

SYSTEM

"It is critical to understand the links between the historical processes of urban development and contemporary forces that impinge on Black communities, so that central city residents might proactively engage with these forces." (Gibson)

DISPERSAL OF RESOURCES, SERVICES AND FAMILIES

With displacement and movement across Root and Anchor areas, people become more dispersed and disconnected from vital services and each other. Families are uprooted, separated geographically from each other, as well as from cultural and environmental institutions needed for health, living and working. This disconnect hinders community cohesion, causing chronic stress and isolation to community members and families while increasing financial burden. Savings in rent are consequently spent on transportation and travel to culturally specific institutions in the historic heart of the community. Therefore, we are ever mindful that disparities reinforce one another in myriad ways—multiplying cost exponentially as symptoms become acute.

A 2010 assessment by the Coalition of Communities of Color's "Unsettling Profile" found that despite our liberal and progressive values, "Communities of color in Multnomah County suffer more than similar communities of color nationally. In the measures explored in

this report (incomes, poverty, occupation and education), communities of color have between 15% and 20% worse outcomes. It is more difficult to get ahead here in Multnomah County than it is more generally across the USA. When we tally the disproportionate 'hit' or additional income losses for communities of color living in the county, the average tally of such costs is \$8,362/year." (p. 8)

VISION

Prioritize equitable and fair allocation of budgets and resources, and use existing underutilized assets such as land, facilities and urban systems to connect people in Root and Anchor areas to create cohesion and prosperity. Connect dispersed social, economic and cultural resources to lift the most vulnerable from serial poverty.

Right 2 Root™ conducted nearly three years of focus groups, community meetings, 1:1 coaching, small business mentoring, charrettes and design-a-thons with Black community members at-risk and impacted by gentrification. Participants shared their vision of places to express and celebrate cultural roots and heritage, benefit from jobs, education and business opportunities and investments, and have affordable homes in stable, flourishing neighborhoods with access to healthy food, transportation and opportunities to make our lives better. Our Phase I report has conceptual

mixed-use site drawings illustrating this vision. To make a society that aligns with our values and understand how to accomplish this feat for one of Oregon's most underserved and excluded communities, we must look to the causal link between historical policy and current inequity. We must reframe multigenerational discrimination, serial forced displacement, gentrification and institutional racism by their consequence, ill health, rather than their intention, "benign neglect." Innovation of "right sized" solutions demands that we look to social, economic, political and cultural systems, as well as the built and natural environment, to understand and identify upstream solutions. Healing will require creative and innovative solutions to redress and reverse the effects.

The Right 2 Root™ campaign is an effort to identify solutions and help community members achieve parity with other successful culturally specific neighborhood stabilization and community development initiatives in Portland. Specifically it aims to help us:

- Reclaim our community
- Improve our health and education outcomes
- Increase access to affordable housing and economic development opportunities
- Generate long-term asset development with the help of the community

