

**Chat Transcript from Public Infrastructure for an Equitable Future Webinar
Hosted by Onside Partners, October 8, 2020**

From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : Learn more about Onside's infrastructure report:
<http://onsidepartners.org/infrastructure/>

From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : Learn more about the connection between health and infrastructure here: <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/collections/public-infrastructure-and-health-equity.html>

From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : Appendix 3 of our full report provides much more data about the six dimensions of infrastructure inequities:
<http://onsidepartners.org/infrastructure/>

From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : Learn more about Dwayne's work here:
<https://ncg.org/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dwayne-marsh-84274919/>

From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : Learn more about Shalini's work here:
<http://www.refocuspartners.com/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/shalinivajjhala/>

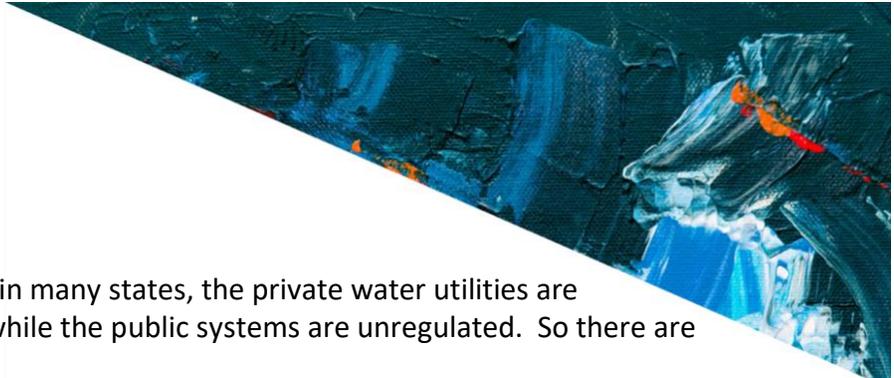
From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : Learn more about Leon's work here:
<https://www.nlc.org/program-initiative/race-equity-and-leadership-real>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leon-andrews-20b6283/>

From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : I have literally had planners tell me that prioritizing low income neighborhoods is "social engineering" -- not recognizing the history of planning decisions are social engineering in favor of white and middle-upper income people.

From Maggie Super Church, Conservation Law Foundation : I'm interested in the trend towards privatization of public infrastructure- from transit to parks, water systems, and more. What are the risks and benefits of this approach?

From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : Great question, Maggie. I recently wondered whether any public agency that had transition to a publicly traded model had actually resulted in better, more efficient and effective service delivery. It hasn't worked well for PG&E here in California.

From Shalini Vajjhala (re:focus) : Maggie - great question. Often the primary perceived benefit of privatization is cost effectiveness. The flip side of that is that infrastructure systems become even more tilted toward who (users) is able to pay (revenues). Water shut-offs are a perfect example of where privatization feeds existing inequities.



From Pamela Russo : On the other hand, in many states, the private water utilities are regulated by a state board/commission, while the public systems are unregulated. So there are pros and cons

From Shalini Vajjhala (re:focus) : Agreed!

From Rachel Bennett (Prevention Institute) : Thank you to all the speakers. It has taken a lot of time and effort to get public agencies to develop and use needs-based criteria when determining what infrastructure to develop/maintain. (Often, philanthropic investments have made a critical difference here!) Now, in the context of COVID and the economic crisis, we're seeing local governments make deep cuts to their budgets (e.g., eliminating park agency staff, cutting bus service, etc.). We have lots of data showing how critical infrastructure is for community health, safety, and resilience. Beyond presenting them with the data, how can we support local leaders AND rank-and-file public agency staff in keeping their commitments to racial justice and health equity in this challenging economic context?

11:53:01 From Manisha Vaze, NFG, she/her : Great panel! In these examples, can you share how the projects are improving access to health, cheaper or free transportation, improving the ability of people to participate in the public process, and access to public sector and/or union or high quality jobs? The LA example seems like it is a great model for job creation - do you see this happening in other contexts?

From Maggie Super Church, Conservation Law Foundation : One key area where we're seeing these issues play out is around cap and trade proposals like the Transportation and Climate Initiative. While these proposals address climate mitigation, emissions reduction, and infrastructure financing, there are concerns and critiques around equity implications of this approach- both in terms of who is at the table, and how these resources are distributed. I'd be interested in hearing from the panelists on this.

From Manisha Vaze, NFG, she/her : Yes to building power and changing the grant making process!!

From José Aranda : Question: What do you think are the ways/channels in which frontline communities can effectively influence water infrastructure investments at the federal level? Through national coalitions or through local/regional advocacy? Both? What else?

From Joya Banerjee : From Leadership Council re public participation:
<https://leadershipcounsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Public-Participation-LCJA-Website-PDF.pdf>



From Katrina Badger, RWJF : Point that came up in our group: the importance of qualitative data in addition to quantitative data; the need to be inclusive of Native American communities, particularly in water infrastructure issues. This report that RWJF supported is a place to start: <http://uswateralliance.org/resources/blog/us-water-alliance-and-partners-release-closing-water-gap-united-states>

From Sarah de Guia : We talked about how don't get to start from scratch and something that has been helpful from funders is to convene and fund policymakers to have a safe space to plan and to test out options. We also talked about the role that public health could play in sharing a prevention model with community development, infrastructure, planning to help us think about the role that health plays.

From Maggie Osborn, United Philanthropy Forum : idea labs that bring together community planners with community and developers to reimagine small projects and medium projects that also assess and reuse spaces in new ways and do not just think about big projects that say they will save cities or communities like too large developments, stadiums or tourist items.

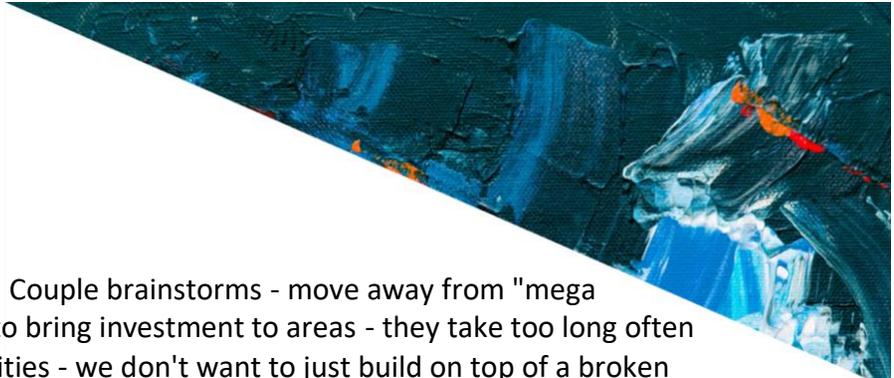
From Sarah de Guia : We also shared concerns around the role that private developers play in investing in communities but where community has no voice, and there isn't accountability to address needs or even complete projects

From Katrina Badger, RWJF : For those who joined a little late, sharing again the RWJF page where all the various infrastructure reports that we supported <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/collections/public-infrastructure-and-health-equity.html>

From Rachel Bennett (Prevention Institute) : @Katrina, here are two resources that might be of interest... The first is an evaluation of Prop. 84, a CA bond measure authorizing \$5.4 billion in spending on projects to improve parks, natural resource protection, and water quality, safety, and supply. <https://www.ioes.ucla.edu/project/environmental-bonds-equitably-benefit-communities-looking-forward-based-analysis-prop-84/>

From Heather Wooten (Onside Partners) : Check out the other infrastructure reports commissioned by RWJF: <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/collections/public-infrastructure-and-health-equity.html>

Get in touch with us at hello@onsidepartners.org!



From Rebecca Morley- RWJF Consultant : Couple brainstorm - move away from "mega projects" (e.g. stadiums) as the only way to bring investment to areas - they take too long often leave out communities. In many communities - we don't want to just build on top of a broken legacy - we may need to start from scratch in many places with communities in the drivers seat. Philanthropy has an important role to convene a "re-envisioning" process. Also, per Onside report, ensuring decision-makers represent communities in all of their diversity and invest in on the ground groups to lead and engage in infrastructure development.

From Rachel Bennett (Prevention Institute) : The second is related to Los Angeles County Measure A, which included equity metrics in the funding allocations:
<https://www.advancementprojectca.org/blog/la-county-park-equity-groups-fight-to-turn-park-poor-communities-red-to-green>

From Rachel Bennett (Prevention Institute) : <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/blog/key-victory-long-struggle-park-equity-la-region>