Rooted & Resilient

CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN OAKLAND CHINATOWN

FINAL REPORT







Rooted in History.
Resilient in Action.
Stronger Together.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) extends its gratitude to the residents, community organizations, public agencies, funders, and partners whose leadership, knowledge, and participation made the *Rooted and Resilient: Climate and Community Resilience in Oakland Chinatown initiative* possible.

Oakland Chinatown Residents

At the heart of this work are the residents of Oakland Chinatown, who shared their experiences, concerns, ideas, and hopes through surveys, workshops, meetings, community events, and conversations. Their knowledge and participation guided the initiative and shaped the priorities documented in this report.

Community Leadership

We are deeply grateful to Friends of Lincoln Square Park (FLSP) and the Wa Sung Community Service Club for their leadership, stewardship, and longstanding commitment to Oakland Chinatown. Their trusted relationships and unwavering dedication helped ensure this initiative remained grounded in the community's voices and priorities.

Community Contributors

We also recognize the community-based organizations, neighborhood and cultural institutions, local businesses, volunteers, advocates, educators, youth, elders, and community leaders who contributed their time, expertise, and leadership throughout this initiative.

City Partnership

Community priorities were further supported through collaboration with the City of Oakland. We are grateful to the Sustainability and Resilience Division of the City Administrator's Office and City staff across departments whose expertise and coordination advanced the initiative and strengthened collaboration with community partners.

Funding Support

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Prepared for the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) by Christy Garcia, Report & Design Consultant.



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Rooted in Oakland Chinatown



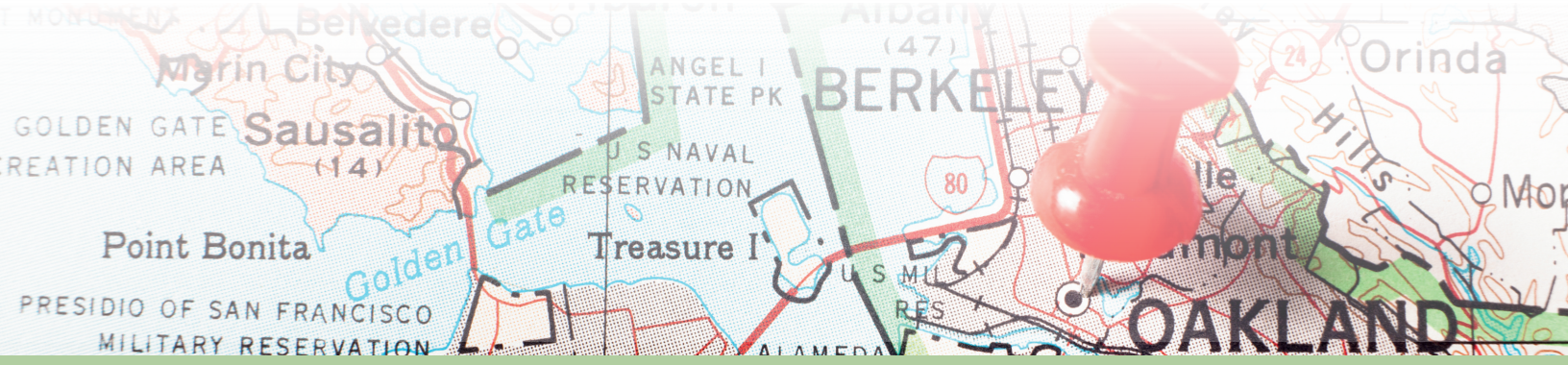
Step into Oakland Chinatown, and you are immediately welcomed by the heartbeat of a community shaped by generations of history, culture, resilience, and belonging. The sounds of neighbors greeting one another in multiple languages, the laughter of families gathering in Lincoln Square Park, the activity of local businesses, and the vibrant rhythms of lion dances and community celebrations reflect a neighborhood deeply rooted in tradition yet continually evolving.

For generations, Lincoln Square Recreation Center has served as a central gathering place in Oakland Chinatown. Often described as the "heartbeat"[2] or the "pearl of Chinatown,"[3] the Lincoln Recreation Center holds deep significance as a place where elders practice tai chi, children play, families gather, and generations come together to celebrate culture and strengthen community connections.

Oakland Chinatown is located on the ancestral and unceded homeland of the Chochenyo Ohlone people, specifically the Huichin territory of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan.[4] We honor the original stewards of this land and recognize their enduring relationship with this place.

The strength of Oakland Chinatown extends beyond its physical spaces. It is reflected in the residents, community organizations, cultural centers, businesses, and neighborhood leaders who have organized for decades to protect the neighborhood, preserve cultural traditions, improve public spaces, and advocate for community needs. That history of organizing and mutual support continues today as the community prepares for climate and emergency risks while working to ensure that residents can remain connected to the neighborhood.

The *Rooted and Resilient: Climate and Community Resilience in Oakland Chinatown initiative* builds on this enduring foundation. More than a climate resilience initiative, it reflects a community that has spent decades investing in relationships, preserving cultural identity, and working together to shape its future.



INTRODUCTION

Building on a Strong Foundation

The *Rooted and Resilient: Climate and Community Resilience in Oakland Chinatown* initiative builds on more than 30 years of community advocacy, planning, partnership, and resident leadership to strengthen public spaces, cultural identity, community programs, and well-being.

Earlier planning efforts, including the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan, helped establish priorities around equitable development, transportation, public space, cultural preservation, and investment in Oakland Chinatown.

In Summer 2024, APEN, Friends of Lincoln Square Park, the City of Oakland, and The California Endowment launched the Rooted and Resilient initiative through the Partners for Places Round 21 Grant Program.[1] Building on existing efforts, the initiative supported community engagement, cross-sector coordination, and resilience planning for the future Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center and surrounding neighborhood.

Residents and community partners helped shape culturally relevant and language-accessible priorities, connecting climate and emergency preparedness with housing, public spaces, culture, economic resilience, and community well-being.



"During the pandemic, folks lost those opportunities, and post-pandemic, people valued even more the ability and opportunity to be together with others."[6]

— Gilbert Gong, Center Director with Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development



"We must fight for collective responses to environmental and climate threats so working-class seniors and families aren't left behind because of where they live, their housing, or the language they speak."[3]

— Shina Robinson, APEN Resilience Projects Director





Why This Work Matters

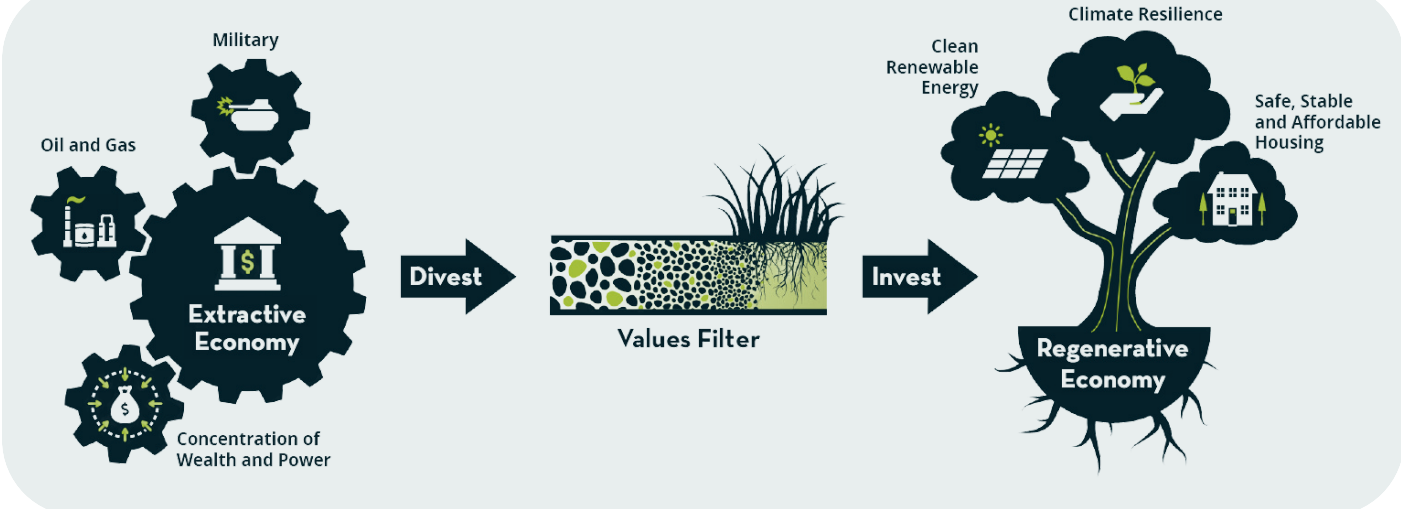
Oakland Chinatown has long demonstrated resilience through community leadership, mutual support, and collective action. At the same time, residents face interconnected climate, environmental, economic, and social challenges.

Extreme heat, wildfire smoke, power outages, and aging housing can create particular risks for elders, children, people with disabilities, low-income households, and residents with limited English proficiency.[16]

These climate conditions reinforce an important lesson: **community resilience requires more than physical infrastructure**. It also depends on trusted relationships, communication, cultural connection, and communities' ability to support one another.

A Just Transition Approach

The Rooted and Resilient initiative reflects APEN's vision of a **Just Transition**—moving from an extractive economy toward one centered on healthy communities, shared prosperity, and a sustainable future.[7]



Project Purpose & Goals

From August 2024 through August 2026, the Rooted and Resilient initiative worked to strengthen community voice, advance the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center, and connect community priorities with broader neighborhood resilience efforts in Oakland Chinatown. The initiative was guided by three goals:

GOAL 1
Strengthen Partnerships

Strengthen the developing partnership into a model for other Equitable Climate Action (ECA) initiatives involving a frontline community, local government, and a place-based funder.

GOAL 2
Center Community

Ensure the frontline community remains meaningfully centered, served, and invested during construction, and empowered to advance its own priority pillars of resilience when the new Resilience Hub opens.

GOAL 3
Share Lessons

Build the field of ECA partnership models by sharing lessons learned – locally with the City and allies, and regionally with other frontline communities in need of resilience hubs and policies.

Project Partners

The Rooted and Resilient initiative brought together community organizations, public agencies, and funders around a shared vision for a more resilient Oakland Chinatown, with each partner contributing distinct knowledge, relationships, resources, and expertise.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

APEN ASIAN PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

PROJECT PARTNERS

Friends of Lincoln Square Park

CITY OF OAKLAND

WA SUNG COMMUNITY SERVICE CLUB 華生

COMMUNITY PARTNERS


Shoong Family Chinese Cultural Center


Asian Health Services


Oakland Asian Cultural Center


Lincoln Elementary School

FUNDING PARTNERS

PARTNERS FOR PLACES

The California Endowment

About This Report

This report documents the engagement, partnerships, lessons, and outcomes that shaped the Rooted and Resilient initiative and the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center. It also shares adaptable lessons for communities, governments, funders, and practitioners advancing community-centered resilience.

A COMMUNITY'S JOURNEY:

30 Years of Advocacy, Partnership, and Resilience

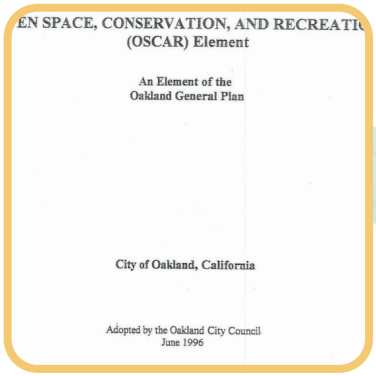
1996-2023 | Building the Foundation

Oakland Chinatown residents, community organizations, advocates, and public agencies have worked over decades to strengthen Lincoln Square and the surrounding neighborhood. This timeline highlights key milestones that helped shape the priorities, partnerships, and community vision that informed the Rooted and Resilient initiative.[8]

1996

Community Roots

Oakland's OSCAR Element highlights Lincoln Square's heavy use and need for continued improvements.



2006-2010

Building Momentum

The City plans Lincoln Square improvements and Recreation Center expansion, but funding remains unsecured.



2008-2014

Community Hub

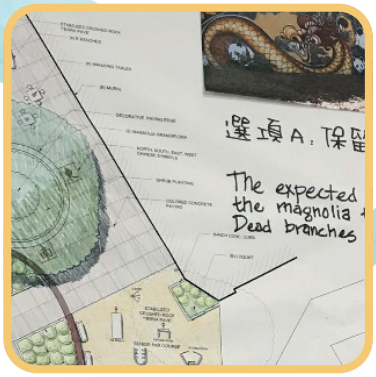
Residents advance priorities for housing, public space, culture, and equitable development.



2016–2017

Visioning the Future

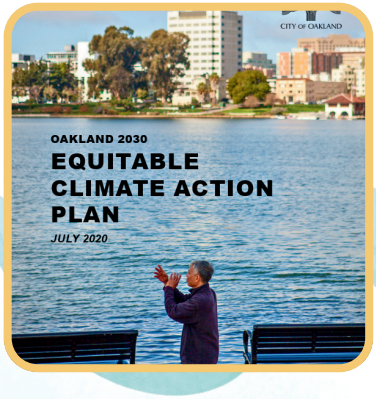
Renewed organizing forms Friends of Lincoln Square Park (FLSP) and builds support for Recreation Center expansion.



2019-2020

Resilience in Action

Advocacy elevates Lincoln Square, while Oakland's 2020 climate plan prioritizes resilience hubs.



2022-2023

Laying the Groundwork

Federal, state, and local investments advance the Recreation Center and community resilience.



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES →

A COMMUNITY'S JOURNEY:

30 Years of Advocacy, Partnership, and Resilience

2024-Present | A Resilient Future

Beginning in 2024, the Rooted and Resilient initiative created new opportunities for residents and partners to shape the next phase of resilience work in Oakland Chinatown. Community priorities helped inform the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center and broader efforts to strengthen the neighborhood's long-term resilience.

2024

Funding & Launch

Through Partners for Places, APEN, FLSP, the City of Oakland, and The California Endowment partnered to advance community resilience.



2024–2025

Shaping Priorities

Multilingual surveys, events, workshops, and meetings create multiple ways for residents to shape priorities.



2025–2026

Preparing for Action

150+ multilingual surveys identify community priorities, while partners strengthen coordination to put them into practice.



2026

Breaking Ground

Council advances construction, followed by the July 30 groundbreaking of Oakland's first municipal Community Resilience Hub.



2026–2028

Building Resilience

Partners advance preparedness, health, emergency communications, anti-displacement, and community resilience.



ROOTED IN PLACE, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY



Community Context

For generations, Oakland Chinatown has been more than a neighborhood. It has been a place where families have established roots, maintained cultural traditions, and built connections through shared languages and experiences. As reflected in APEN's community visioning work, Chinatown has provided a place for immigrant families to establish themselves in a new country and for older adults to age with dignity among friends and neighbors who speak their languages.[14]

Oakland Chinatown's history reaches back to the late 1800s, when the neighborhood became a refuge for Chinese immigrants facing racial harassment, violence, and restrictions on where they could live and purchase land.[14] In response, residents built businesses, community associations, cultural organizations, services, and networks of support that continue to shape the neighborhood today.



"By supporting elders to be able to stay in their homes and age with dignity, that is a form of resilience."[3]

— Shina Robinson, APEN Resilience Projects Director

Approximately 5,000 residents live in Oakland Chinatown, while many more Asian residents from across Oakland and the Bay Area rely on the neighborhood for Chinese-language services, groceries, cultural activities, and community connection.[14] While many residents are Chinese immigrants and families, Filipino, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, and other Asian immigrant communities are also part of the neighborhood.[14]

Lincoln Square Park: From Community Gathering Place to Resilience Center



"The biggest change was realizing that Lincoln Square has been a key resiliency service provider from the beginning."[6]

— Gilbert Gong, Recreation Center Director, Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development



A space for generations.
A stronger tomorrow.

Lincoln Square Park and the Lincoln Recreation Center have been part of everyday life in Oakland Chinatown for generations. Operated by the City of Oakland and located alongside Lincoln Elementary School, the park provides spaces where children, families, elders, and community members gather, play, exercise, and connect. Its play areas, basketball courts, field, outdoor exercise space, and well-known Junk Boat help make Lincoln Square an important setting for recreation, cultural activities, community events, and intergenerational connection.

Since opening in 1978, the Lincoln Recreation Center has served Chinatown and the surrounding downtown community through basketball, tai chi, table tennis, dance, children's programs, and community gatherings. More than a recreational facility, it has become a familiar and trusted neighborhood space.

The Rooted and Resilient *initiative* engaged residents and partners to shape a welcoming, culturally relevant center for community resilience.

A Community Vision for Resilience

Long before the Rooted and Resilient initiative began, APEN members discussed what residents needed to stay healthy, connected, and rooted in Oakland Chinatown. Through months of conversations documented in APEN's Community Visioning Report, three overarching priorities emerged.[14]

1. Affordable Housing

A critical building block for community resilience.[14]

APEN began organizing in Chinatown in the early 2000s in response to pressures of displacement, including the threatened displacement of more than 40 elderly and low-income tenants at Pacific Renaissance Plaza in 2003.[14]

That organizing expanded to affordable housing, tenant protections, and community benefits, helping residents remain connected to homes, services, businesses, and networks of care.

2. Public Spaces and Services

Promote Health and Community Connection[14]

Residents envisioned safe, accessible, and culturally relevant places where people could gather, receive services, participate in community life, and build relationships.

Lincoln Square Park and Lincoln Recreation Center are central to this vision. Together with Chinatown's schools, cultural institutions, service providers, and community spaces, they support recreation, health, culture, intergenerational connection, and access to resources.

3. Vibrant Local Economies

Serve Community Needs[14]

Residents' vision of resilience reflects social, cultural, and economic needs. Chinatown's small businesses provide culturally familiar goods and services, support livelihoods, and strengthen cultural identity.

This vision established an important foundation for the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center: ***a trusted neighborhood space that supports everyday well-being while strengthening emergency preparedness.***

Building on the Community's Vision

Together, these priorities show that Oakland Chinatown residents were defining resilience broadly before the Rooted and Resilient initiative began. Housing stability, healthy public spaces and services, and a vibrant local economy were understood as interconnected parts of a community where people can remain connected, supported, and able to thrive.

Partner reflections reinforced this broader understanding of resilience. Tiffany Eng, Co-Founder of Friends of Lincoln Square Park, described how the concept expanded beyond climate resilience to encompass community resilience more broadly, in "good times and bad," including emergencies that are not necessarily climate-related, such as pandemics and earthquakes.[21]

The Rooted and Resilient initiative is built on this foundation, connecting longstanding community priorities with climate resilience, environmental health, emergency preparedness, and the conditions that support community well-being.

Oakland's Resilient Community Vision

"Oakland is and will be a life-loving, kind, and united community that keeps each other safe. Where housing and fun are abundant through helping each other and making changes together. This strong community would be made up of families, workers, caretakers, immigrants, renters, and seniors."[14]

—Collective Vision Statement, APEN Community Visioning Report

"It has to include not just the stressful events but also the everyday joyful ones."[21]



— Tiffany Eng, Co-Founder, Friends of Lincoln Square Park

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



Community engagement was central to the Rooted and Resilient initiative. Building on Oakland Chinatown's long history of community organizing and neighborhood planning, the project created opportunities for residents to identify concerns, share ideas, and help shape priorities for the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center.

Through this process, partners gained a deeper understanding of how residents experienced resilience in their everyday lives and what they wanted to see strengthened in their community. Priorities extended beyond emergency preparedness and physical infrastructure to include safety, environmental health, cultural belonging, community connection, and overall neighborhood well-being.



"Through the advocacy, it wasn't just directed at the city, but was really focused on engaging community members and engaging other organizations in Chinatown. Having structures like the Oakland Chinatown Coalition, having community festival series like the Lincoln Summer Nights Festival series, there were consistently places to raise people's awareness of resilience, of the project, how to get involved, how to add to a collective vision."[3]

— Shina Robinson, Resilience Projects Director, Asian Pacific Environmental Network



"Without the community voices being heard, and being able to express their needs and concerns, public officials don't have real-life directions."[6]

— Gilbert Gong, Recreation Center Director, Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development

Together, these perspectives highlight two key dimensions of community engagement: **1) creating trusted and accessible opportunities for participation, and 2) ensuring that community input meaningfully informs decisions that affect the neighborhood.**

Community Engagement Approach

APEN worked with Friends of Lincoln Square Park, the City of Oakland, and community partners to create multiple ways for residents and neighborhood organizations to participate. Rather than relying only on formal meetings, engagement took place through gatherings and networks where community members were already connecting, including Lincoln Summer Nights at Lincoln Square Park and the Oakland Chinatown Coalition.

APEN also supported engagement through the Community Visioning Action Team (CVAT) and Community Resilience Action Team (CRAT), creating ongoing opportunities for residents and community partners to discuss and help shape priorities. Meetings typically brought together approximately 45–55 participants.

Together, these approaches connected resilience infrastructure planning with broader community needs and priorities.

FIELD-BUILDING TAKEAWAY

Meet people where community life already happens. Use trusted gatherings, organizations, languages, and existing community networks rather than relying only on formal public meetings.

Project Timeline

The Rooted and Resilient initiative unfolded over time through ongoing community engagement, partnership development, and shared learning. This timeline highlights key activities and milestones from August 2024 through June 2026.

August 2024

APEN convened eight Oakland organizations at Lincoln Recreation Center to assemble 5,000+ emergency preparedness kits, with 500+ distributed to each partner.

April 2025

Held annual kickoff Community Resilience Action Team (CRAT) meeting to review priorities and plan activities for the year.

May 2025

Supported three bilingual PEP trainings at Lincoln Recreation Center, averaging 70 participants per session.

June 2025

Reviewed LSN Survey #2 findings, debriefed the Personal Emergency Preparedness training series, and developed LSN Survey #3.

August 2025

Hosted Little Manila Rising for a resilience exchange and tour of Lincoln Recreation Center, sharing community-led resilience hub strategies and lessons.

September 2025

Facilitated a CRAT community mosaic activity and joined the Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) Forum, highlighting Lincoln Recreation Center and resilience efforts.

THE TIMELINE CONTINUES →



Project Timeline

November 2025

Held a CRAT community mapping meeting, joined Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network (BayCAN) and California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) tours, and filmed for The Solutions Project.

December 2025

Joined the Oakland Chinatown Coalition Walking Tour and CRAT meeting to advance affordable, resilient housing strategies.

January 2026

Educated Oakland City Council members about the project, coalition efforts, and community resilience priorities.

February 2026

Hosted a coalition-wide member meeting and a CRAT meeting to identify campaign priorities based on Community Vision results.

April 2026

Released The Solutions Project video highlighting Oakland Chinatown's community-led resilience efforts and Lincoln Recreation Center.

May 2026

CRAT leaders supported Lincoln Recreation Center at the Public Works & Transportation Committee, joined All Hands Resilience Training, and shared preparedness resources with partners.

June 2026

Received Oakland City Council recognition and approval to begin recreation center construction; selected a writing consultant and began partner interviews.

Community Voices.
Build Brighter Tomorrow.

Community Engagement



Lincoln Summer Nights became an important setting for community engagement. Because the events were already familiar community gatherings, they provided opportunities for residents and families to learn about the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center, speak directly with project partners, and share their priorities in an accessible community setting.

Lincoln Summer Nights collected 194 surveys in English and Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin). Residents and community members also participated through workshops, community conversations, walking tours, informational booths, presentations, newsletters, and other outreach conducted by APEN, Friends of Lincoln Square Park, and project partners.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE [10]

194
Multilingual surveys

3
Lincoln Summer Nights

62
in the CVAT team; attendance is around 50+

55
in the CRAT team; attendance is around 45+

Engagement
Surveys · Workshops · Tours Events · CVAT · CRAT

Languages
English · Cantonese · Mandarin

Safe Spaces Stronger Communities

What We Heard

Across surveys, workshops, community conversations, and other engagement activities, residents described resilience as something broader than preparing for a disaster. They connected emergency preparedness and climate risks to everyday needs such as safe, healthy public spaces, housing stability, environmental health, cultural belonging, community connection, and economic well-being.



"Transformative organizing takes time and resources, and this is just the start. The climate crisis is only getting worse, and we're working to build resilience at home, where we work, and where we gather."[16]

— Shina Robinson, Resilience Projects Director, Asian Pacific Environmental Network

KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY VOICES

- Preparing for Emergencies & Climate Risks
- Safe & Welcoming Public Spaces
- Culture, Belonging & Intergenerational Connection
- Staying Connected



Prepared Communities Stronger Neighborhoods

Preparing for Emergencies and Climate Risks

Community input highlighted the importance of being prepared before an emergency occurs. Residents' responses pointed to the need for accessible information, trusted resources, and places where community members can turn for support during climate and emergency events.

SURVEY SNAPSHOT

- **46** respondents said they would use Lincoln Rec as a resilience hub during a power outage.[17]
- **31** respondents identified earthquakes as an emergency concern.[17]
- **24** respondents interested in more emergency preparedness trainings.[17]
- **16** wanted public information such as weather, air quality, and community news.[19]

PROJECT IN PRACTICE[10]

Preparedness activities connected community priorities with opportunities to build knowledge and capacity. Activities included:

- Three-part bilingual English/Cantonese Personal Emergency Preparedness (PEP) training series
- Approximately 70 participants per session
- Resilience exchange involving 8 Oakland community organizations
- 5,000+ emergency preparedness kits assembled

Safe and Welcoming Public Spaces



Residents emphasized the importance of **public spaces** where people of different ages can feel safe, comfortable, and welcome. Community conversations also raised concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety, environmental conditions, and the availability of activities and gathering opportunities, including in the evenings.

Lincoln Square's role as a familiar neighborhood gathering place made these concerns particularly relevant to planning for the future Recreation Center and Resilience Hub.

SURVEY SNAPSHOT[19]

58 survey respondents • Multiple responses permitted for select questions

58 Respondents: 12 English-Language and 46 Chinese-Language

52 Respondents echoed concerns about limited nighttime activities, environmental issues, and traffic.

27 Respondents wanted more lighting.

28 Respondents wanted more public gathering spots.

39 Respondents wanted activities for seniors or kids



TOP SUPPORTS FOR USING THE CENTER AT NIGHT[18]

32 Respondents wanted information about programs and activities

30 Respondents wanted more volunteer presence and community ambassadors

29 Respondents wanted better transportation options



Culture, Belonging, and Intergenerational Connection

Community members emphasized the importance of **cultural activities, language access, and opportunities** for different generations to gather and participate in community life. Residents' priorities reflected a desire for spaces and programs that strengthen cultural identity while creating opportunities for elders, youth, families, and other community members to connect.

SURVEY SNAPSHOT[18]

62

Respondents: 19 English-Language and 43 Chinese-Language

Culture of Caring:

89% of English-language and 98% of Chinese-language respondents said Chinatown helps foster a culture of caring for one another.

Cultural Representation and Stability:

100% of English-language and 95% of Chinese-language respondents said they feel more stable when their culture is represented in their neighborhood.[18]

Cultural Representation and Safety:

100% of English-language and 88% of Chinese-language respondents said they feel safer when their culture is represented in their neighborhood.

PLACES OF CULTURAL CONNECTION[18]

Residents identified multiple places where they experience cultural connection, reinforcing the importance of a broader network of community and cultural spaces.

English-Language Respondents

- 79% Lincoln Rec
- 37% Lake Merritt
- 26% Oakland Asian Cultural Center

Chinese-Language Respondents

- 81% Pacific Renaissance Plaza
- 58% Oakland Asian Cultural Center
- 49% Lake Merritt
- 47% Lincoln Rec

WHAT THIS TELLS US

Survey responses point to multiple places where residents feel culturally connected, rather than a single gathering place. Although the most frequently identified places differed between English- and Chinese-language respondents, Lincoln Recreation Center emerged as an important place of connection for both groups, reinforcing its role in a broader network of community and cultural spaces.

Many Generations. One Community.



COMMUNITY VOICE

"Many residents have limited living space and Lincoln is considered as a second home for many. The access to green space, the ability to observe small social gathering and witnessing the abundance of people participating various programming. These imagery are the foundation for our community to build kindness and with families and friends."[10]

— Yin Zhou Feng

PROJECT IN PRACTICE[10]

The project incorporated culturally and linguistically responsive activities, including bilingual preparedness programming and community-based engagement. What we heard reinforced that resilience is about more than emergency preparedness—it is also rooted in trusted relationships, accessible resources, cultural belonging, and strong community connections.

Looking to Future Generations[18]

Residents also identified community needs and improvements they would like to see for the future:

Senior Center:
Nearly 80% of Chinese-language survey respondents were seniors.

Public Bathrooms & Sanitation:
37% English;
37% Chinese

Public Art:
42% English;
21% Chinese

More Open Space/Parks:
47% English;
30% Chinese

Affordable Housing:
47% English;
26% Chinese

Other:
Chinese diaspora, intergenerational activities, neighborhood cleanups, a community garden, and recreational activities.

COMMUNITY WORD CLOUD

"How does Chinatown celebrate and contribute to your culture?"[18]





Staying Connected

Across the engagement, residents also emphasized the importance of relationships, communication, and opportunities to connect with one another. Trusted organizations, community spaces, events, volunteers, and informal networks can help residents exchange information and maintain relationships during everyday conditions as well as emergencies.

These findings reinforce an important dimension of community resilience. Physical resources and infrastructure matter, but so do the relationships and communication networks that connect residents to information, services, organizations, and one another.

Partner reflections also suggested that the engagement process deepened awareness of neighborhood resilience resources. Shina Robinson, APEN Resilience Projects Director, observed that, over the course of the Lincoln Summer Nights survey process, responses evolved from some residents being unsure where to turn during an emergency to residents identifying trusted community spaces and thinking more intentionally about where they feel safe and culturally welcomed.[3]

PROJECT IN PRACTICE[10]

CRAT and CVAT created ongoing opportunities for residents and community partners to gather, exchange information, discuss priorities, and remain involved as the project developed.



COMMUNITY VOICE

"I have an older sister in her 70's who also lives by herself. From morning to night where she feels stuck in her room with 4 walls, easier to dementia. She would walks to Lincoln everyday, exercise with Tai chi, expose herself to sunlight, meet and greet with strangers who are utilizing the park similarly as her. It helps her to maintain positive and cheerful thinking. This has become her daily routine and for many."[10]

— Yin Zhou Feng

From Community Priorities to Action

Taken together, these findings reinforced an important direction for the Rooted and Resilient initiative. The Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center should serve the community not only during emergencies, but also as an everyday neighborhood resource that supports health, safety, culture, connection, and community well-being.

Community input also pointed beyond the walls of the future Center. Residents identified multiple organizations, public spaces, cultural institutions, services, and gathering places that contribute to community life, reinforcing the importance of connecting the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center to a broader neighborhood network.

These priorities guided the initiative as it moved from listening and planning to implementation.

Creating the Foundation for Collective Action



The Rooted and Resilient initiative brought residents, community organizations, City departments, and philanthropic partners into closer collaboration around a shared vision for Oakland Chinatown. While the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center is one of the initiative's most visible outcomes, the relationships, trust, and capacity strengthened through the process are equally important to its impact.

Building on the community priorities described in Part II, partners worked together to translate community input into planning, coordination, problem-solving, and implementation. The collaboration drew on longstanding relationships while also creating new ways for community organizations and City departments to work together.

This section examines how those relationships worked in practice, including collaboration between APEN and Friends of Lincoln Square Park, coordination with City departments and community partners, shared problem-solving, and the evolution from community input toward sustained collaboration and collective action.

Building on Decades of Partnership

The longstanding relationships described earlier in this report provided an important foundation for the Rooted and Resilient initiative. During the initiative, those relationships evolved as APEN, Friends of Lincoln Square Park, residents, community organizations, and City departments worked more closely across planning, community engagement, emergency preparedness, construction coordination, and implementation.



"In the past 25 years, we have been able to grow Lincoln Square into one of the most thriving park communities in Oakland. Pre-COVID, through a solid network of community partnerships, Lincoln Square not only served children and youth but also the entire community."[22]

— Gilbert Gong, Center Director with Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development



"I think the community has shown us that resilience is different depending on the neighborhood's needs. It has also demonstrated the diversity of activities that contribute to resilience."[20]

— Nick Kordesch, Energy Manager, Sustainability and Resilience Division, City of Oakland

Together, these perspectives illustrate an important foundation of the initiative: **resilience planning did not begin with a blank slate**. It built on longstanding community relationships, local knowledge, and the understanding that resilience must reflect the needs and strengths of Oakland Chinatown.

FIELD-BUILDING TAKEAWAY

Build from relationships already in place. Community-centered resilience efforts can be stronger when they recognize and support existing relationships, organizing, leadership, and community knowledge.

Building Trust Through Partnership



One of the initiative's most important outcomes was **deepening trust** among project partners.

APEN and Friends of Lincoln Square Park (FLSP) built on an already longstanding relationship by bringing complementary strengths to the initiative. APEN contributed experience in community organizing, environmental justice, multilingual engagement, advocacy, and climate resilience, while FLSP brought decades of neighborhood leadership, volunteer engagement, place-based knowledge, and relationships surrounding Lincoln Square. Together, these strengths helped connect community priorities with planning, advocacy, resources, and implementation.





"Partnering with a place-based steward like FLSP meant they were able to gather a lot more in-depth intel about what this specific project needed and make deeper connections within...city staff and city processes. In turn, APEN was able to use our expertise around creating advocacy campaigns at the local and state level to help draw down resources. Together, we're able to be a great inside-outside force."[3]
— *Shina Robinson, Resilience Projects Director, Asian Pacific Environmental Network*

Each partner brought different forms of knowledge, expertise, and capacity to the collaboration. Tiffany Eng described APEN as contributing broader policy and technical expertise, while Friends of Lincoln Square Park brought community organizing, planning experience, and deep neighborhood relationships.[21] City partners contributed planning, technical expertise, public resources, and implementation capacity, while their openness to community input created opportunities for community priorities to inform the project. These complementary strengths allowed partners to contribute in different ways while working toward a shared vision.

FIELD-BUILDING TAKEAWAY

Build partnerships around complementary strengths. Effective collaboration does not require every organization to play the same role. Partnerships can be stronger when organizations recognize what each brings to the work and build structures that let those strengths complement one another.

A Changing City–Community Partnership

The initiative also strengthened relationships between community-based organizations and the City of Oakland. As project partners noted, the collaboration among APEN, Friends of Lincoln Square Park, and the City represented an evolving approach to how community-based organizations could participate in a major City capital project. Before this collaboration, the City more often operated independently, bringing community-based organizations into the process after many decisions had already been made. Through the Rooted and Resilient initiative, community partners became more directly involved in ongoing planning, coordination, implementation, public engagement, and problem-solving.

From Friends of Lincoln Square Park's perspective, the City's openness to community input has been an important part of this evolving relationship. Tiffany Eng reflected that the City brought technical expertise and resources to the work while also demonstrating a willingness to listen to community perspectives and incorporate feedback into the project.[21]

At the same time, partners acknowledged that collaboration across community and City systems is not always easy. Gilbert Gong described working with the City as challenging at times while also emphasizing that the partnership continues to make forward progress.[6] These reflections suggest that stronger collaboration does not eliminate institutional challenges; instead, it builds relationships and structures that help partners work through them.

The project also strengthened relationships with philanthropic partners, connecting community-driven resilience planning with resources and broader opportunities to support the work.

What Helped the Partnership Work?

Partner reflections from APEN, Friends of Lincoln Square Park, and City partners identified several factors that supported the collaboration. Shared goals emerged across all four partner reflections, while trust and building on trusted community relationships were also consistently identified as important strengths.

MOST COMMONLY IDENTIFIED

- **Shared Goals**
- **Trust**
- **Partnerships**

ADDITIONAL STRENGTHS IDENTIFIED BY PARTNERS

- **Community Leadership**
- **Transparency**
- **Flexibility**
- **Regular Communication**
- **Shared Decision-Making**
- **Long-Term Relationships**
- **Commitment to Maintaining Programs and Services During Construction**
- **Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Engagement**
- **City Participation**

Coordination evolved from monthly meetings to bi-weekly and ultimately weekly working sessions. These meetings created regular opportunities to share updates, address challenges, coordinate resources, plan engagement, and work through project decisions.

From Consultation to Co-Creation

One of the most significant shifts during the initiative was the transition from consultation toward more sustained collaboration between community partners and the City.

The Rooted and Resilient initiative created opportunities for community organizations to participate throughout planning and implementation. Community partners helped identify priorities, navigate implementation challenges, mobilize residents, identify resources, and coordinate with City departments as the project developed.

Community engagement also extended beyond formal meetings and surveys. Friends of Lincoln Square Park and project partners connected with residents through spaces and activities where people were already gathering, including community organizations, schools, neighborhood groups, and Lincoln Summer Nights. Children and families also participated through activities such as drawings and letters about what they hoped to see in the new center. These different forms of engagement created ongoing opportunities for community perspectives to inform the project.

Community feedback helped shape specific aspects of the new center. Residents raised practical priorities such as larger bathrooms and flexible-use spaces, while feedback on early renderings helped inform changes intended to make the building more vibrant and culturally resonant.

CONSULT
Community input through meetings and surveys

→

LISTEN
Hear priorities, concerns, and ideas from residents

→

COLLABORATE
Work together through planning, implementation, and problem-solving.

→

CO-CREATE
Shared decision-making and solutions that reflect community priorities.

Examples of Co-Creation in Practice

Community Priorities

Residents and partners helped identify priorities and shape planning.

Design & Implementation

Community feedback informed features such as larger bathrooms, flexible-use spaces, and changes to early renderings.

Continuity During Construction

Partners worked together to identify alternative locations so recreation, cultural, educational, and community programming could continue.



"I think it's important that programming does continue...we need to keep the community connected, and we need to keep them informed."[21]

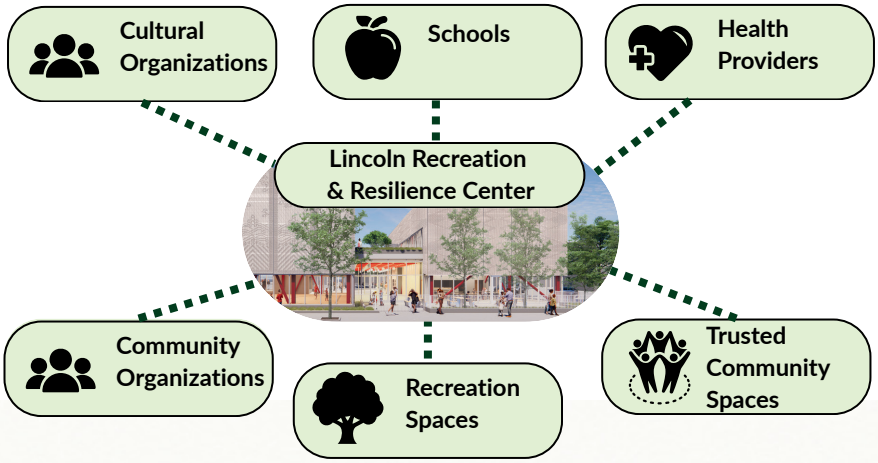
— Tiffany Eng, Co-Founder, Friends of Lincoln Square Park

FIELD-BUILDING TAKEAWAY

Create structures for ongoing participation. Give residents and community organizations meaningful opportunities to shape priorities as projects move from visioning through planning, implementation, and operations.

Strengthening a Broader Neighborhood Resilience Network

The relationships strengthened through the Rooted and Resilient initiative also created opportunities to connect the formal project partnership with a broader network of trusted community organizations and spaces across Oakland Chinatown. Cultural organizations, schools, recreation spaces, health providers, community-based organizations, and other neighborhood resources each bring relationships, knowledge, facilities, and services that can contribute to community resilience.



Resilience extends beyond a single facility.

The Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center will serve as an important anchor, with stronger neighborhood connections expanding access to trusted spaces, information, resources, and support during emergencies and everyday life.

Community Partner Story

Shoong Family Chinese Cultural Center

Building on More Than 70 Years of Community Trust

For more than 70 years, the Shoong Family Chinese Cultural Center has provided a trusted community space for Chinese language and cultural education, youth development, recreation, and community connection in Oakland Chinatown. Its longstanding relationships with generations of families have created a foundation of trust, language access, cultural continuity, and belonging.

Through connections with APEN and Lincoln Recreation Center, the Center secured a $100,000 PG&E Resilience Hubs Design and Build Grant in 2025. The investment brought modern HVAC, cooling, and air filtration to the building for the first time since it opened in 1953, strengthening climate readiness at a trusted community space serving approximately 800 youth weekly.

70+	$100K	800	1953
Community Trust	Resilience Grant	Youth Served Weekly	Building Opened



"Our understanding has shifted from thinking about resilience primarily as emergency preparedness and physical infrastructure to understanding it as infrastructure plus relationships, communication, trust, and community connection."[15]

— Anna Sophie Loewenberg, Director of Program Development, Shoong Family Chinese Cultural Center

FIELD-BUILDING TAKEAWAY

Strengthen the network, not only the hub. Community resilience can be strengthened by investing in trusted community spaces and connecting them through relationships, resources, and preparedness efforts across the neighborhood.

An Emerging Model for Community-Centered Resilience

The relationships and practices developed through the Rooted and Resilient initiative point toward an emerging model for community-centered resilience planning in Oakland Chinatown. The model brings together grassroots community leadership, place-based organizations, multiple City departments, technical expertise, and a broader network of trusted community organizations and spaces.

Rather than treating community engagement as a single phase of a capital project, the partnership has created opportunities for community organizations and City departments to work together as the project moves from planning and design into construction, implementation, emergency preparedness, and long-term resilience efforts. The collaboration also creates opportunities for shared learning and accountability.

Community-based organizations bring neighborhood knowledge, trusted relationships, and community priorities into City processes, while City departments contribute public resources, technical expertise, infrastructure responsibilities, and connections across municipal systems. Working together requires partners to navigate limited resources, public-sector responsibilities, and significant community needs while identifying shared solutions.

This approach is particularly meaningful in the historical context of Oakland Chinatown, where major infrastructure and development decisions have not always reflected community priorities. The Rooted and Resilient initiative takes a different approach: ***it keeps community voices, relationships, and neighborhood assets connected to decision-making as the project moves forward.***

A Collaborative Approach

Bringing together community knowledge, trusted relationships, public resources, and technical expertise to build a more resilient Oakland Chinatown.



Key Elements of the Model

Community Leadership
Centering resident voices and priorities

Cross-Sector Partnerships
Community organizations and City departments working together

Coordinated Action
From planning & design to implementation, preparedness, and long-term stewardship

Shared Learning & Accountability
Identifying solutions together

Culturally Grounded
Honoring the history, people, and places of Oakland Chinatown

FIELD-BUILDING TAKEAWAY

Build capacity and accountability across the partnership. Community-centered resilience requires more than community input. It requires structures that allow community knowledge and public systems to work together throughout planning, implementation, and long-term stewardship.

Co-Creating Climate and Community Resilience

The Rooted and Resilient initiative created opportunities to move community priorities from visioning and engagement into planning, implementation, and investment. The work connected residents' priorities for emergency preparedness, environmental health, safe and welcoming public spaces, cultural connection, and neighborhood well-being with strategies for the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center and the broader Oakland Chinatown community.

Partners worked across infrastructure, emergency preparedness, community programming, public spaces, and neighborhood resilience, recognizing that each contributes to the community's ability to prepare for disruptions, respond to changing conditions, and remain connected.

From Community Priorities to the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center

The Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center became one of the most tangible expressions of the community's vision. Years of community advocacy and partnership helped turn this vision into reality. APEN, Friends of Lincoln Square Park, and a broader network of community organizations and partners advocated for a facility that could build on Lincoln Square's longstanding role as a gathering place while expanding its capacity to support Oakland Chinatown during climate and other emergencies.

Plans for the new approximately 22,000-square-foot, two-story facility bring together everyday community use, emergency preparedness, and climate-resilient infrastructure. The expanded Center will provide additional space for recreation and community programming while strengthening its capacity to support residents during extreme heat, poor air quality, power outages, flooding, and other disruptions.

See the Vision: Inside Oakland's New Climate Resilience Center

Learn more about the planned Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center and how features such as clean-air systems, renewable energy, and emergency preparedness infrastructure are designed to support Oakland Chinatown.



SCAN HERE

Watch: Inside Oakland's New Climate Resilience Center | Clean Air, Solar Power & More

From Vision to Groundbreaking



On July 30, 2026, that vision moved another step closer to reality as the City of Oakland and community partners celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Lincoln Square Recreation Center and Resilience Hub. The milestone marked the beginning of construction after decades of community advocacy, planning, fundraising, and partnership.

The groundbreaking also represented more than progress on a capital project. By this point, years of community engagement and collaboration had helped develop a broader shared understanding of what a resilience hub could mean for Oakland Chinatown: **not only emergency infrastructure, but a trusted community space that supports health, culture, connection, recreation, and preparedness in everyday life.**



"The project's greatest accomplishment thus far has been getting us to groundbreaking, a major milestone 30 years in the making. But beyond the physical building, it's been incredibly rewarding to see the entire community unify with their voices, talents, and even pocketbooks around a shared goal and realize a long-held community wish, after decades of delayed gratification."[21]

— Tiffany Eng, Co-Founder, Friends of Lincoln Square Park



"During the recent groundbreaking ceremony, I was struck by the fact that community members, elected officials, CBO partners, and City staff managing the project were finally speaking the same 'language' about the resilience center. That is likely to have positive effects beyond Chinatown."[20]

— Nick Kordesch, Energy Manager, Sustainability and Resilience Division, City of Oakland

Translating Community Priorities into Hub Strategies

Emergency Preparedness

- Reliable power
- Emergency resources
- Refrigeration
- Communications
- Environmental Health

Environmental Health

- Heating and cooling
- Air filtration
- Clean indoor air
- Community Connection

Community Connection

- Gathering spaces
- Community programming
- Accessible information
- Culture & Belonging

Culture + Belonging

- Culturally responsive spaces
- Intergenerational programming
- Language access

These strategies reflect a broader understanding of resilience, where physical infrastructure, preparedness, and community connection work together. At Lincoln Square Park, resilience shows up in both large community events and the smaller, everyday interactions that build familiarity and belonging.



"I cherish the daily grandmas visiting with each other as highly as hosting community gatherings of 1,200+ people for Lincoln Summer Nights."[6]

— Gilbert Gong, Recreation Center Director, Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development

Strengthening Emergency Preparedness

The Rooted and Resilient initiative also expanded emergency preparedness beyond the new facility. Partners connected residents and community organizations with emergency preparedness education, training, communications resources, and opportunities to strengthen neighborhood response capacity.

This work included bilingual Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, emergency radio communications, preparedness education, and continued development of operating guidelines for the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center. These efforts are intended to strengthen the capacity of residents, community organizations, and City partners to work together before, during, and after an emergency.

Emergency preparedness efforts at Lincoln also intersected with related City and community initiatives occurring outside the Partners for Places grant. One example is the Emergency Communications Hub (ECH) pilot, which selected Lincoln Square as a neighborhood emergency communications site. The ECH initiative recruited, licensed, and trained volunteer radio operators to support communication when phones, internet, or power are unavailable.[23]



Although the ECH pilot was not funded through the Partners for Places grant, it complements the broader resilience work underway at Lincoln Square by strengthening neighborhood-level communications capacity and connecting trained community volunteers with emergency preparedness efforts.

The Draft Lincoln Resilience Center Operating Guidelines further translate this approach into five operating modes that describe how the Center could function during everyday conditions, community-level disruptions, larger emergencies, severe disruptions, and recovery. The framework recognizes that the Center's resilience role extends beyond emergency response, beginning with regular community programming and preparedness during "Blue Sky" conditions and continuing through response and recovery.

To view the Draft Lincoln Resilience Center Operating Guidelines: Climate Fellows Research Project

Click Here or Scan the Code



SCAN HERE

A LONGSTANDING VISION MOVES FORWARD



"In five years or less, I hope that through my dream job, and the help of many, we are able to plan, build, and open a world-class facility that is driven by the investments of our entire community."[22]

— Gilbert Gong, Center Director with Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development

From Everyday Resilience to Emergency Response and Recovery

BLUE SKY

Everyday community resilience

- Regular programming
- CERT and PEP training
- Resilience education
- Lincoln Summer Nights
- Community workshops

RESILIENCE HUB ACTIVATION MODE

Responding to community-level disruptions

- Cooling or warming
- Clean-air respite
- Backup power
- Refrigeration
- Charging
- Community communications

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER ACTIVATION MODE

Coordinated

Lincoln may become part of the City's coordinated emergency response, with EOC support and coordination

SEVERE DISRUPTION MODE

Community response when systems are severely disrupted

- Hub may operate independently
- Emergency updates
- Community needs and offers
- Supplies and support

RECOVERY MODE

Supporting community recovery

- Information & Resources
- Food distribution
- Benefits and insurance
- Cooling and air filtration
- Local organization referrals

These strategies reflect a broader understanding of resilience, where physical infrastructure, preparedness, and community connection work together.

At Lincoln Square Park, resilience can be visible in both large community events and the smaller, everyday interactions that create familiarity and belonging.



Maintaining Community Connections During Construction

Construction raised an immediate question: ***How could programs and services continue while a central community facility was temporarily unavailable?***

City departments and community partners worked together to identify alternative locations and support continuity of recreation, cultural, educational, and community programming. Maintaining those connections during construction became part of the resilience strategy itself.

Planning for continuity has also encouraged partners to look across Chinatown for alternative spaces and resources. As programs temporarily move to other locations, this coordination can strengthen connections with cultural organizations, schools, parks, and other community spaces while helping residents remain connected to recreation, arts and cultural activities, and educational programming.

Community Continuity in Practice

Partner reflections identified several ways to support continuity during construction, including maintaining community programming, keeping residents informed and connected, and drawing on other neighborhood spaces and relationships to support recreation, arts and cultural activities, education, and community gatherings.

Program/Need	Continuity Strategy
Recreation	Identify alternative spaces where recreation programs can continue while Lincoln Recreation Center is under construction.
Arts & Cultural Programming	Coordinate with community and cultural organizations to identify spaces and partnerships that can help sustain arts and cultural activities.
Youth & Education	Draw on relationships with schools, youth-serving organizations, and other neighborhood partners to maintain access to youth and educational programming.
Community Gatherings & Connection	Continue opportunities for residents to gather, receive information, and remain connected to Lincoln Square and one another throughout construction.

FIELD-BUILDING TAKEAWAY

Plan for continuity alongside construction. Protect access to programs, services, gathering spaces, and relationships when physical improvements temporarily disrupt familiar community spaces.

Building a Neighborhood Network of Resilience

Planning for continuity during construction also highlighted a broader strength of Oakland Chinatown: resilience does not depend on a single facility. The neighborhood includes a network of community organizations, cultural organizations, health and service providers, schools, businesses, parks, and gathering spaces that residents already know and use.

The Rooted and Resilient initiative built on this existing network by strengthening connections among organizations and creating opportunities to extend preparedness activities, partnerships, and resilience investments beyond Lincoln.

These efforts build on existing community assets while strengthening connections among the places, organizations, resources, and people that can support residents during everyday conditions and emergencies.



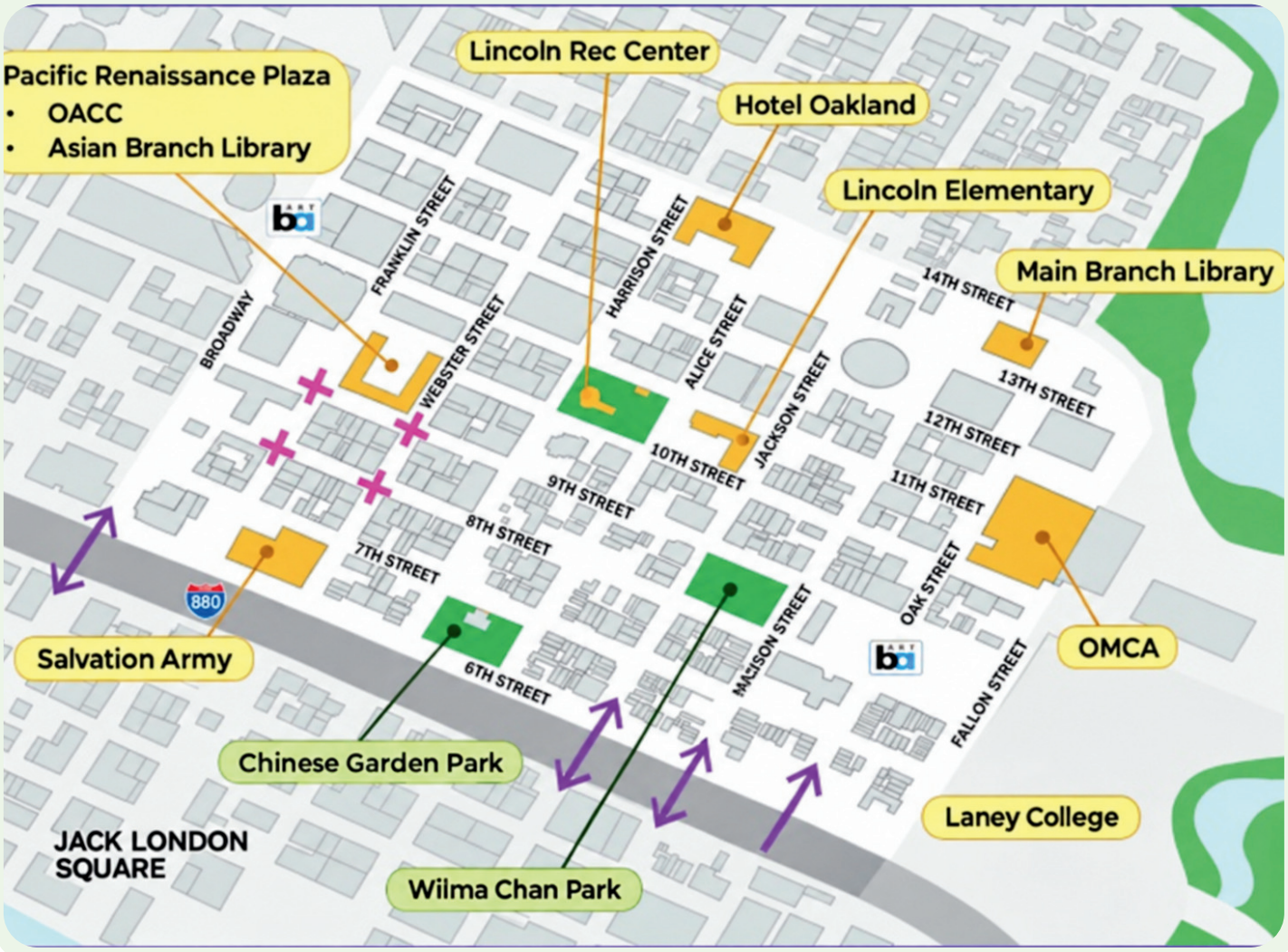
"I would emphasize the network effect—this effort has brought additional stakeholders into the fold that can also lead resilience projects."[20]

— Nick Kordesch, Energy Manager, Sustainability and Resilience Division, City of Oakland

This emerging network can increase the number of places where residents can access trusted information, resources, and support, while reducing reliance on a single location during an emergency.

Community Resilience Assets Map

Oakland Chinatown's resilience is supported by a network of trusted organizations, services, public spaces, and gathering places. This map highlights community assets that contribute to everyday well-being, connection, preparedness, and resilience across the neighborhood.



FIELD-BUILDING TAKEAWAY

Map the assets that already support community resilience. Identify trusted organizations, gathering places, cultural institutions, service providers, and other resources to understand where resilience already exists and where stronger connections or additional resources may be needed.

OUTCOMES, LESSONS LEARNED, AND LOOKING AHEAD

As the Rooted and Resilient initiative moves from planning to implementation, its impact shows up not only in the development of the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center, but also in the relationships, practices, community capacity, resources, and opportunities that emerged through the work.

Collectively, these outcomes demonstrate that community resilience is not created through infrastructure alone. It also depends on the relationships, knowledge, leadership, and systems that enable residents, community organizations, public agencies, and other institutions to work together over time.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

1 Strengthened Partnerships and Ways of Working

One important outcome of the initiative was the strengthening of relationships and coordination among community organizations and City departments. Regular meetings created opportunities to share information, address challenges, identify resources, and coordinate decisions across organizations with different responsibilities and areas of expertise.

The experience also demonstrated the value of involving community-based organizations throughout a complex capital and resilience project, rather than limiting their role to individual points of consultation.

Community partners brought neighborhood relationships, organizing experience, and knowledge of community priorities, while City departments contributed public resources, technical expertise, and institutional responsibilities. Working across these different roles created opportunities for shared problem-solving and strengthened capacity on both sides.

2 Strengthening Community Capacity and Leadership

The Rooted and Resilient initiative created opportunities for residents and community leaders to build knowledge, skills, and connections related to resilience planning, emergency preparedness, and neighborhood decision-making.

Through CVAT, CRAT, community events, trainings, surveys, and workshops, community members shared their knowledge and priorities while expanding participation in resilience efforts.

Capacity-building extended beyond formal planning through preparedness trainings, workshops, community engagement, and leadership opportunities that strengthened the skills and relationships supporting long-term neighborhood resilience.

Over time, this work also engaged multiple generations of young people, community members, and organizational staff, helping build knowledge and participation around resilience across the neighborhood.

Community Capacity in Practice

- **Community participation through CVAT and CRAT.**
- **Emergency preparedness education and training.**
- **Multilingual surveys, workshops, and community engagement.**
- **Resident leadership and intergenerational participation.**
- **Stronger connections among community and City partners.**

Changes in Organizational and City Practice

The initiative influenced how partners approached resilience planning and implementation. Community engagement became more directly connected to project development, City departments coordinated more frequently with community organizations, and planning increasingly considered both emergency functions and everyday community use.

The collaboration also created opportunities for partners to better understand one another's roles, responsibilities, resources, and constraints.

Working through the demands of a major capital project required ongoing communication, flexibility, and shared problem-solving while keeping community priorities connected to the work.

For City partners, these experiences are informing how they approach future resilience efforts.



"I think the lesson of the value of regular communications has been useful to me. I know what it will take for future projects to achieve this kind of partnership."[20]

— Nick Kordesch, Energy Manager, Sustainability and Resilience Division, City of Oakland

The knowledge and practices developed through this collaboration can inform future efforts to build community-centered partnerships around resilience, public infrastructure, and other complex projects.







Lessons and Practices for Community-Led Resilience

The Rooted and Resilient initiative offers lessons for community organizations, local governments, funders, and others advancing community-centered resilience. These lessons reflect the project's experience to date and may continue to evolve as the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center moves through construction and toward operation.

Rather than providing a one-size-fits-all blueprint, they highlight approaches that can be adapted to each community's history, culture, relationships, needs, and priorities.

1 BUILD ON COMMUNITY VISION AND TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS

Begin with the organizing, advocacy, knowledge, relationships, and community-defined priorities already in place.

In Oakland Chinatown, decades of community leadership provided a foundation for the initiative and helped partners navigate delays, changing conditions, and new opportunities.

Support trusted community organizations with the resources and capacity needed to sustain relationships, conduct outreach, provide language access, and connect resilience planning to community priorities.

2 RECOGNIZE AND CONNECT PARTNER STRENGTHS

Community organizations contribute neighborhood knowledge, trusted relationships, language capacity, and organizing experience. City departments contribute technical expertise, public resources, infrastructure responsibilities, and implementation capacity.

Recognizing these complementary strengths and establishing shared goals can support collaboration across organizations and public systems.

3 KEEP COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION CONNECTED TO IMPLEMENTATION

Engagement should continue beyond initial visioning and consultation. Create meaningful opportunities for residents and community organizations to shape priorities as projects move through planning, design, construction, implementation, and operations.

Integrate culturally and linguistically responsive engagement throughout the work, using the languages, trusted organizations, and community spaces through which residents already connect.

4 MAKE COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION ONGOING

Complex projects require regular communication, flexibility, transparency, and shared problem-solving.

Establish coordination structures that allow partners to exchange information, clarify responsibilities, address challenges, identify resources, and maintain community priorities as conditions change.

Connect departments and organizations working across infrastructure, emergency management, public health, recreation, housing, and environmental justice.

Lessons and Practices for Community-Led Resilience

5 DESIGN FOR EVERYDAY LIFE AND EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

Resilience infrastructure is most meaningful when it supports the community before an emergency occurs.

Solar power, battery storage, cooling, air filtration, and communications systems should be connected to recreation, cultural activities, education, community gatherings, services, and preparedness programming.

Designing for everyday use helps sustain the familiarity, trust, and relationships that become especially important during disruptions.

6 PLAN FOR CONTINUITY DURING CONSTRUCTION AND DISRUPTION

Consider how programs, services, gathering opportunities, and relationships will continue when physical improvements temporarily disrupt familiar community spaces.

Identify alternative locations, community partnerships, and communication strategies alongside construction planning to help residents remain connected to recreation, cultural activities, education, and essential services.

7 STRENGTHEN THE NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK, NOT ONLY THE HUB

A resilience hub can serve as an important anchor, but community resilience extends beyond a single facility.

Identify and connect trusted organizations, schools, cultural institutions, health and service providers, parks, businesses, and gathering places that already contribute to community well-being.

Strengthening this network can expand access to information, resources, services, and support during everyday conditions and emergencies.

Supporting Long-Term Community Resilience

The *Rooted and Resilient* initiative connected climate and emergency preparedness with broader neighborhood priorities, including housing stability, anti-displacement, healthy homes, energy efficiency, environmental health, public spaces, and a vibrant local economy.

While the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center is an important physical outcome, lasting resilience extends beyond one building. It depends on the people, relationships, programs, and organizations that sustain community well-being and strengthen Oakland Chinatown's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions.

Looking Ahead

Although the Partners for Places grant has concluded, the work it supports continues. Construction of the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center will move forward alongside emergency preparedness, community programming, and broader efforts to strengthen resilience throughout Oakland Chinatown.

CONTINUE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Partners and community members will continue to develop and refine the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center Operating Guidelines, strengthen preparedness and communication networks, support resilience investments at trusted community sites, and plan programming and operations for the new facility.

CARRY THE WORK FORWARD

Additional resources are helping to sustain this work. APEN was awarded a CalEPA Environmental Justice Action Grant to continue strengthening CRAT leadership, including climate monitoring and emergency preparedness equipment, in preparation for future operations at the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center.

SUSTAIN TRANSFORMATIVE ORGANIZING

As climate risks continue to grow, Shina Robinson emphasized the need for sustained time and resources for transformative organizing and to ensure that communities like Oakland Chinatown are not left behind in the transition to clean energy.[16]

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

"I'm hoping this project makes it easier to replicate resilience hubs based on the lessons learned in Chinatown. More people are familiar with the topic of resilience now."[20]

— Nick Kordesch, Energy Manager, Sustainability and Resilience Division, City of Oakland



"I hope that the Lincoln Square Resiliency Hub continues to be a place where folks KNOW that their lives can be improved."[6]

— Gilbert Gong, Recreation Center Director, Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development



Conclusion

The story of the Rooted and Resilient initiative did not begin with a single grant, plan, or building. It builds on decades of relationships, knowledge, advocacy, and community priorities that have shaped Oakland Chinatown over time.

A KEY MILESTONE

The Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center represents an important milestone in that journey. Its physical infrastructure will strengthen the community's ability to prepare for climate and emergency risks, while its everyday role as a place for recreation, culture, services, and connection reflects a broader understanding of resilience.

STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Through the Rooted and Resilient initiative, community organizations, residents, City departments, and other partners strengthened relationships, expanded opportunities for participation, and developed new ways of working together. Their experience demonstrates that resilience is built not only through physical investments, but also through trust, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, shared knowledge, and the connections that sustain community life.

LESSONS FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES

Oakland Chinatown's experience also shows that no single path or blueprint leads to community resilience. The approaches documented in this report emerged from the neighborhood's particular history, relationships, organizations, and priorities. Other communities may draw lessons from this journey as they develop strategies grounded in their own places and people.

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

As the Lincoln Recreation and Resilience Center moves from vision through construction and eventually into operation, the work of resilience will continue beyond its walls. Its lasting impact will depend not only on the infrastructure created, but also on the community's continued ability to shape its future, sustain its connections, remain rooted in place, and build resilience together.



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Rooted in History.
Resilient in Action.
Stronger Together.

With heartfelt gratitude, we thank the community members, partners, and City departments who made the Rooted and Resilient initiative possible. Together, we are helping to build a healthier, safer, and more resilient Oakland Chinatown for current and future generations.

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