WASHINGTON APA'S GAME CHANGING INITIATIVE
SOCIAL EQUITY WORKING GROUP

SOCIAL EQUITY
RESEARCH PACKET

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Part of fostering social equity is ensuring that academic research, practices and methodologies are pushing the boundaries of how urban planning can best support underprivileged and underrepresented communities. Within this goal, the Social Equity Working Group has three objectives:

- Partner with universities and professional organizations to provide funding for research that targets social equity in the built environment.
- Encourage the national APA Research Program to prioritize social equity research projects.
- Encourage students to explore these issues in capstone projects, theses, and dissertations.

This research package addresses this last objective. Our hope is that this research package will inspire students to conduct projects on social equity issues by providing research questions, potential partner organizations and literature references. With the support of universities, planning departments and nonprofit organizations, we believe that students can find solutions to our most pressing social equity concerns here in Washington.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research package is to provide the support and inspiration to urban planning students in Washington to help them address social equity concerns within their work.

Below are some questions that can be launching points for your own research regarding the relationship between urban planning and social equity, with a special focus on displacement.

1. Displacement of existing lower-income communities may tend to take place in neighborhoods with certain characteristics, trends and locations. What are metrics, indicators, and conditions that would signal the potential for and start of neighborhood displacement?

2. Redevelopment and gentrification may displace previous residents and business. What are some ways to measure the impact of redevelopment on social equity (i.e. affordability, cultural preservation, access to services etc.)? Is it feasible to use these measurements when issuing development permits?

3. Policy tools may affect how redevelopment projects affect social equity issues. How can financing tools, land-use regulations, ownership transformation, historic preservation and other policies help make redevelopment projects more socially just?

4. Theories on urban form, travel behavior, public health, social psychology, consumer behavior, business location choice, real estate value, stakeholder game, operation management, and so on, have been employed to explain urban developments. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the theories in addressing social equity issues? How can new theories to be developed and existing ones to be adjusted in the context of redevelopment projects?

5. Aside from the economic factors, what are the social and cultural factors associated with gentrification that displace existing communities? How can those social and cultural factors be amended to enable existing communities to feel at home?

6. Affordable commercial real estate is necessary to allow existing businesses to continue operating in the face of gentrification. What are some ways to ensure affordable real estate and how can you balance these methods within a free market system?

7. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) have been increasingly popular in urban planning. How can GIS and geospatial analysis be utilized to monitor, evaluate and predict social equity conditions related to displacement?

8. In addition to quantitative data from censuses, surveys, and remote sensing, qualitative approaches such as storytelling, art and filming can capture detailed elements of displacement. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using quantitative data to research social equity studies in displacement? How will new formats and sources of data allow a better understanding of current issues?

9. Public participation is a popular topic in planning studies and an essential element in planning process. How can participatory actions be optimized for benefiting communities involved in displacement?

Partner Organizations

Below are a selection of organizations in the Puget Sound area that are working at the intersection of urban planning and social equity. Some of these organizations might be open to working with students on a thesis or professional project relevant to their mission.

Name	Topic	Contact Name	Contact Email
ArtSpace	Affordable (artist) housing	Kelley Lindquist *President*	kelley.lingquist@artspace.org
HomeSight	Affordable housing	Tony To *Exe Director*	tony@homesightwa.org

Seattle Housing Authority	Affordable housing	Anne Fiske-Zuniga *Deputy Exec Dir. Development*	Anne.FiskeZuniga@seattlehousing.org
Seattle Office of Housing	Affordable housing	Steve Walker *Director*	Steve.Walker@seattle.gov@seattle.gov
Seattle Department of Neighborhoods	Community development	Bernie Matsuno *Director*	bernie.matsuno@seattle.gov
Community Capital Development	Economic development	Josephine Tamayo Murray *Board President*	info@seattleccd.com
Rainier Valley Chamber of Commerce	Economic development	E.J. Gong *Board President*	mail@rainierchamber.com
MLK Business Association	Economic development	Julie Pham *Board Chair*	http://www.mlkba.org/contact/
Mercy Corps Northwest	Economic development	John W. Haines *Executive Director*	jhaines@mercycorpsnw.org
Seattle Office of Economic Development	Economic development	Steve Johnson *Director*	steve.johnson@seattle.gov
Rainier Valley Community Development Fund	Economic development	Wayne Lau *Executive Director*	wlau@rvcdf.org
PolicyLink	Economic and Equity Research	Angela Glover Blackwell *Founder and CEO*	Otilia@policylink.org
Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition	Environmental justice	James Rasmussen, *DRCC/TAG Coordinator*	contact@duwamishcleanup.org
Washington CASH	Social capital/financing	Beto Yarce *Interim Executive Director*	beto@washingtoncash.org
Craft 3	Social capital/financing	John Berdes *President & CEO*	jberdes@craft3.org
Impact Capital	Social capital/financing	Judith Olsen *Executive Director*	judith@impactcapital.org
HopeLink	Social services, transit	Lauren Thomas CEO	hopelink@hope-link.org
Transit Riders Union	Transit advocacy	General Secretary *Katie Wilson*	contact@transitriders.org
Puget Sound Sage	Labor rights, community development	David West *Executive Director*	dwest@pugetsoundsage.org
Seattle Department of Planning and Development	Equity in Comprehensive Planning	Tom Hauger *Comprehensive Plan Manager*	tom.hauger@seattle.gov
Congress for the New Urbanism, Cascadia Chapter	Inclusive walkable, livable community design	Bill Lennertz *Board President*	cnucinfo@cnucascadia.org
Office of Housing Community Cornerstones	Community Development	Nora Liu *Chair Multicultural Planning* Ryan Curren *Chair TOD Funding*	http://www.seattle.gov/housing/Cornerstones/default.htm

Sample Introductory Email

Puget Sound Regional Council	Growing Transit Communities Project	Sara Maxana *North Corridor*	smaxana@psrc.org
The Health Atlas; Plan for a Healthy LA	Health Equity and Planning	Beth Altshuler	healthplanla@gmail.com

We encourage you to reach out to the organizations listed above to assess their capacity for partnering with students. Feel free to use the sample introductory email below when making initial contact with these organizations.

Dear (ORGANIZATION/CONTACT),

My name is (YOUR NAME) and I am a student at the (UNIVERSITY). I understand that one of the goals of the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association is to connect university research to the needs of organizations working to advance social equity in our region.

Since (ORGANIZATION) is doing important work at the intersection of urban planning and social equity, I was wondering if you were open to partnering with urban planning university students looking to do independent research or a thesis related to your mission.

Organizations can partner with students in a variety of ways. For example, (ORGANIZATION) can simply provide data or provide students with research oversight.

I'd love to describe the mutually beneficial possibilities of partnering in more detail. Are you free for a phone call or coffee date on (DAY)?

I hope to hear from you soon.

(NAME)

(CONTACT INFORMATION)