass Incarceration	Number of People	Distribution (%)
I am a family member of someone who is formerly incarcerated	8	14%
I am formerly incarcerated	5	8.8%
I am a family member of someone who is currently incarcerated	6	10.5%
None	15	26.3%

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Decline to state	23	40.4%

Table 9. Family Arrived in Oakland

Arrive in Oakland	Number of People	Distribution (%)
Before 1900	0	0%
1900-1950	1	1.8%
1950-1979	3	5.3%
1980-1999	10	17.5%
2000-2010	13	22.8%
2011-2020	17	29.8%
2021+	3	5.3%
Visiting	1	1.8%
Working	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Decline to state	9	15.8%
Total	57	