



# Native Neighborhood Community Study

A Place of Belonging for  
Seattle's Native Community

**REPORT**  
2022





**Respect  
Responsibility  
Reciprocity  
Relationship  
Appreciation  
Accept Only  
What You Need**

**“We are working to create  
a long-term future where  
Indigenous people on Coast  
Salish lands can live happy,  
healthy, self-determined lives.”**

*sləp̓iləbəx<sup>w</sup> (Rising Tides)  
Indigenous Planning Group,  
Founded 2018*



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In 2021, the City of Seattle’s Office of Planning and Community Development Equitable Development Initiative provided Na’ah Illahee Fund with contract funding for a consultant to lead a Native Neighborhood Study.

*Cover Art by Artist/Graphic Designer, Denise Emerson (Skokomish, Navajo). Cover art statement: I study Native American basketry for bead art as I sculpt little bead baskets for jewelry, circles within circles. In our culture, our living spaces are usually inward-facing circles as well so I thought it would be perfect to create a basket design for this report cover. I also came to the realization that designing a basket with human beings is what was needed for the title “Native Neighborhood”. The design shows a woman in full circle and a man in full circle as full circle is the philosophical concept of a Native Neighborhood in Seattle.*

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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that this land d̓ídzəlalič, downtown Seattle, where we gather, visit, live and work, is in the ancestral territory of Coast Salish peoples, communities and nations. Foremost being the Suquamish, Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie and the Duwamish, as they continue their caretaking relationships to this land and waters as protectors, safeguarding it for future generations.

We also acknowledge the traditional and current importance of this place to other Coast Salish Tribes. For centuries, the land Seattle occupies is one among many central meeting places frequented by the recognized and non-recognized Tribes of Washington State. Tribes including: Chehalis, Chinook, Colville, Cowlitz, Hoh, Jamestown S'Klallam, Kalispel, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Nisqually, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Puyallup, Quileute, Quinault, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Shoalwater Bay, Skokomish, Spokane, Squaxin Island, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Wanapum, and Yakama.

## TERMINOLOGY

**Indigenous/Native** - This report uses the terms Native and Indigenous to represent American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, First Nation, and Indigenous People of all nationalities. We respect that each Tribal member may have a preference for how they wish to label, name, or present their Tribal identity, and we acknowledge that some people are not comfortable with the terms Native or Indigenous as broad labels. We also recognize that Indigenous cultures are not monolithic, that there are differences among Native cultures, and that not all individuals will agree with the broad statements of this report.

**Relatives (Respondents)** - To avoid Western research's transactional language, this report refers to the respondents as relatives.

“Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished.”  
- Chief Seattle 1854



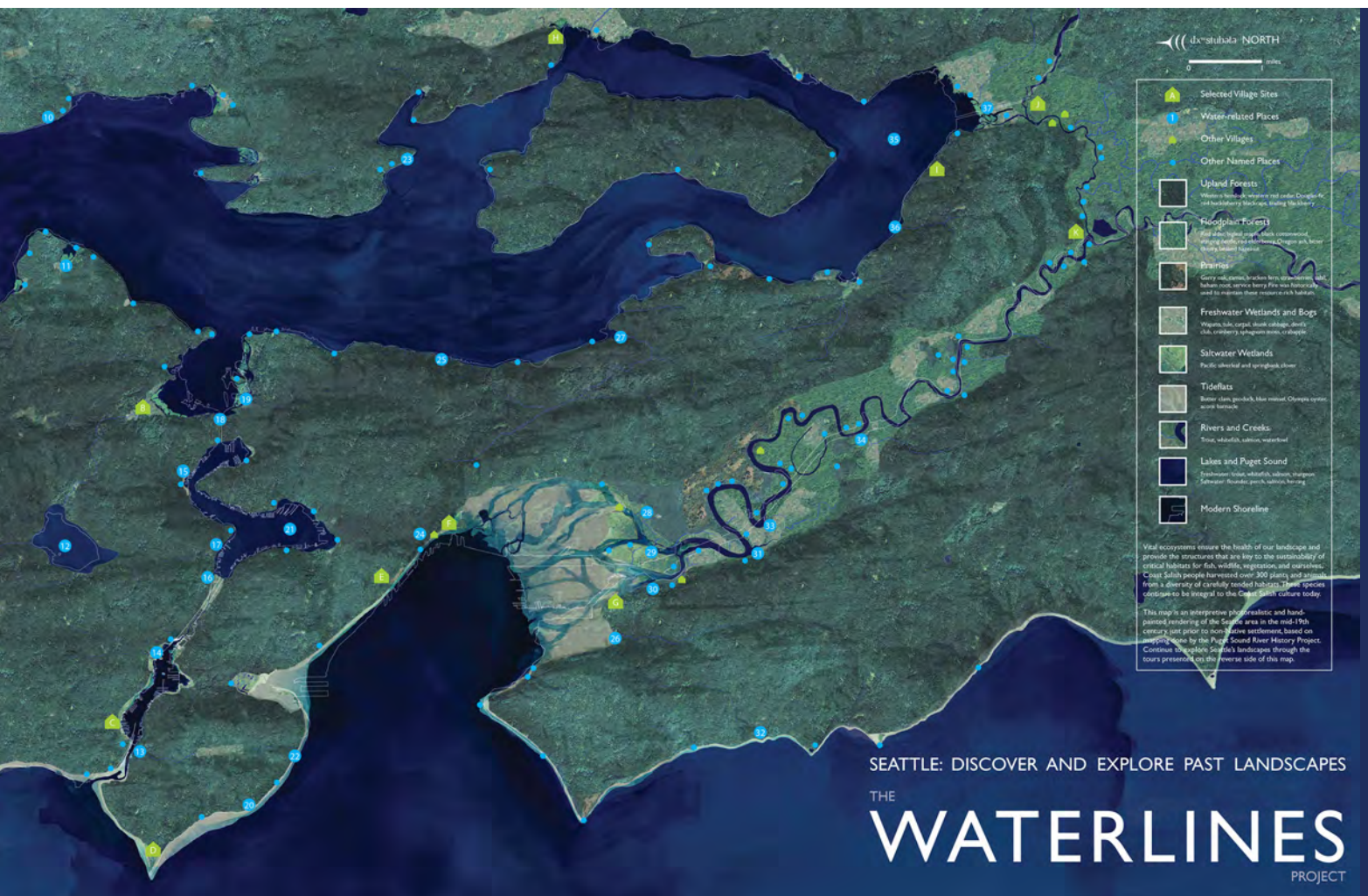


# FORWARD

## BY OWEN OLIVER

*The name Seattle is new, it's been intentionally fashioned into a name that evokes the wild, the gloom, the pillaging boom from sea to sky. The land that is called Seattle is new, it's been intentionally manufactured into a city that's been scraped from the Montlake Cut to the Ballard Locks to the evaporation of the Black River to moving land, killing tide flats of clams and herring spawning grounds, to create the largest artificial islands at the time. Seattle is new for Coast Salish People because for us, we knew those places as carry a canoe, tucked away inside, inside place, herring's house. These lands all have intentional place names that inform us of the land and location that we are nearby. We know that people's names don't inform the land, the land informs people's names. təqʷubəʔ (Tahoma) tells us about the importance to care for our mother that provides us with water. Peter Rainier tells us nothing further than the British admiral who knew Captain Vancouver. We forgot the importance of the land when we cloud it with destructive memories.*

*Seattle now still illustrates the beauty that Coast Salish, Indigenous guests, explorers, and settlers saw once they arrived. The glaciated sound that is held together by the vast forests and mountains. The diverse and abundant wildlife that are local caretakers of the ecosystem. The picturesque transition from sleeting rain, foggy mornings, sailor delights, and temperate summers make this a place to call home. A humble home that invites you with huckleberries and smoked salmon. A sweet and savory place that takes care of you; physically, mentally, and spiritually. Yet a place is only a place when you want to learn and understand the reciprocity needed to create a relationship, without that, it's an empty space that can be abused.*



# GROUNDING

*Long ago, giant eagles in Alaska were hunting too many whales. The giant eagles would pluck whales out of the ocean, dropping them to rocks on the beach. They would only eat the tongue, which is the softest, tastiest, and easiest part to eat and leave the rest of the whale to rot.*

*The Inupiat were starving and when they asked the giant eagles to stop wasting the whales, the young eagles laughed and refused to listen to the people. The villagers gathered together and concluded that their only choice to save the people and the whales was to hunt the giant eagles. A hunter came upon the last giant eagle, and she was grieving the loss of her children.*

*The Mother Eagle gave the hunter instructions for how to steam wood, bending it into a hoop, stretching skin and attaching it to the hoop to make a drum. She asked the hunter to listen to her beating heart and play the drum in the same rhythm as a reminder of her love for her children.*

## TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

In traditional knowledge systems, knowledge and wisdom come from the land. Each person's journey leads to their individual perspective and way of understanding. Thoughts that are generated by interactions with the world and from teachings by Elders, families, healers, and leaders. Native cultures tend to view nature as fluid, changing, cyclical, giving and abundant – every human need is met freely as a gift from nature and the role of humanity is to be a cooperative caretaker of the earth. Native creation stories tie humans intimately to the land by reminding us of how we co-created the world with our plant, animal, and spiritual relatives. Our cultures arose from the land, the sea, the river, the lake, the forest, the mountain, the prairie, the tundra, and the sun, stars and moon.

Traditional knowledge also views time as cyclical: lessons from the earth return to guide us in how we must live within nature's boundaries. We should not be greedy, self-interested, and arrogant like the young giant eagles. We should listen to the people.

Traditional knowledge systems and Indigenous science are embedded in Native and Indigenous cultures, have been practiced since time immemorial, and are guided by values, ethics, and morals.

Traditional knowledge is made of three parts that overlap significantly: (1) values, (2) protocol or policy, and (3) knowledge content (Reo 2012, 15). These three pillars of traditional knowledge exist because ethical action drives Native science - the resulting actions based on the knowledge gained during research are just as, or even more so, important as the knowledge itself. Indigenous scholars and traditional knowledge holders will ask how the information gained during research will be used, and what is the intention or purpose for the research.

*"Indeed, Western sciences and Indigenous sciences are not necessarily incommensurable in principle. Indigenous methods sometimes align, diverge, or conflict with Western science and may also be critical complements to it in answering the most pressing questions of the twenty-first century. Engaging heterogeneous sciences – specifically Indigenous sciences – can expand our collective knowledge and are critical if sciences (in their plurality) are to become champions of the common good and adequately respond to contemporary problems" (Bang et al, 2018, 151).*



# TRADITIONAL SUSTAINABLE VALUES

Traditional sustainable values are holistically expressed as a way to build relationships with community members, family, plant and animal relatives, ecosystems, and the world. These guiding sustainable values are a gift from Nature.

These values were used to guide the NNCS project and were a starting point for developing community study questions. A solid understanding of these values and their role in Native and Indigenous worldview creates robust data analysis.

The values are a helpful tool for building relationships among community members, as the values are shared by many Indigenous tribes across Turtle Island.

*"Traditional values are reinforced through ceremony and prayer; these values are also invoked during the opening speeches at gathering events as a way to remind community members of the importance of traditional values."  
(Tevuk 2015)*

## RELATIONSHIP

Central to Native cultures is the goal of building and maintaining good relationships. Every member of the community must be able to work together to both determine and meet common goals.

## RESPECT

A good relationship must be built on a foundation of respect. Community members are obligated to show respect upon meeting each other, but respect can become unearned through repeated bad behavior.

## ACCEPT ONLY WHAT YOU NEED

This value is an Indigenous interpretation of the Western term "conservation". As we share resources with our plant and animal relatives, low consumption is a mindful way to show respect and responsibility to the the natural world.

## RESPONSIBILITY

A strong sense of responsibility for one's actions is taught from a young age. Humans are a part of Nature and our actions impact our living and nonliving relatives.

## RECIPROCITY

Sharing the gifts of Nature with the community builds lasting and meaningful relationships. Humans, as social creatures who take care of each other, give and receive as naturally rewarding actions. Participation in a traditional reciprocal economy includes trusting that your gifts will be returned by others or by Nature.

## APPRECIATION

Thankfulness reinforces the previous values. Expressing thankfulness during gathering, hunting, and fishing is one way to show reciprocity toward Nature.

**“Traditional sustainable values are taught to children from babyhood and parents, community leaders, and elders lead by example by expressing these values through action. - Tevuk 2015**

# PREFACE

## AN INDIGENOUS FUTURE FOR SEATTLE

The Native Neighborhood Community Study Report is the first step in empowering the local urban Native community to recognize, uplift, and revitalize traditional Indigenous community planning approaches in envisioning a new Indigenous future for the city of Seattle. Native-led planning centers community-based design and methods using knowledge from thousands of years of adaptive caretaking of relatives - people, animal, and plant - and careful observation of weather cycles, ecological long-term patterns and humanity's impacts on ecosystems.

Since 2018, the sləp̓iləbəx̌w (Rising Tides) Indigenous Planning Group, made up of Indigenous architects, planners, knowledge holders, and community members have been meeting together to envision a Native Neighborhood in Seattle where urban Native People feel a sense of community and belonging to live happy, healthy, self-determined lives. sləp̓iləbəx̌w aim is to cultivate a city that is culturally, socially, and economically inclusive of our Tribal and urban Native people. The group strives to ensure cultural knowledge keepers, Tribal nations, community leaders, and Native professionals are consulted and engaged in city and regional planning efforts. sləp̓iləbəx̌w seek to increase awareness and understanding of Indigenous cultures and histories of settler colonization as a means to promote Indigenous approaches to planning, community, and cultural placekeeping.

In 2021 sləp̓iləbəx̌w member, Na'ah Illahee Fund, launched the E'lip Tilikum (First Peoples) Land Conservancy program. The first Native land conservancy in the Pacific Northwest seeks to help remedy centuries of dislocation, displacement, and enforced disconnection from Mother Earth through returning land in the Pacific Northwest to the stewardship and guidance of Indigenous communities throughout the area, beginning in the City of Seattle. The land conservancy will create the opportunity for Na'ah Illahee Fund, other Indigenous-led groups, Tribal nations, and allies who seek to uplift and support the Land Back movement, to restore, preserve, and protect land, waterways, plant and animal relatives' natural habitat as well as sacred traditional areas in rural and urban settings.

The Native Neighborhood Community Study is a collective effort by sləp̓iləbəx̌w with the support of Na'ah Illahee fund staff and Seattle's Urban Native community. The study has been led by Demarus Tevuk, an Inupiaq relative with expertise in traditional knowledge systems and sustainable traditional values.

◆ **Seattle's comprehensive plan for 2035 was published in 2015 and outlines four core values for the city: community, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and security, race and social equity. The 2035 plan only mentioned Native Americans generally on page 65 under a section about historic preservation, which signals to the reader that Native and Indigenous peoples and culture exist only in the past. The City of Seattle has the opportunity to make significant updates to its upcoming One Seattle Plan in order to achieve racial equity for the local Native and Indigenous community. (Seattle.gov)**



*The Pond at Daybreak Star  
Indian Cultural Center*



# STUDY INTRODUCTION

## NATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY

As the first step in a community-directed process, the Native Neighborhood Community Study, actively listened to the hopes, dreams, and concerns of the urban Native community about creating a Native Neighborhood in Seattle. The study encouraged Native and Indigenous communities to radically dream of urban Native places that are healing, safe, multi-functional, multi-generational, and holistically care for current and future generations, our plant and animal relatives, and the land and water.

The Native Neighborhood Survey, created by and for urban Native people, was the heart of this study. The Seattle area Native community replied enthusiastically to the survey. Remarkably, 768 relatives provided survey responses from December 2021 to July 2022. Native and Indigenous People who live, work, visit, or receive services in Seattle were the target audience. All Indigenous Peoples were welcome to participate and were not required to meet the United States Government's definition of federally recognized Tribal affiliation. Guided by sləp̓iləbəx<sup>w</sup> weekly meetings, qualitative and quantitative data was gathered through the Native Neighborhood Survey, Virtual Talking Circle, Native and Indigenous Food Systems Listening Session and One-on-One interviews.

The Seattle urban Native community responded positively to the Indigenous research methods utilized. These include the first stage of asking the community to participate in evaluation, where the research questions and the research intentions are determined. Open-ended questions resulted in meaningful and thoughtful responses by our community. These types of responses required a sensitive and culturally attuned analysis. Survey data analysis was conducted by Indigenous relatives who were able to interpret and codify qualitative responses while maintaining the cultural context of relatives' responses.

**SURVEY**  
**TALKING CIRCLE**  
**LISTENING SESSION**  
**ONE-ON-ONES**

**768**  
**RELATIVES**  
**RESPONDED**

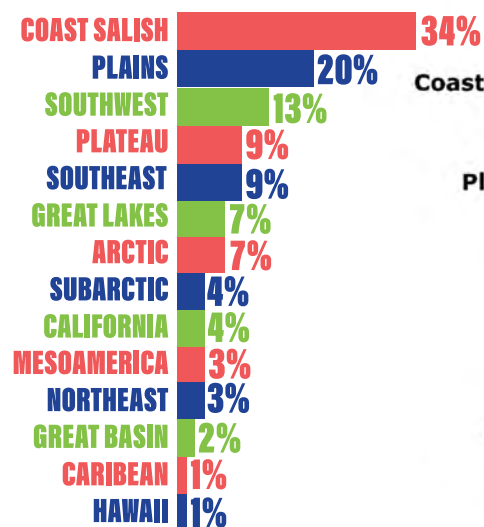
In contrast to the Western focus on quantitative stand-alone data, this report aims to present the information in a meaningful way to show the relationality of qualitative and quantitative information along with legacy harmful policies, practices and misconceptions.

## GENERAL MISCONCEPTIONS BY MAINSTREAM CULTURE

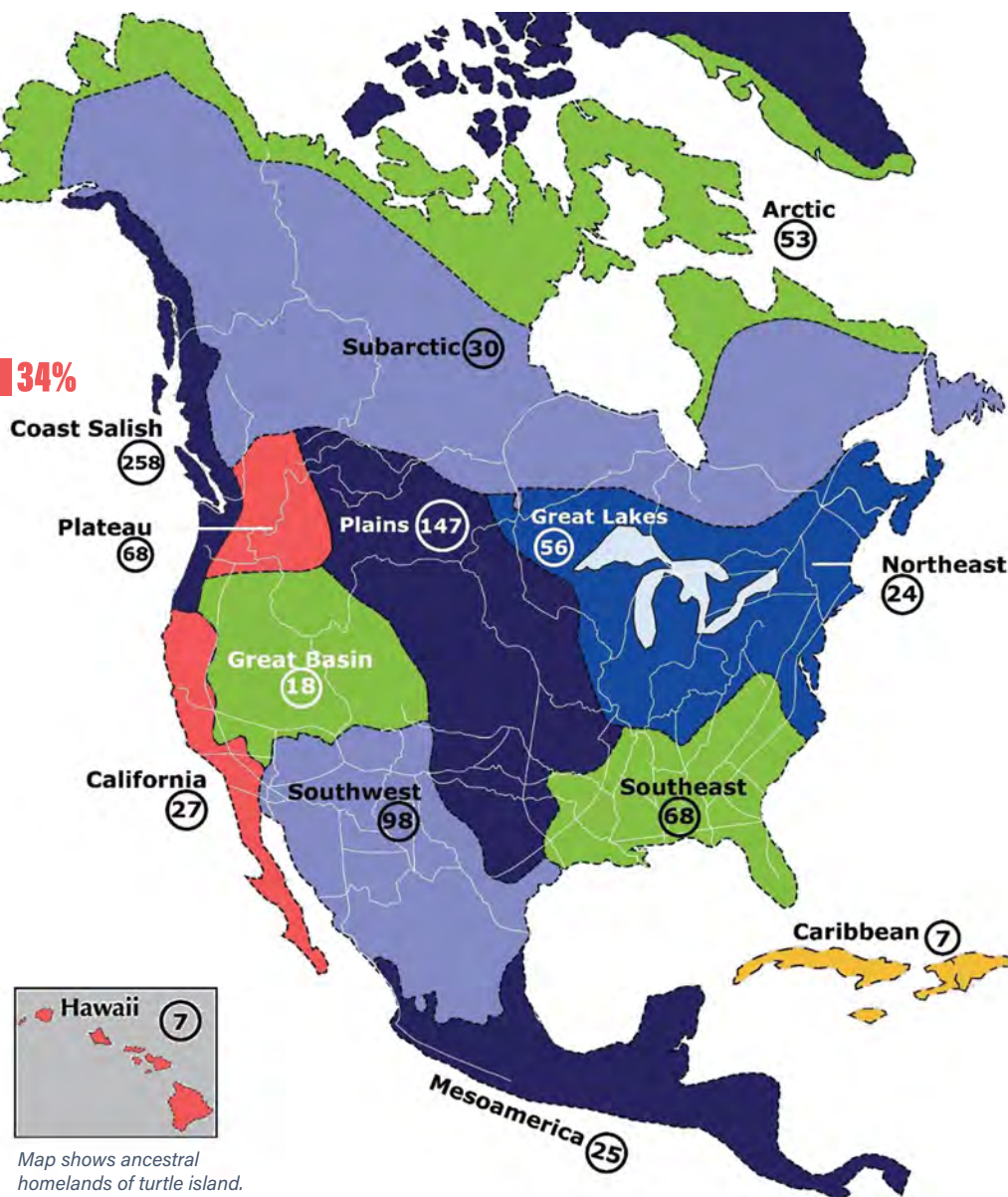
- ◆ Mainstream culture continues to portray Native Peoples as minorities who live solely in rural areas, villages, and reservations. In reality, more than 71% of American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN) live in urban areas far from their Tribal ancestral homelands (Norris 2012).
- ◆ In fact, 2020 US Census showed an 86% increase since 2010 in the AIAN population, alone and in combination, and now makes up 9.7 million, or 2.9% of the US population (ICT 2021).
- ◆ Another misconception is that all AIAN people have access to federal funding and receive Tribal funds. Urban Native communities do not qualify for federal funds that must be used on Tribal lands by federally recognized Tribes.
- ◆ These misconceptions are the reason that only 0.23% of philanthropic dollars are given to Native-led nonprofits, even though the urban Native population have similar needs to Native People on Tribal lands (SUNN 2021).

# 2022 SEATTLE'S URBAN NATIVE COMMUNITY

## ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS OF SEATTLE RELATIVES

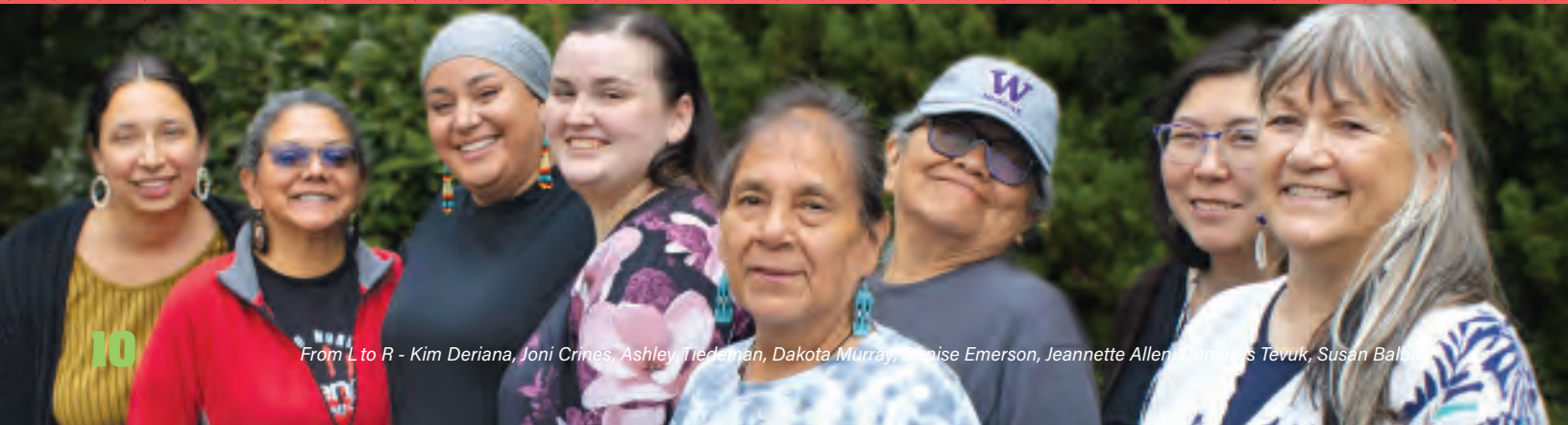


The majority (71.7%) of relatives reported that they are affiliated with one tribe but about 1 out of every 5 (21.1%) relatives have heritage from two tribes.



Map shows ancestral homelands of turtle island.

Credit: Denise Emerson (Skokomish, Navajo), Artist/Graphic Designer



From L to R - Kim Deriana, Joni Crines, Ashley Tiedeman, Dakota Murray, Denise Emerson, Jeannette Allen, Dennis Tevuk, Susan Balbo



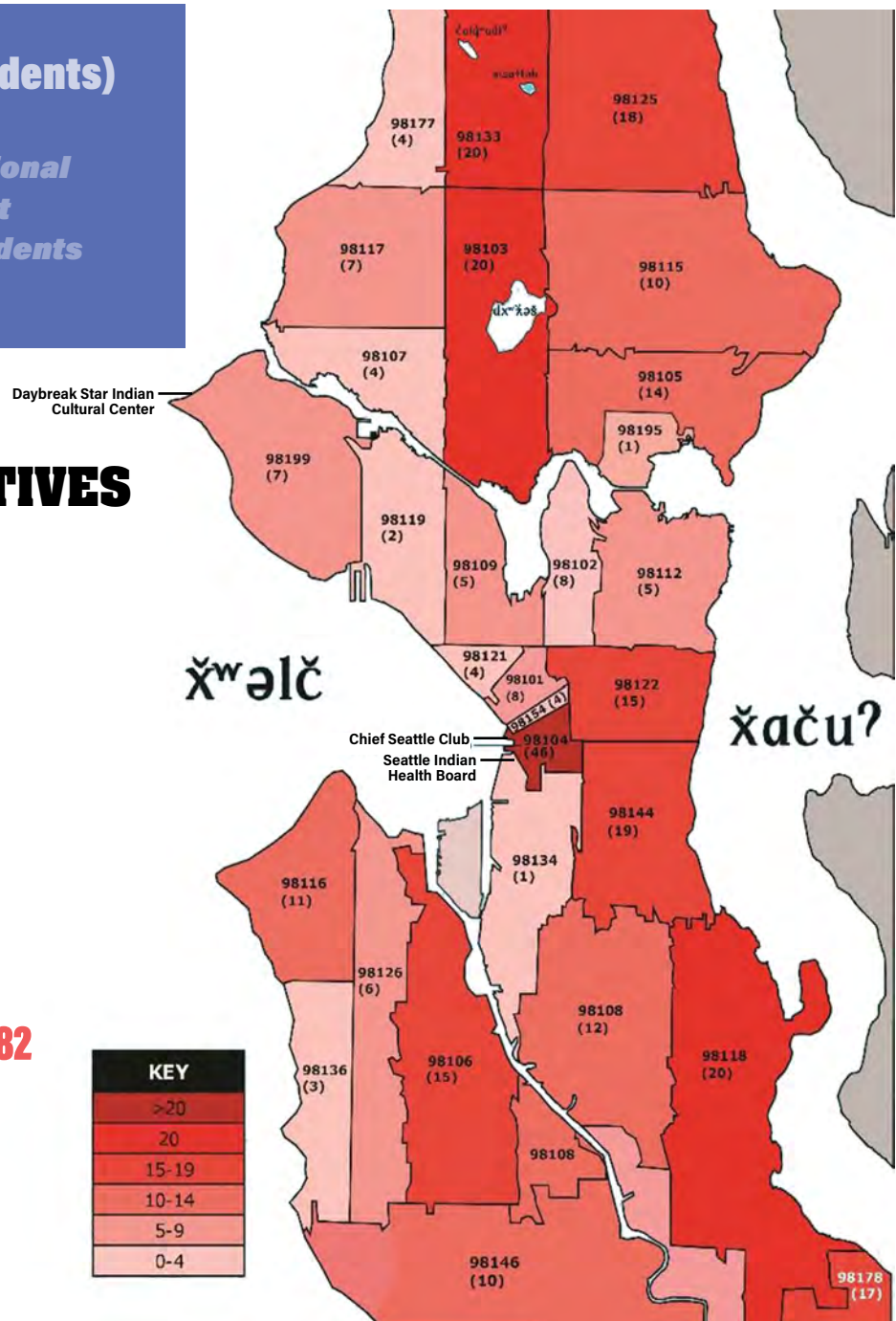
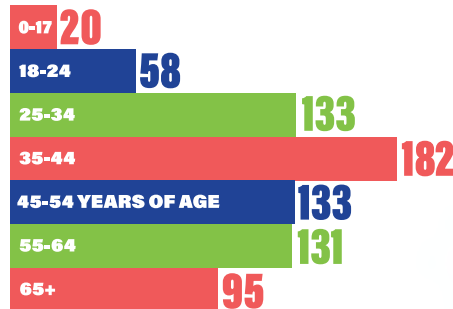
## Relatives (respondents)

To avoid Western research's transactional language, this report refers to the respondents as relatives.

## SEATTLE RELATIVES RESIDENCY BY ZIP CODE

Seattle 41.7%, 98104 highest n  
Tacoma (50), Auburn (19), Keni

## AGE OF RELATIVE



Credit: Denise Emerson (Skokomish, Navajo), Artist/Graphic Designer

“What we ask of America is not charity, not paternalism, even when benevolent. We ask only that the nature of our situation be recognized and made the basis of policy and action. - Declaration of Indian Purpose, American Indian Chicago Conference, June 20, 1961

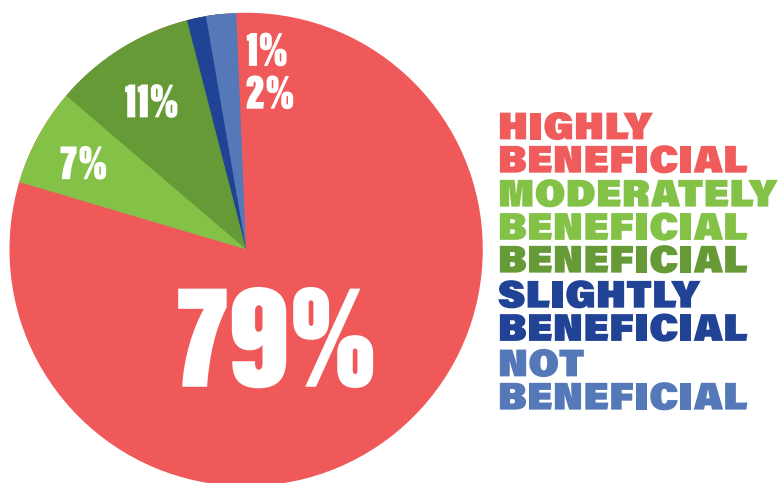
# VISIONING A NATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD

## ENTHUSIASM FOR A NATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD

Relatives (respondents) expressed excitement for the creation of a Native Neighborhood in Seattle, and some expressed a desire to see Native neighborhoods in every city. A recurring theme in relatives' written responses was the need to build a place of everyday community connection outside of larger community gathering events like powwows or the annual Tribal Canoe Journey.

### FROM A RELATIVE:

"A Native Neighborhood would bring a sense of belonging for our Urban Indian Community. Our Indigenous Peoples are clan people. We thrive when we are together seeing each other every day instead of at periodic events. Seattle spreads our people out from living next to each other, but as Natives we live our traditions and culture in our everyday lives. If smudging or gathering for ceremony is needed the whole community comes together. In Seattle a lot of our Elders can't make it to gatherings due to lack of transportation. If we had a Native neighborhood we could gather more frequently (as Natives do), and be together supporting one another in our traditional and cultural ways without worrying about traveling through traffic congestion or missing out because we don't have the means to get to the gathering place."



### FROM OUR RELATIVES:

"For urban Natives it's hard to feel like you belong to a community if you don't have any family here. You feel very alone."

"Seattle can be the heart of Indian country on the West coast. It is already a destination city for many Native people."

**“It could defy the “divide and conquer” strategies and impacts of settler colonialism and white privilege. If we can spend our time and energy in closer relationship to one another, rooted in our cultural values and worldview, social justice is possible.**  
**-From a relative**

## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

A recurring theme among qualitative survey responses is our relative's feeling of isolation and separation from their ancestral homelands and Tribal communities. Relatives (respondents) also expressed a sense of cultural pride and a strong desire to have a safe place to build community and intergenerational connections, heal, practice ceremonies, and forge meaningful friendships. Most relatives felt that a Native Neighborhood would help the urban Native community build relationships with each other, with the land, and amongst urban Native and local Tribes.

- ◆ **Assimilation policies purposefully separated Natives from each other. A Native Neighborhood would be a step towards healing by fostering connection and belonging among Seattle's urban Native community.**

### FROM A RELATIVE:

"A community of Indigenous people really brings care to community members' needs such as housing, food access and sovereignty, intellectual development, and more."



# 79% FEEL MODERATELY TO COMPLETELY UNWELCOME

## FEELING OF BEING WELCOMED

Gauging the comfort of relatives within the general culture and setting of the city is an important step toward identifying gaps and potential solutions. The City of Seattle can use this study information to make improvements and build trust and relationships with sustained effort over a period of time.

### FROM OUR RELATIVES:

"To some degree I feel like the city of Seattle has boycotted the image of Chief Seattle by having his image as the city's logo and putting it on things like the SPD cars that say "protect and serve" which is white supremacy and colonialism. The city doesn't do much for Native communities, yet they feel entitled to use a Native image, ugh."

"A space which local Natives have a say in forming and maintaining would give us easy access to each other and the cultural knowledge our elders fought to hold on to. We can share what we know with each other and have a space to practice an Indigenous lifestyle - that would be amazing."

- ◆ The City of Seattle has a history of erasing Indigenous presence and the non-Native Seattle community appropriated Coast Salish culture by hosting the annual Golden Potlatch for several years beginning in 1911. (HistoryLink)

## COMMUNITY VISIBILITY

Survey responses from our relatives highlight that the Seattle urban Native community wants recognition of and decision-making power for the Native community living within and near the city and they want the public to be educated about issues and past harms.

### FROM A RELATIVE:

"A Native Neighborhood can establish a community amongst the Native people in Seattle. It can greatly help those of us that are moving here from a much smaller town/ reservation to adjust to this big city and feel more welcome."

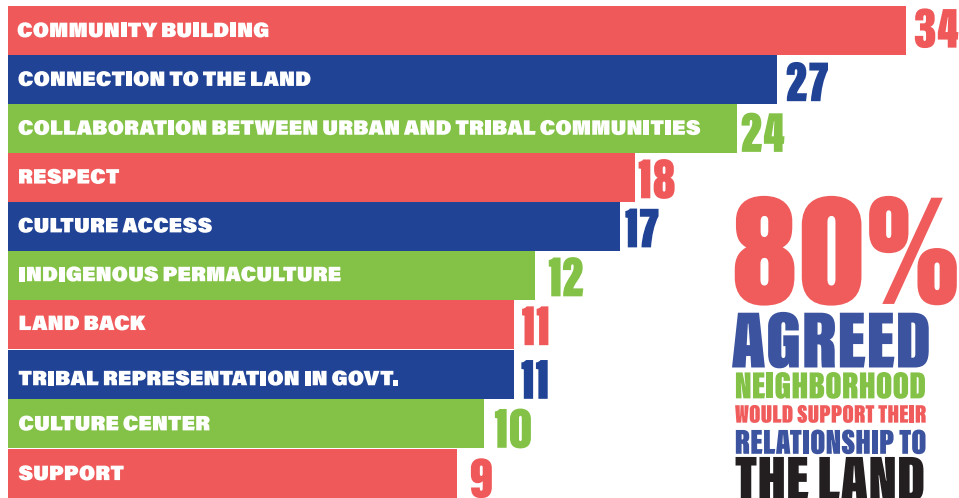
# 91% AGREED NEIGHBORHOOD WOULD INCREASE VISIBILITY

“ *A Native Neighborhood can establish a community amongst the Native people in Seattle.*  
-From a relative



Ashley Tiedeman & her Daughter

# RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAND



Most relatives (respondents) felt that a Native Neighborhood would help the urban Native community build relationships with each other, with the land, and between urban Indigenous and local Tribes. Respect for the land is a traditional value related to living sustainably in ancestral homelands and is a value that is shared among many Native communities.

A decolonial Indigenization of a Native Neighborhood needs to be land-based, as most Tribal cultures view knowledge as a gift from the land. Ceremonies, gatherings, ancestral food and medicine harvests, and time with the land will offer guidance on how to build and manage a Native Neighborhood. Several relatives also stated the need for a Native Neighborhood to provide access to waterways to harvest traditional seafood, practice ceremonies, and use traditional watercraft.

- ◆ Colonial and federal policies systematically disrupted the relationships that Native and Indigenous People have with their homelands.

## FROM OUR RELATIVES:

"Our natural resources here in Salish Sea area [are] land based. Our cultural base is cedar tree and salmon. Our aboriginal village sites connected us with way of life. We are land based which separates us from all other Americans historically. I'm fortunate that Lummi Reservation is the land base of my ancestry for thousands of years. My husband's ancestry also includes Suquamish-Duwamish, Clallam, Lummi and Skokomish. So our children are connected to the whole Salish Sea land based peoples. We take pride in knowing this and are grateful for our ancestry. Seattle area is rich in Native history. My mother was non-Indian and a descendant of the pioneer family, the Dennys who settled Seattle. I have mixed emotions about my identity but believe it gave me a deeper understanding of racial problems over my 86 years."

"A lot of us have been displaced from our homelands or people, having a place(s) to be Native would help foster community, reinforce identity and provide healing for our people."

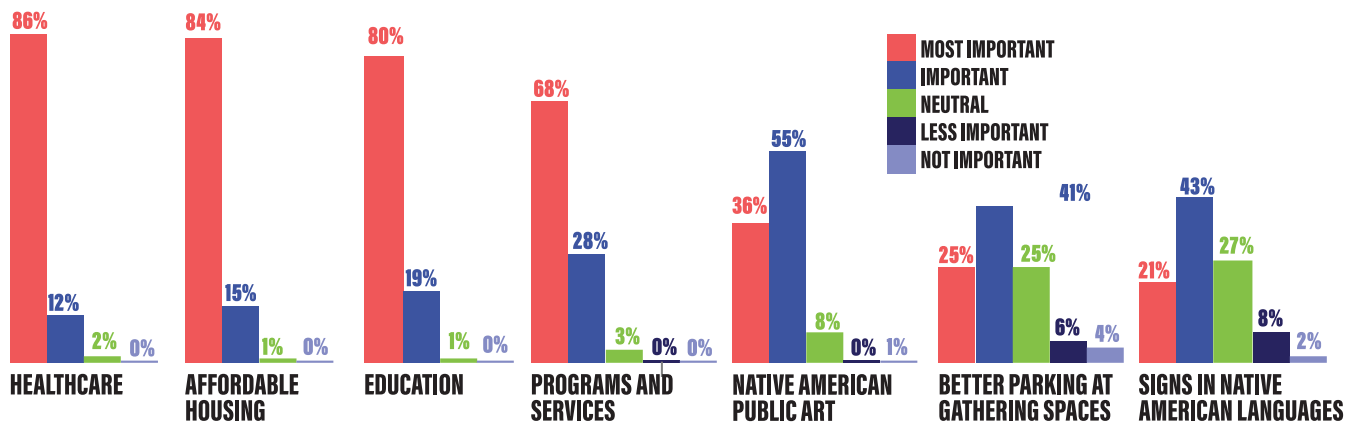


Kristin Lightfeather  
& Daughter AAliyah &  
her Baby Imari



# ISSUES & SOLUTIONS

## MOST PRESSING ISSUES



The top three issues facing Native people in Seattle, identified by relative's survey responses, are affordable housing, healthcare, and education. The top solutions to these initial identified issues will be found within the urban Native community itself – as the community gathers together to revitalize their cultures and take care of each other in meaningful and time-honored ways.

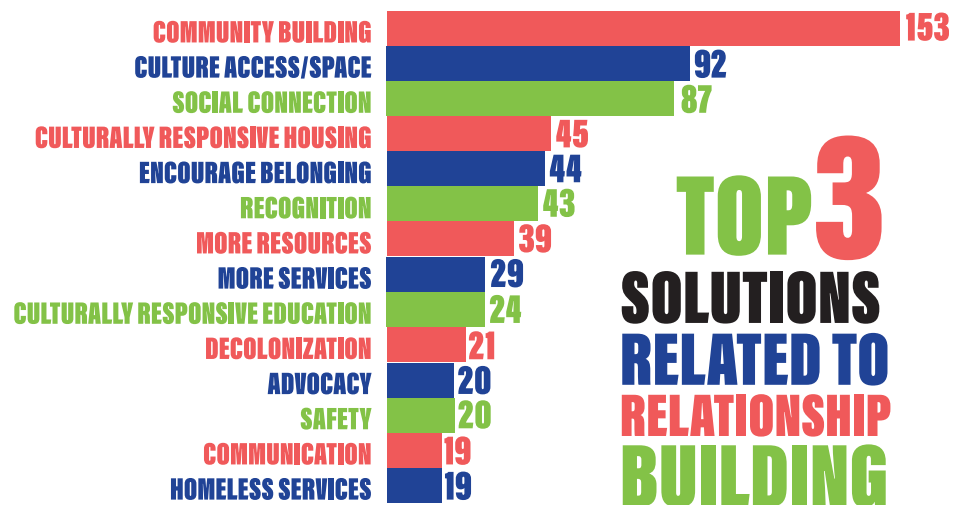
- ◆ Less than 1% of the Indian Health Service budget provides care for the urban Native community. (Norris 2012)

### FROM A RELATIVE:

"Necessary social services to help those experiencing illness, homelessness, and addictions are a prevalent, heartbreaking, and potent reality. These things must be addressed, but in a culturally sensitive way. However, I think it's important that the celebration of Indigeneity and revitalization of communities and culture is also paramount. We need a place to heal and feel safe and accepted, but also to be happy and proud and participate in our culture with joy."

## COMMUNITY SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Relationship building is a traditional value shared by many Tribal nations because relationships are central to sustainability. We must build good and long-lasting relationships with each other, with past and future generations, and with the land.



**TOP 3**  
**SOLUTIONS**  
**RELATED TO**  
**RELATIONSHIP**  
**BUILDING**

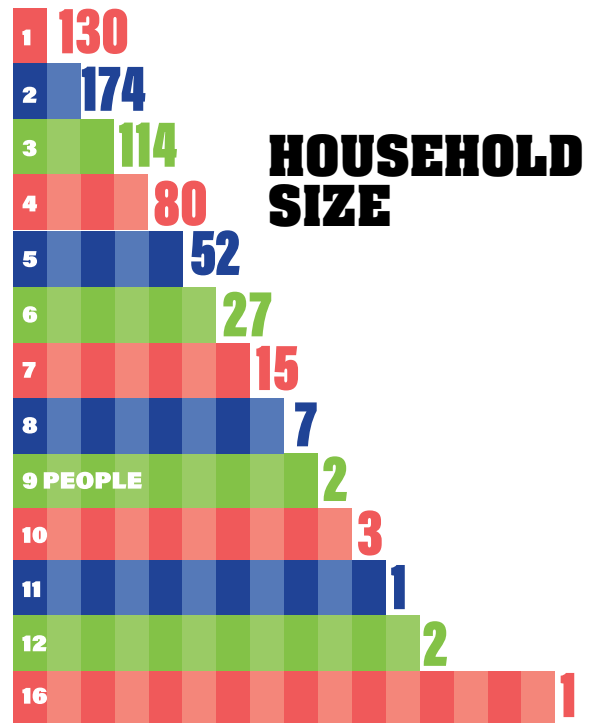
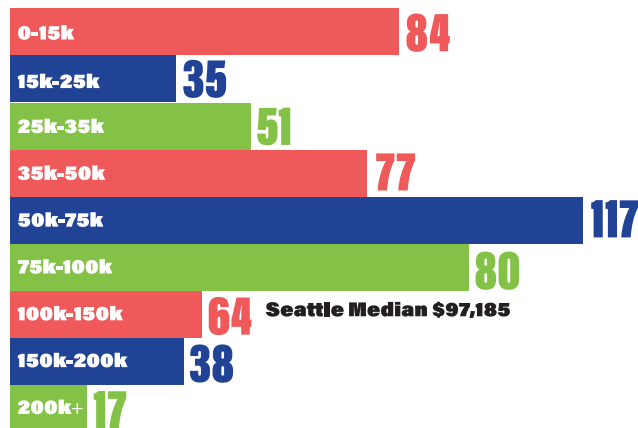
# HOUSING & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Seattle is well-known as a city that is becoming increasingly unaffordable and gentrified, relatives (respondents) expressed that financial support, and pathways to home ownership are a desired outcome.

Relatives repeatedly said that housing access, affordability and security is important. Location must include access to food and transportation and energy costs are a huge consideration. Relatives would enjoy gardens everywhere. Housing should be multi-generational to meet needs for both elders and childcare. Elders want to live in safe, quiet, peaceful homes while also being close to community and able to have family/grandchildren visit. Many relatives reported large family sizes, showing the need for housing that is flexible for multiple generations.

- ◆ According to City of Seattle data, 56% of those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native (alone) are housing cost-burdened (RJSI).
- ◆ History of displacement, such as redlining, will continue without intervention by the city and other governments. (RJSI).

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME



**“ Build affordable housing and administer it fairly and safely, with wrap around mental health, trauma informed & addiction services. Holistic & traditional healing practices & wellness as part of housing. -From a relative**



Leanne Rye Brock & her Baby Montana, Camie Goldhammer & her Daughter Dylan



# NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

## NUMBER OF LOCATIONS

**48% MULTIPLE SMALLER LOCATIONS**  
**28% ONE CENTRAL LOCATION**  
**24% UNSURE/SUPPORT BOTH**

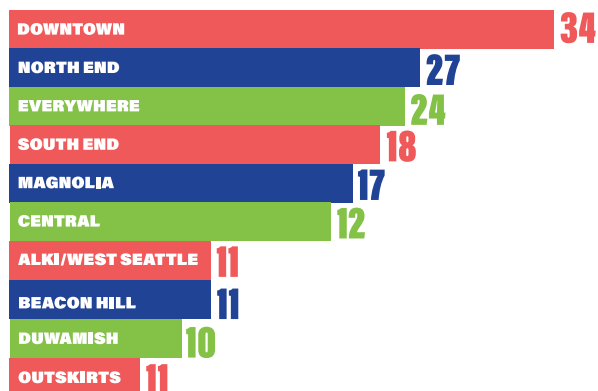
Relatives identified that they would like multiple Native Neighborhood locations, one central hub with a large gathering space and smaller village sites offering a variety of choices.

### FROM OUR RELATIVES:

"Why keep us in just one location? Let's make people uncomfortable."

"I think a large central location with smaller satellites (more than just single standalone buildings, hopefully) would be most accessible, effective, and inclusive."

## LOCATION PREFERENCE



A location near water and nature was extremely important to a high number of the relatives. Also important is a safe location near existing gathering spaces, programs and services, with access to transportation and food.

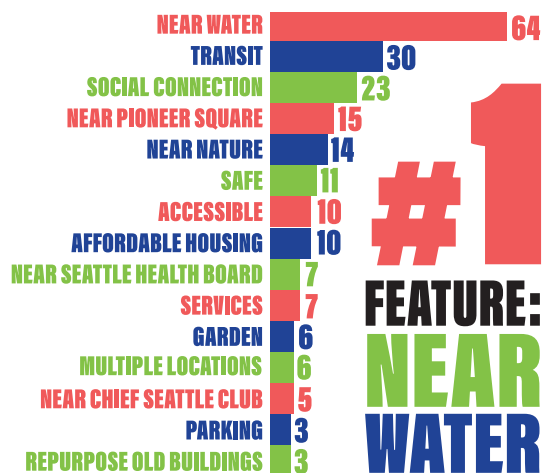
Many wrote about their desire to own a business, support Native-owned businesses, gain financial skills, employment opportunities, job and skills training, and own a home as a path toward their family building generational wealth.

- ◆ Traditional village sites include water access for canoe landing and water has a high cultural and spiritual significance for Native and Indigenous cultures.

### FROM A RELATIVE:

"A private place for sweat lodge, gathering place to practice powwow dancing, a place for seasonal feasts, a place to honor our Native neighbors who have passed on, a garden area, a dry meat rack, a place for people to sell food (maybe food truck area?), a place to sell beadwork, clothes etc."

## LOCATION FEATURES



## NATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN FEATURES

Reflecting the wisdom of the Coast Salish culture especially longhouse architecture, a Seattle Native Neighborhood would be flush with contemporary and traditional Native influences. As a welcoming touch, Native art installations would reflect our diverse Tribal heritage.

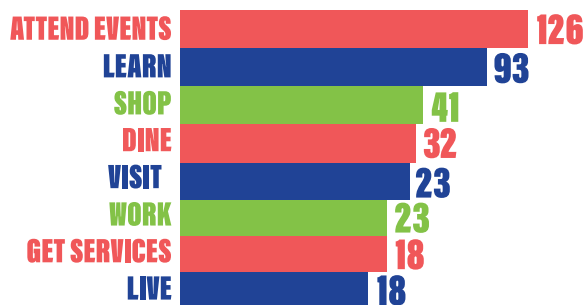
### FROM A RELATIVE:

"Of course it's important to represent Coast Salish art and cultures. At the same time, it would be wonderful to see the diversity of art styles shown. This not only helps other Tribes see themselves in the space, but also to push back against the idea of one "pan-Indian" identity."

### FROM A RELATIVE:

"The large buildings need to be completely sustainable offering green roofs, gardens all over, solar panels, and zero waste watering systems - a means of housing a large community but reminding about the relationship with the land and setting the standard for modern multifamily housing. Art should be an act of storytelling and sharing the culture and history of the Tribes Indigenous to the area. There should be murals, sculptures, native plants, and more that articulates a native way of life."

## ACTIVITY PRIORITIES



Connecting Elders and youth by providing cultural education and revitalization programs would be an important function of the neighborhood as well as caring for relatives of all ages. Relatives would like to attend large yearly gatherings and to have copious opportunities to visit with each other at talking circles and cultural revitalization classes. Supporting local artists with business spaces and art galleries was also important and mentioned often. There were many relatives who wrote eagerly about wishing to live in a Native Neighborhood.

### FROM OUR RELATIVES:

"A safe place to gather, grow, embrace each other provides good mental and physical health"

"But most importantly not to commodify our native culture or gentrify it. There are some practices that should remain within native communities because they are meant to be sacred and shared only with community."

## INCOME DIVERSITY

**59% PREFER TO LIVE AMONG PEOPLE OF MIXED INCOME LEVELS**  
**29% ARE NEUTRAL OR UNSURE**  
**12% PREFER INCOME PEERS**

Planning a high functioning neighborhood generates some touchy questions including this one: Should the neighborhood include housing for all levels of income?

### FROM OUR RELATIVES:

"Income is a colonized idea and therefore native people should not be separated by it. We should be able to see one another for the strength they provide to the community. Higher incomes will contribute more taxes to the community and lower incomes will provide a vitality and connection that higher income can sometimes lose sight of. Mixed income keeps people humble, responsible, and thinking communally rather than individualistically."

"We used to all live together, no matter our wealth. It was only until colonialism that we were forced to stop. Lets go back to it."

"Income is irrelevant to the class divide between workers and employers. The metric should be ownership of the economic means of production, and that should be in the hands of Indigenous workers."

## PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS

Childcare, day and meal programs, healthcare, cultural education, and revitalization were the most common responses to how a Native Neighborhood could provide programs and services to Native Elders and children. Relatives shared a general desire to take care of everyone, connect generations, and provide services and support at all stages of life from birth to elderhood. Weaving, basketry, sewing, and beading were popular requests for traditional art classes and workshops. Traditional food and medicine gathering, as well as how to harvest, process, store, and use ancestral foods and herbs was mentioned often. Affordable or free housing, financial assistance, and ride-share or transportation services show the variety of needs relatives wish to offer to people of all ages. Flexible operations would allow for changing needs and make space for the community to explore Indigenizing and decolonizing while helping relatives to feel safe and well cared for.

### FROM OUR RELATIVES:

"What we call 'wrap around services' makes sense because we are looking at the whole person and possibly the whole family need. If services collaborate, then individuals have easier time healing and recovering."

"Something like retirement homes and daycares but a lot more culturally relevant and caring. Not all harmful like white retirement homes lol"

Relatives were asked about the role of Indigenous Elders in the development and ongoing operations of a Native Neighborhood. Relatives overwhelmingly stated that Native Elders would have the role of providing guidance to the community and policy creation. They were described as leaders, mentors, teachers, knowledge holders, and culture keepers.



# SUMMARY

## VISIONING A NATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD

### FROM A RELATIVE:

"A place to gather, learn, grow food, share stories and more would be an incredible asset to Natives in Seattle. It would center many of us "urban Natives" who are disconnected from their homelands as well as create a space for new generations to learn about themselves and their connection to this land."

As a place of healing and belonging, a Native Neighborhood is a safe space where Native and Indigenous People can gather to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions. Guiding every step of the process to bring a Native Neighborhood into reality, local Native and Indigenous leaders and community members would embody the following ideals:

- Uplift Indigenous traditional knowledge as a robust, holistic, and forward-thinking knowledge system that focuses on action
- Indigenize the work by centering Native and Indigenous values; support the community to identify a set of guiding values and principles to create an authentic Native Neighborhood
- Practice Native community planning methods by actively listening to the community's concerns and issues, identify solutions and advocate for change through funding and support

Our relatives' responses from this study showed that they want the greater Seattle community to recognize and understand Native culture and the issues that the urban Native community face. This report discusses broad issues and the lasting effects of colonization, white supremacy, assimilation, intergenerational trauma, and internalized oppression. Our Native and Indigenous community members and the traditional knowledges they hold are the greatest assets for confronting these difficult issues to ensure autonomy and build an authentic urban Native community.

Guided and designed by the local Native community, a Native Neighborhood is a place that carefully and mindfully considers all the community's unique needs to live healthy and fulfilling lives. A Native Neighborhood will take care of all our relatives: people, plants, animals, water, soil, air; this care will extend to all groups of people, including future generations. It will be a meaningful project toward true sustainability and improve the city's stated goal of racial and social equity.

A Native Neighborhood will provide the urban Native community with culturally relevant homes and gathering places, and it also offers resources and facilities for businesses, restaurants, daycares, elder care, programs, and health services. A Seattle Native Neighborhood will finally provide the urban Native community with the opportunity to make places that are a true reflection of the Native cultures that the city has long claimed to have admired.

## NATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

**Create a Central Location:** A central neighborhood location near water that provides a large gathering space, programs and services, business opportunities, affordable housing, and has public transportation access.

**Number:** As opposed to one large central location, create multiple smaller neighborhood locations so that the urban Native community can have choices for where to live or visit.

**Site features:** A site near water or access to water, near existing Native-led and Native serving facilities and infrastructure, and nature access. All locations should provide access, providing ample space for gardens and healing programs..

**Art & Design:** Utilize Coast Salish art and architecture, include art that reflects the diversity of the urban Native community.

**Leadership:** Develop a steering committee made up of Native and Indigenous Elders, parents, and youth, Tribal leaders, non-profit leaders, and planners.

**Intentionality:** Community members would be opposed to displacing communities who have established neighborhoods.

**Holistic Native Community Planning:** Take into consideration all living costs (food, transportation, housing, childcare); intergenerational relationships that meet the needs of children, youth, parents, and elders; revitalizing culture includes planning methods.

# INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## CENTERS INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW

As a research project directed by the urban Native community, sləp̓iləbəx<sup>w</sup> identified that the Native Neighborhood Community Study (NNCS) should follow

**Indigenous research methodology. Indigenous research methodology centers Indigenous worldview, values, knowledge, and ways of knowing; it focuses on relationality, is a transformative force of social good for the community, and must be co-created, evaluated, and analyzed by the Indigenous community (Chilisa 2012).**

Indigenous research methods are tied to ceremony as they are opportunities of healing for the Native community as tribal members come together to speak out, be heard, listen to each other, and connect with the heart of their being.

Because Western positivist science actively removes culture and values from its perspective and places such significance on numerical data, imposing numbers on social settings, it is a poor knowledge system for conducting community studies. The cause-and-effect relationality of Indigenous research methods presents the solutions while identifying the causes of the issues.

Every stage of an Indigenous research methodology project should be conducted by a team of Native and Indigenous People. Native researchers understand the context and worldview of their traditional knowledge system, are able to

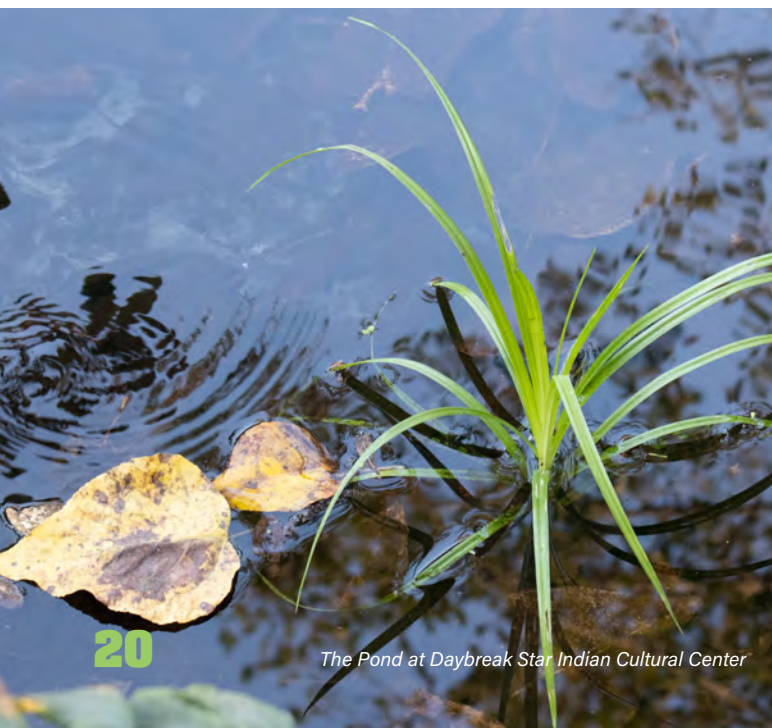
build trusting relationships with their community, and can analyze data in a holistic manner.

The City of Seattle placed a high value on data analysis of the Native Neighborhood Survey (NNS) results, but numbers alone will not show the collective trauma that the urban Native community has experienced due to policies such as...

- ◆ City Ordinance #5
- ◆ Redlining
- ◆ Boarding Schools
- ◆ The Indian Relocation Act
- ◆ Data Erasure
- ◆ Underfunding
- ◆ Disinvestment in urban Native community programs and services.

This report acknowledges past harms perpetrated by research within the Western knowledge system. Aware of the potential harms that the NNCS could inflict, sləp̓iləbəx<sup>w</sup> was as intentional as possible in creating mindful and aware outreach and engagement tools. One example is the avoidance of discussing or naming racism, stereotypes, and bigotry in the NNS. Instead, general terms such as “issues” and “solutions” were used and our relative’s qualitative responses showed that these harmful issues were top of mind or are day-to-day issues in our urban Native community member’s lives.

**“Decolonizing a research report also means creating an Indigenous method of presenting ideas and challenging the Western white paper structure.”**





# TRANSPARENCY IN RESEARCH

Transparency is a central value in Indigenous research methods as the Native community also holds the cultural value of understanding the purpose, protocol, or intentionality of the research. The NNCS clearly stated how the research would be used and provided community members with the lead researcher's email address. Following the United Nations' protocols for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent was another way to build trust with the local Native community.

Indigenous research methods include the first stage of asking the community to participate in evaluation, where the research questions and the research intentions are determined. This method resulted in the open-ended nature of some of the NNS questions, which may have resulted in a more difficult analysis process, but resulted in meaningful and thoughtful responses by our community.

The Seattle urban Native community responded positively to the Indigenous research methods utilized. The NNCS subcontracted with two Native women to conduct data analysis for both the Native Neighborhood survey and the Food Equity Talking Circle. Data analysis by Indigenous community members produces quality analysis and the NNCS hopes to present the information in a meaningful way. The NNCS wishes to avoid the Western focus on quantitative stand-alone data and includes quotes from urban Native community members as often as possible. No small feat, the NNCS includes the goal of presenting the relationality of information and focuses on recommended actions as the final research results.

"Traditional knowledge belongs to the community, the individual right to access knowledge must be earned by proving that one will treat the knowledge with respect, use the knowledge properly, and keep the knowledge context or background intact."

**“What we ask of America is not charity, not paternalism, even when benevolent. We ask only that the nature of our situation be recognized and made the basis of policy and action.**

**- Declaration of Indian Purpose, American Indian Chicago Conference, June 20, 1961.**



# INITIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This report delivers a preliminary needs assessment, where the community identifies assets, barriers, and potential solutions for building an authentic Native Neighborhood. A needs assessment is an iterative process and the next phases of project development will further refine issues and solutions.

Issue	Potential Cause	Potential Solution
Severely underfunded, urban Native-led nonprofit organizations only receive 0.23% of philanthropic funding, causing stress and low capacity for Native NPOs to take on large issues or projects (source: <a href="#">SUNN</a> )	Assumption that Native NPOs qualify for federal funding, assume all Native People live in rural areas, lack of understanding of history of Native community, lack of understanding needs	Educate funders of history of urban Native community, prioritize and expand funding to Native NPOs, build trust relationships, collaborate and co-create needed funding opportunities
Federal and larger funding for Tribal governments tends to ignore urban Native community	Federal legacy policy to only offer funding to projects on Tribal land	Advocate for change in federal policy for funding projects and programs in urban and suburban settings
Nonprofit sector and city management function with Western mindsets and policies: urgency, scarcity, competition, top-down, hierarchy governing structure	Agencies must operate in a capitalist economy built by Western society; assimilation mindset; EDI (equity diversity inclusion) not strong enough for meaningful change	sləpələbəx <sup>w</sup> and a future NN leadership team need to continually evaluate if their partnerships align with the group's value to Indigenize processes and the neighborhood project
Housing affordability, low stock of affordable housing in Seattle, displacement and gentrification	IRA, CO #5, redlining, 2008 recession, high AMI for Seattle (single household), competitive wages and high earners renting below what they can afford reduces affordable housing stock	Form a committee to understand long-term effects of past policies, explore collaborative affordable housing models
Desire of urban Native community members to own a home in Seattle's high/ rising cost housing market	Policies that did not allow generational wealth to develop in the past: redlining, CO #5, Western views of land ownership not the same as Indigenous view of belonging to the land	Homeownership education and support programs that are culturally relevant/ responsive, land co-operatives, mixed-income projects, graduated/ transitional programs, lease to own
High per capita rate of homelessness for Seattle urban Native community, need for culturally relevant holistic and wrap around care	IRA, intergenerational trauma (caused by colonialism, racism, stereotypes), low philanthropic funding relative to the community's need	Empathy, fund affordable long-term and life-long housing, fund healing centers (ceremony, talk therapy), programs that help relatives with achieving stability



Less than 1% of Indian Health Service (IHS) funding is dedicated to care for Tribal members who live in urban areas. >70% of AIAN live in urban areas. Access to healthcare as a treaty right was secured by ancestors	Federal government claims (from the 1940s to Nixon era) that it can't afford to care for Tribal enrolled members who live off reservation land. Federal policy to make treaty responsibilities place-based	Fully fund and expand services of IHS for Tribal enrolled members living in urban areas, and remove place-based restrictions for this treaty responsibility, culturally relevant healthcare
Mental health needs for intergenerational trauma, healing from internalized oppression	Colonization, federal assimilation policies, forced removal of AIAN children and adoption to non-AIAN families, boarding school trauma, white supremacy culture in workplaces and services	Fund counseling services, fund and expand existing talking circle programs, provide stipends for relatives seeking care, create safe (and secluded or protected) spaces for ceremony and other healing practices, mentorship
Anti-Native and anti-Indigenous racism, stereotypes, erasure and invisibility	Colonialism, Manifest Destiny, neo-colonialism, lack of truth and reconciliation movement	Education, especially of non-Natives to take initiative for self-education of racist policies, guided education programs
Lack of land access for gathering traditional food and medicines, lack of land for ceremony	IRA, ITA, CO #5, redlining, colonialism, Western or European view of humans outside of nature	Land back movements, land conservancy programs, land cooperatives, graduated programs that will return lands to Tribes

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