



Advancing Transit-oriented Communities & Planning for Equity in Los Angeles

Harvard CoDesign @ GSD

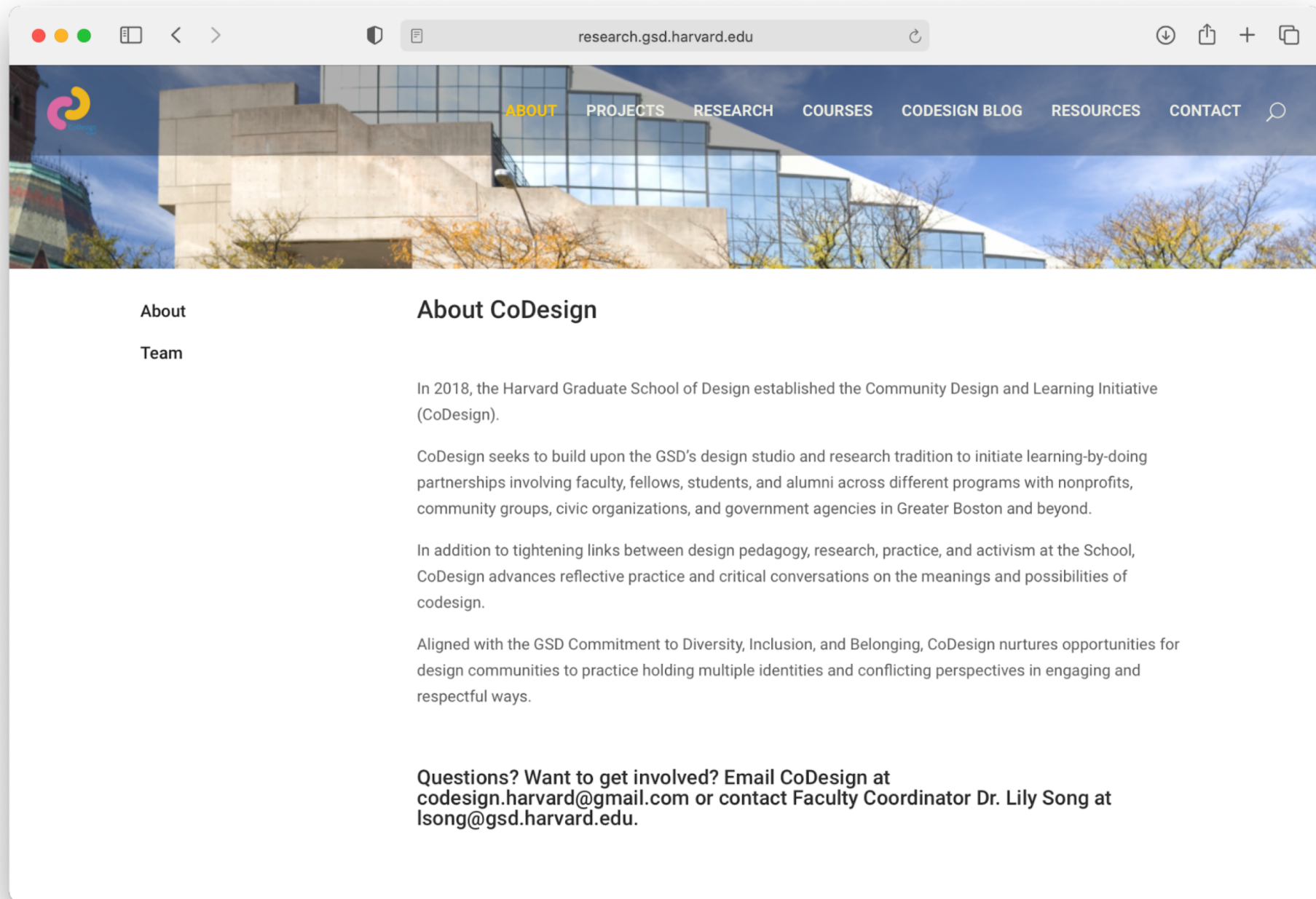
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JCHS | March 26, 2021



About

Team

About CoDesign

In 2018, the Harvard Graduate School of Design established the Community Design and Learning Initiative (CoDesign).

CoDesign seeks to build upon the GSD's design studio and research tradition to initiate learning-by-doing partnerships involving faculty, fellows, students, and alumni across different programs with nonprofits, community groups, civic organizations, and government agencies in Greater Boston and beyond.

In addition to tightening links between design pedagogy, research, practice, and activism at the School, CoDesign advances reflective practice and critical conversations on the meanings and possibilities of codesign.

Aligned with the GSD Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, CoDesign nurtures opportunities for design communities to practice holding multiple identities and conflicting perspectives in engaging and respectful ways.

Questions? Want to get involved? Email CoDesign at codesign.harvard@gmail.com or contact Faculty Coordinator Dr. Lily Song at lsong@gsd.harvard.edu.

“What does it mean to be a human being in the 21st century?”

Grace Lee Boggs



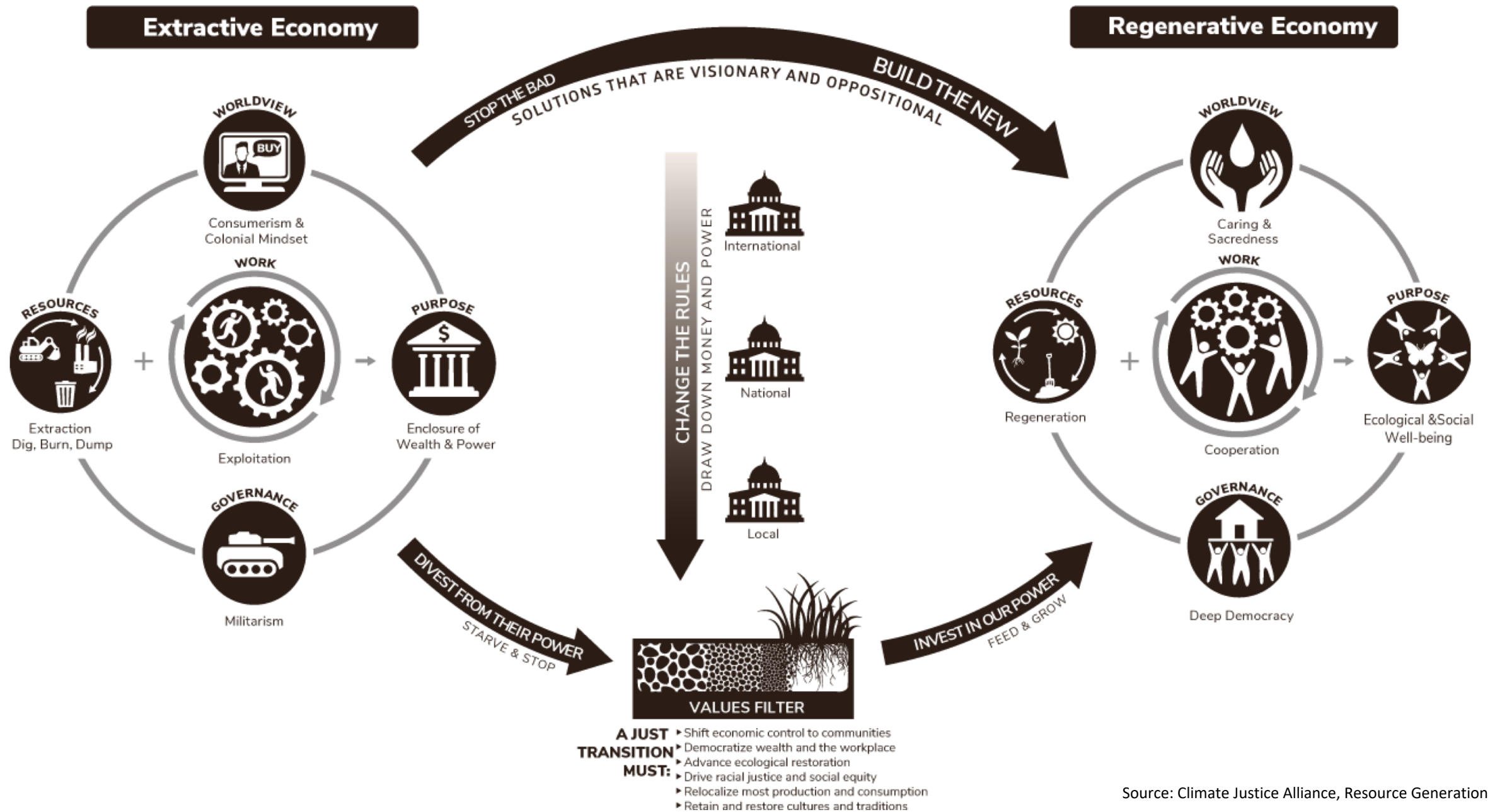
Source: American Revolutionary



Source: AP Photo/Mel Evans

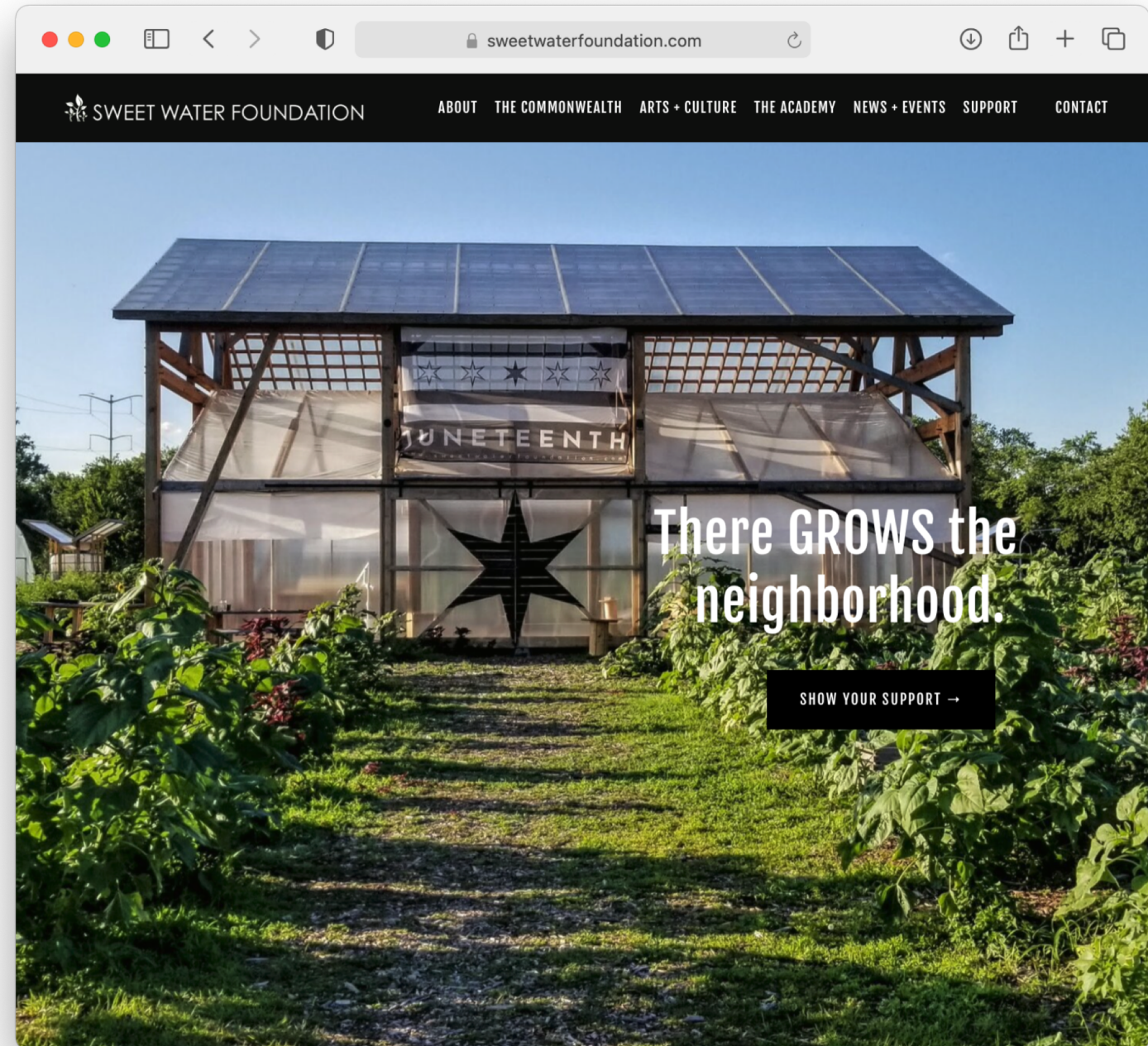


Source: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images



Reparative planning and design

- Acts of repair, healing, and making whole borne from brokenness and damage.
- Centers the margins as space of radical insight, openness, and possibility in moving towards regenerative ecological, social, political, and economic systems.
- Shifts planning and design methods, pedagogy, and culture to uphold intergenerational knowledge, situated insight, and creative practices of frontline communities
- De-commodifies space and human relationships by investing in regenerative communities, commons, and publics



Research Questions

- How do infrastructure-based struggles and mobilizations led by frontline communities **reveal and challenge social supremacies** baked into and reproduced through the built environment and prevailing spatial development?
- **How can planners and designers align our creative practices with frontline leaders and communities** to combat spatialized supremacies and help repair, heal, and make whole urban environments and social relations?

“Infrastructure enables all manner of things, and it can foster transformation as well as reproduction. In contrast to top-down infrastructure- communities, movements, networks, and nations assemble creative alternatives that respond to needs and desires for a different future as they help bring them into being.”

Deborah Cowen, *Infrastructures of empire and resistance* (2017)

Division of the Barrios & Chavez Ravine, by Judith Baca. Image Source: The City project



Transit-induced Displacement in Los Angeles

Research precedents:

- Doctoral dissertation on place-based mobilizations for green jobs (2010-12)
- Transforming Urban Transport- The Role of Political Leadership (2015-18)

Deeper dive into LA Case of transit-induced displacement:

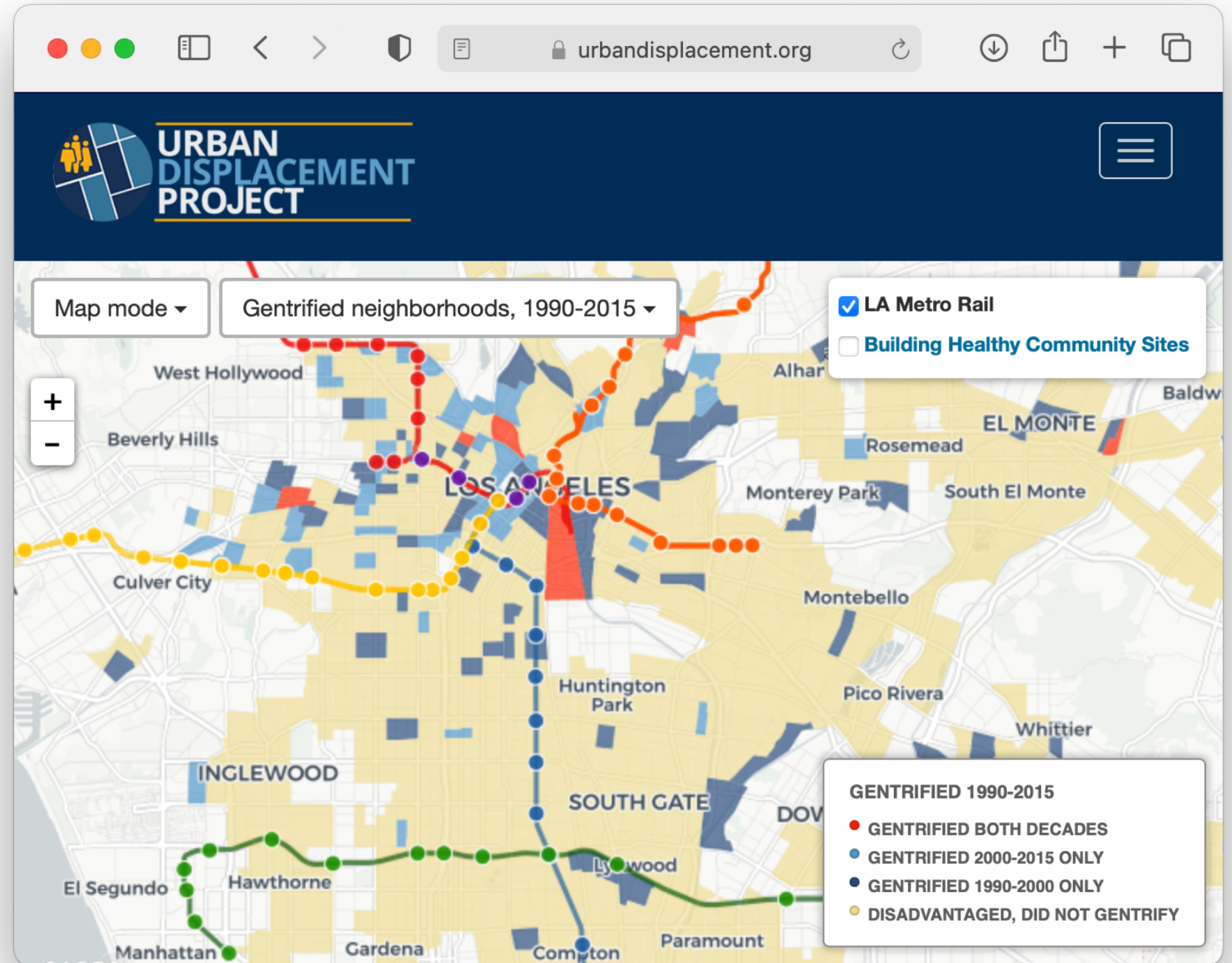
- Historical and archival research, individual interviews, participant observations, and field observation



Source: Carmel Partners



Source: ACT-LA

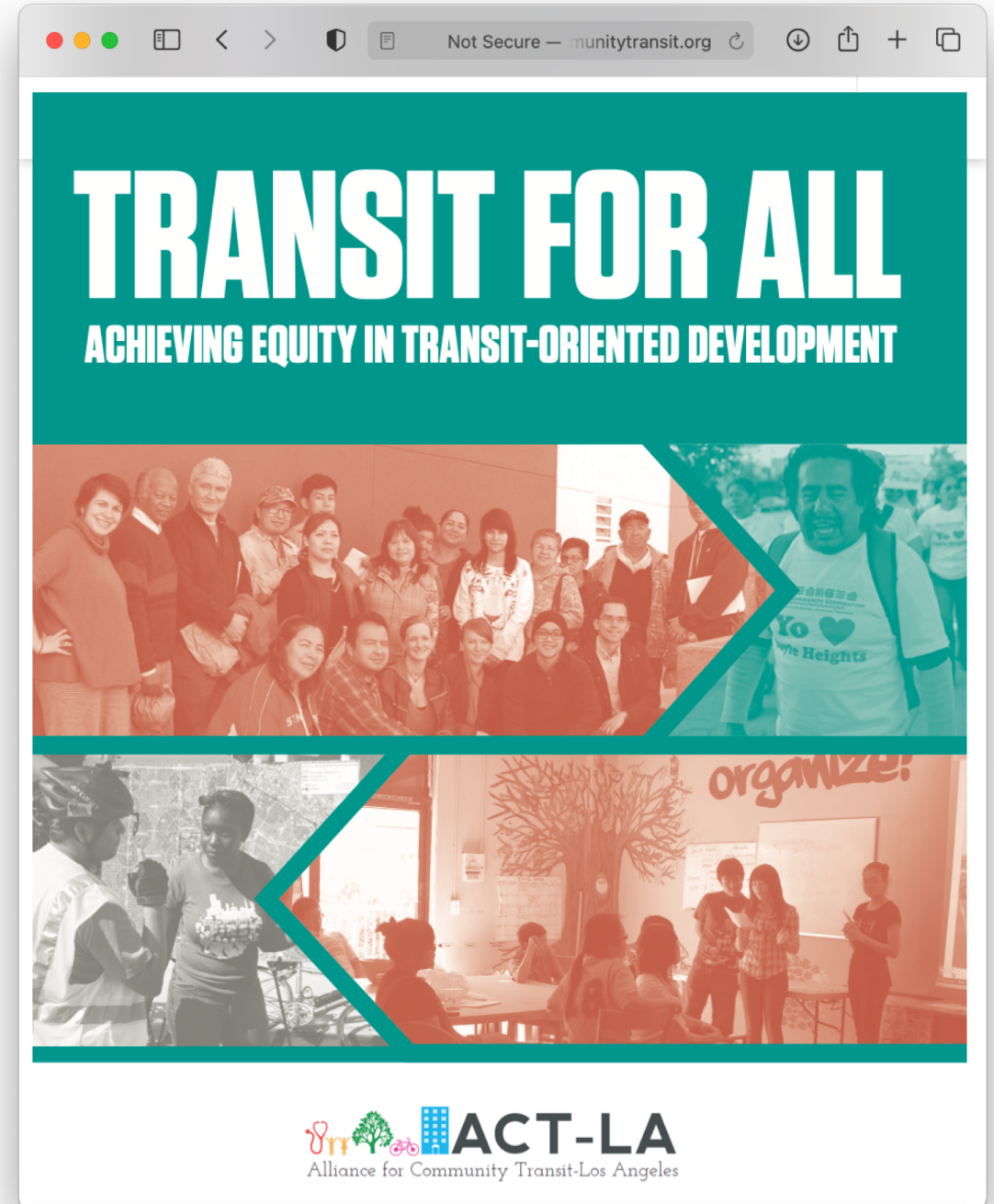


Alliance for Community Transit- Los Angeles

Coalition of transportation advocates, community and neighborhood groups, and worker centers leading citywide, regional, and state-level campaigns to ensure transit investments are coupled with affordable housing and inclusive workforce and economic development policies

Landmark policy wins:

- Measure JJJ: LA City Transit Oriented Community Overlay (2016)
- LA Metro Transit Oriented Communities Policy (2018)
- Planning for Equity Initiative (Ongoing)
- SB827 and SB50 (2018-2020)



Reparative Planning and Designing with Frontline Organizers

Begins with showing up for and participating in ACT-LA processes and projects

1. Movement building
2. Agonistic politics
3. Coalition work
4. Planning and design with value-aligned experts

METRO: THE FREE WAY **A COMMUNITY FORUM ON FARE-FREE TRANSIT**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10

5:00PM – 7:00PM

Join transit riders and allies in a conversation on the future of public transportation and the need for fare elimination on Metro!

**Register here:
bit.ly/FareFreeLA**



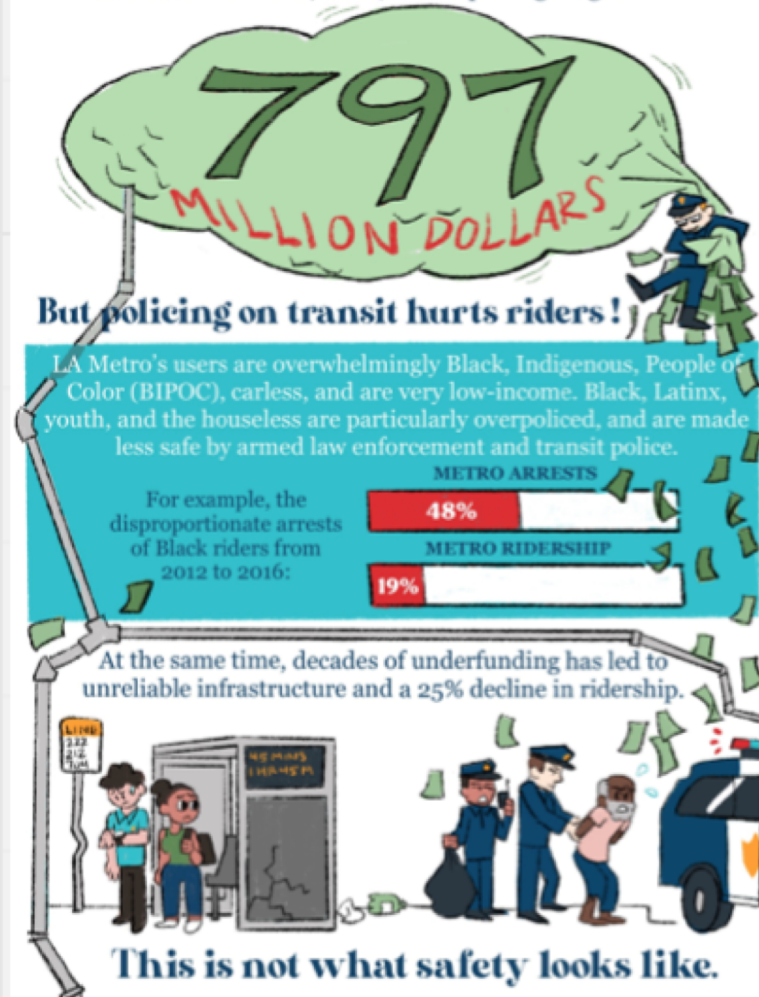
Current ACT-LA campaign:

Divesting from Police

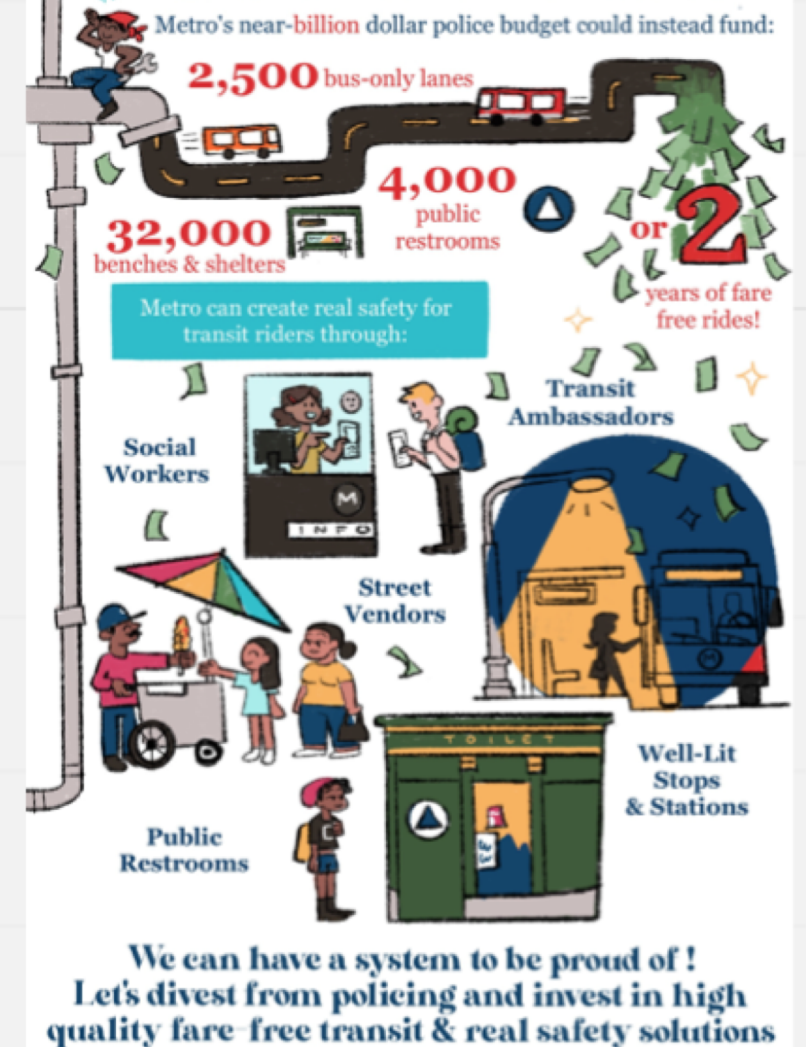


Reimagining Public Safety, Better Buses and Fare-Free Transit

LA Metro's transit system is a public good primarily funded by Angelenos' sales taxes. Between 2017-2022, Metro's policing budget is at least



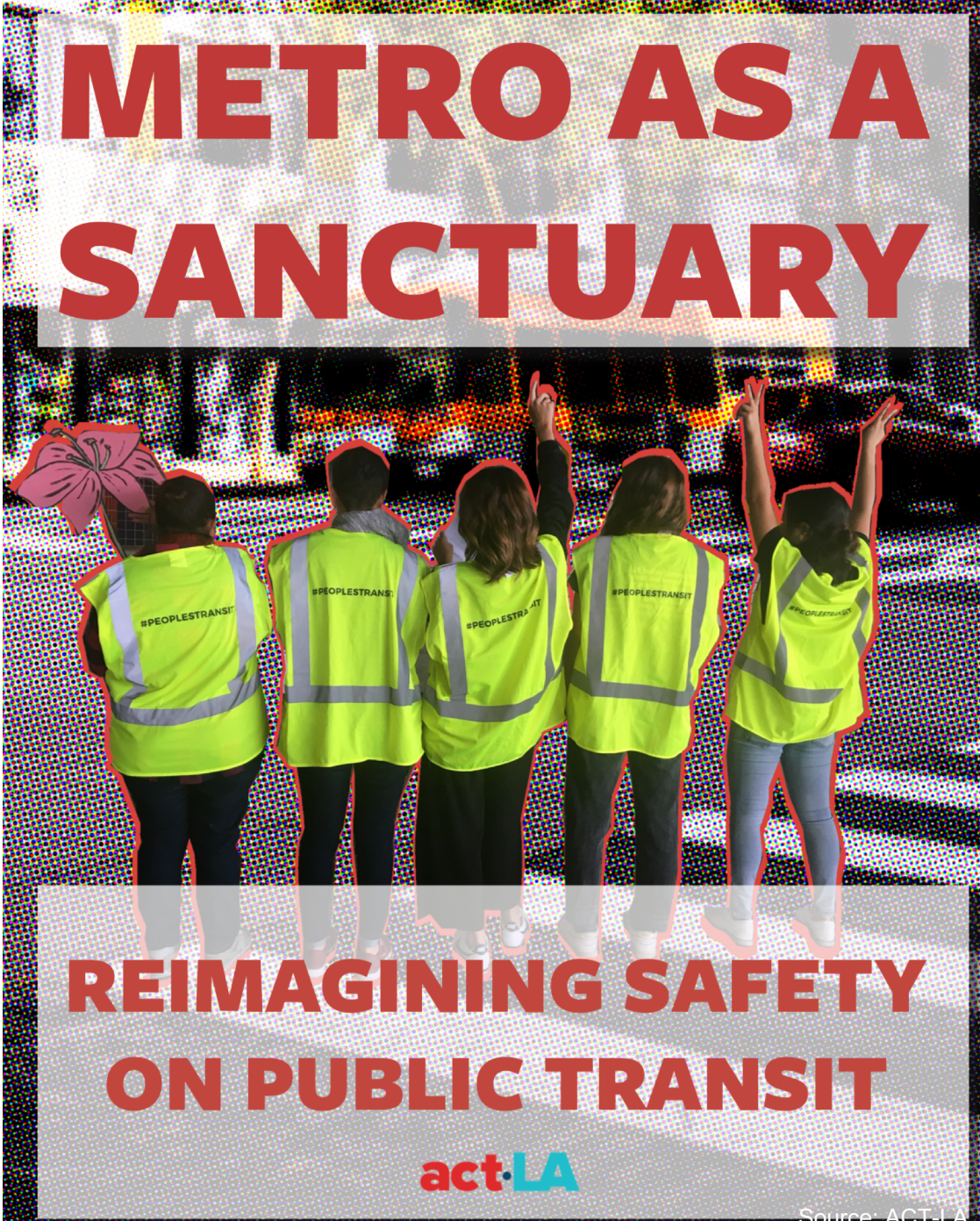
Transit Justice is Racial & Economic Justice



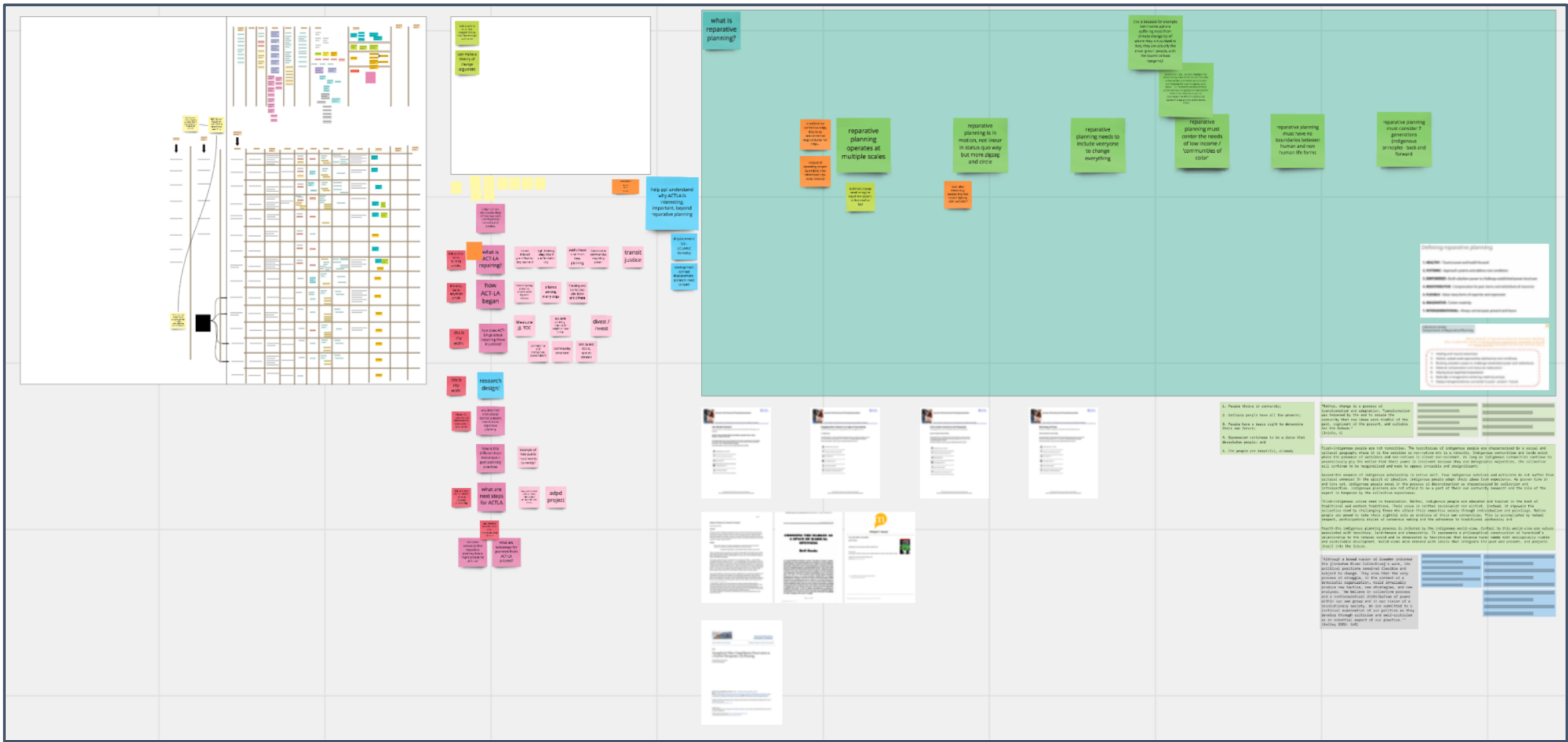
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Design strategies: Co-creating the Vision of Metro as Sanctuary




Embedded Thesis Design



Screenshot from research Miro Board

Transit Justice - Workshops, Webinars and Trainings

- November 2019: Metro Station Activation
- July 2020: Reimagining Safety on Public Transit Public Webinar
- August 2020: Training
- October 2020: Training
- March 2021: Workshop
- March 2021: Fare Free Transit Public Webinar
- March 2021: Metro as a Sanctuary Public Webinar
- TO COME: Interactive Webinar
- TO COME: Training
- TO COME: Workshop



The worksheet is divided into two main sections. The top section contains a series of prompts for a commute journal, each followed by a blank line for a response. The prompts are: 'I live in _____ and I commute to _____', 'On my commute I smell _____, I hear _____', 'and I see _____', 'I wish my commute had more _____ and less _____', and 'In the future, every bus stop should have _____'. The bottom section is a large blank area with the text 'What does a sanctuary look like? Muéstrame un santuario.' and a small orange flag icon on the left side.

I live in _____ and I commute to _____
a neighborhood a destination

On my commute I smell _____, I hear _____
a smell a sound

and I see _____
a sight

I wish my commute had more _____ and less _____

In the future, every bus stop should have _____

What does a sanctuary look like?
Muéstrame un santuario.

Worksheets for Metro as a Sanctuary Webinar



Sanctuary suggestions received from webinar participants

Preliminary findings on transit justice and equitable urban development

- *democratic decision making and coalition building
- *create counter-spaces for organizing
- *build relationship with decision-makers and resource holders
- *no silos! housing and transit and jobs and climate
- *putting current transit riders at front of decision making process
- *using momentary cracks in power to make change



Tools and methods of ACT-LA

Concluding Thoughts

On the urban planning and design side, what do we need to put in place to support just transitions led by frontline communities—undertake reparative infrastructural planning and design?

1. Cultivate keen sensitivity to issues of power.
2. Build relationships with transformative place-based organizers where you are.
3. Consider why and how we show up.
4. Use professional knowledge and skills to advance movement goals and priorities.

