

Grounding Justice in the Land: Strategies for Advancing Reparative Spatial Justice

PolicyLink

Center for Ethical Land Transition



INTRODUCTION / Introducción

Language Justice / Justicia del Lenguaje

As part of our shared language justice practice, we acknowledge that:

1. We will be holding this session in English and Spanish, which may not reflect all of the languages that participants speak, the languages originally spoken on the lands where we are each calling from, or the languages that many of our ancestors spoke.
2. Still, we honor the diversity of our experiences and how we speak based on where we are from, the work we do, and our cultures.

Como parte de nuestra práctica compartida de justicia del lenguaje, reconocemos que:

1. Celebraremos esta sesión en inglés y español, lo que puede no reflejar todos los idiomas que hablan los participantes, los idiomas que se hablaban originalmente en las tierras desde donde cada uno de nosotros llamamos o los idiomas que hablaban muchos de nuestros antepasados.
2. Honramos la diversidad de nuestras experiencias y la forma en que hablamos según de dónde somos, el trabajo que hacemos y nuestras culturas.



Introductions

PolicyLink

- **Rasheedah Phillips**, Director of Housing Futures and Land Justice
- **Tina Grandinetti**, ACLS Leading Edge Fellow and Associate of Housing Futures and Land Justice

Center for Ethical Land Transition

- **Cassandra Ferrera**, Program Director
- **Neha Sharma**, Strategy
- **Abi Huff**, Reunion Program Lead

Agenda

1. Spatial Futures Initiative

2. Center for Ethical Land Transition

3. Q&A



Overview: Spatial Futures Initiative

“The origins of property rights in the United States are rooted in racial domination.”

- Cheryl Harris

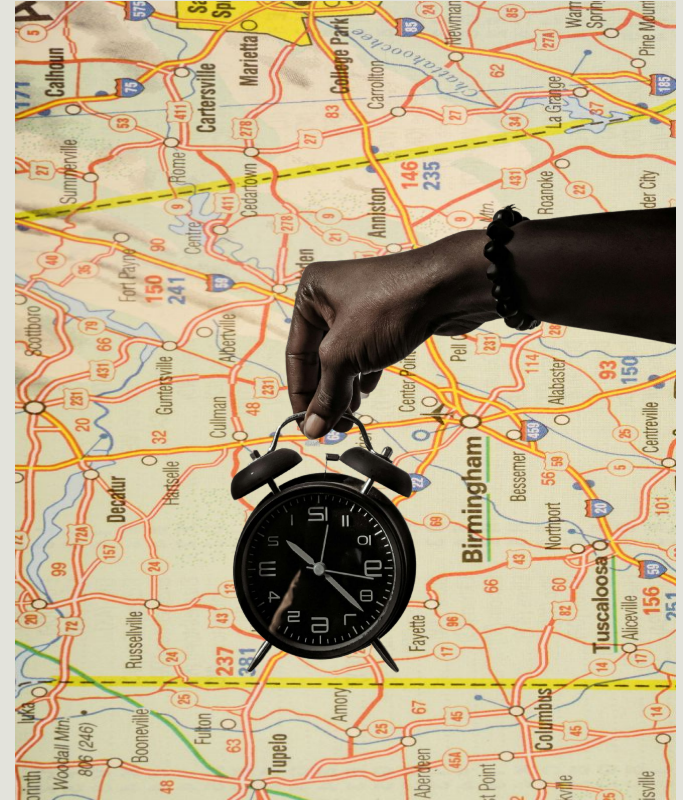
- Housing and land exclusion are racialized in nature, sewn into the very fabric of our institutions, policies, and value systems.
- In order to transform this reality, we need to address historical and persistent spatial injustices.

What would our futures look like if space were oriented toward justice??

- Expose the entrenched racial inequities in this country’s existing land use and housing policies
- Generate recommendations and resources to support systemic change
- Lead research and maintain a comprehensive list of policies and projects for spatial justice

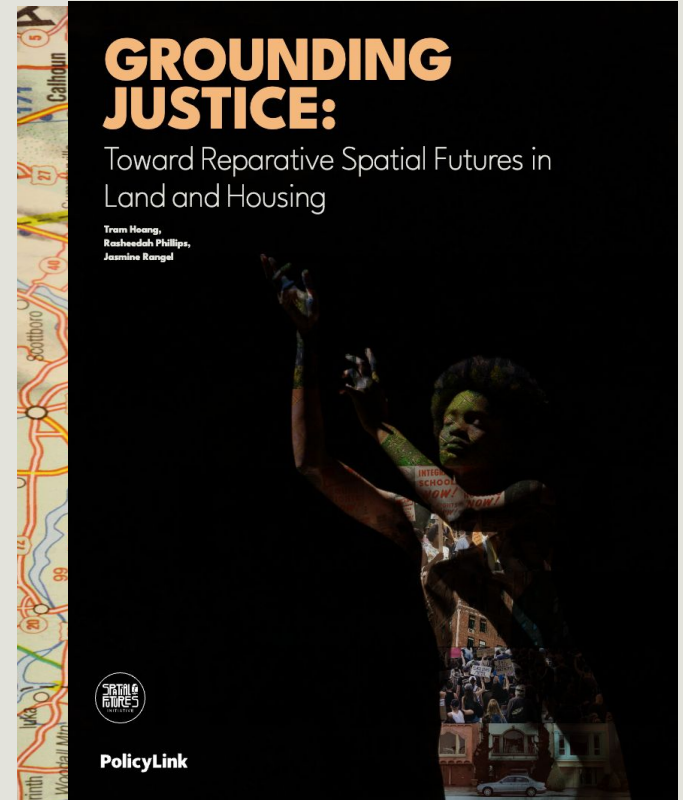
Time, Space and the Conditions of Repair

- Beyond Redistribution
- Reclaiming Temporal and Spatial Autonomy
- Challenging Colonial Narratives
- New Cartographies of Justice and Belonging
- Integrating Indigenous and Black temporal and spatial imaginaries

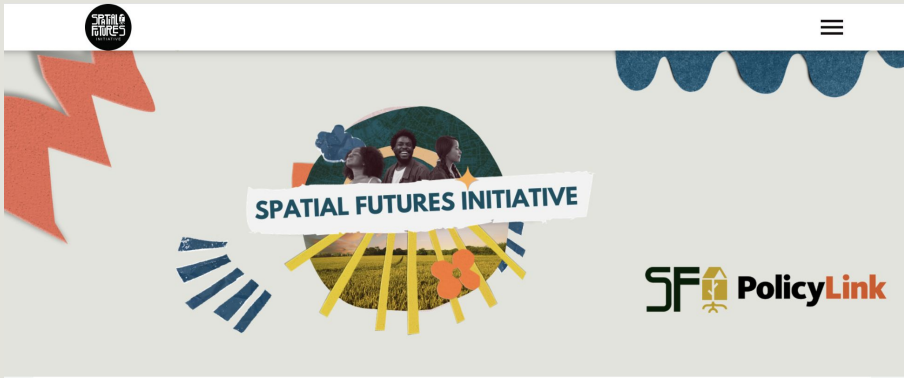


Ground Justice Report

- Emphasizes the urgent need for a reparative spatial justice framework in land and housing policy
- Elevates critical concepts and diverse perspectives from the field
- Includes evidence-based recommendations for practitioners, researchers, policymakers, organizers, and advocates
- Provides a set of actionable, evidence-based recommendations
- Charts a strategic course for those dedicated to reparative spatial justice



SpatialFutures.org



The movement for reparative spatial justice reimagines and reshapes spaces for historically marginalized communities to reclaim land and achieve restitution for the enduring impacts of racist policies. Beyond redistributing land and housing, it fosters healing, growth, and well-being. PolicyLink's Spatial Futures Initiative serves as a catalyst and resource hub, dedicated to uprooting racial inequities in land and housing policies and supporting communities in building a more just futures.

Our Work



The Spatial Futures Initiative Database is committed to uplifting the narratives and solutions developed by those most affected by spatial injustice. By sharing these resources, we aim to inspire and guide efforts towards creating just and equitable spatial futures for all communities.

Explore the database and join us in the movement towards spatial justice. Together, we can transform our spaces and build a more equitable world.

Navigation: Policies | Programs | Initiatives | Organizations

Views: Grid view | 3 hidden fields | Filter | Sort

Year	Title	Level of Government	Legislation Status	Category	Description	State
2023	Covenants Homeowne...	State	Passed	Mortgage Assistance	Provides home buying assistance...	Wa
2021	Unlawful Racial Restrict...	State	Passed	Research Study	Relatin	

[SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAILS](#)

Grounding Our Terms

Reparative Spatial Justice:

A transformative approach to rectify historical and ongoing injustices in the allocation and use of space, housing, and land. Aimed at reconfiguring spaces where historically marginalized communities can reclaim their connection to land and gain restitution for enduring racist policies and practices.

- Aspirational, world-building
- Transformative rather than reformist
- Community driven and place-based



Key Frameworks for the Movement

- **Economic Justice Approach:** focus on the restoration of assets and resources to communities that have endured generational harm.
 - Financial restitution and economic empowerment
- **Reparative Urban Planning:** aims to transform city and town planning processes to prioritize the voices and needs of those most impacted by spatial injustice.
 - Louisville's Anti-Displacement Ordinance
- **Abolitionist Approach:** advocates for dismantling harmful systems and practices within housing policies (especially those rooted in punitive measures)
 - Decommodification of housing, diminished economic pressure on housing market, accountability shifts to communities who have been historically harmed



Key Frameworks for the Movement

- **Land Sovereignty and Indigenous Movements:** envision Indigenous sovereignty over land and resources, including the right to develop and housing initiatives through practices that align with cultural and communal needs
 - Land back and land repatriation
- **Collective Land Stewardship:** reimagined governance structures in land ownership and tenure that once previously undermined the power of Black and Indigenous groups to direct their futures.
 - Community Land Trust (New Communities, Inc. and Sogorea Te' Land Trust)



Moving Beyond the Logics of Possession

- Land and housing defined by “racial regimes of property”
 - Ownership model of property built on the power to exclude
- Property shapes space and subjectivities
- “Struggles against dispossession too easily become struggles for possession”
 - *How do we respond to dispossession with something other than possession?*
 - *How do we repair so that we may reshape?*
- Staking a different kind of claim
 - Moving from ownership and exclusion to belonging and responsibility



Spatial Futures Fellows

- Ten fellows advancing reparative spatial justice projects
- Collective questions:
 - How can we structure our relationships to land and housing around care and stewardship while still navigating our current system and protecting our claim to space and community?



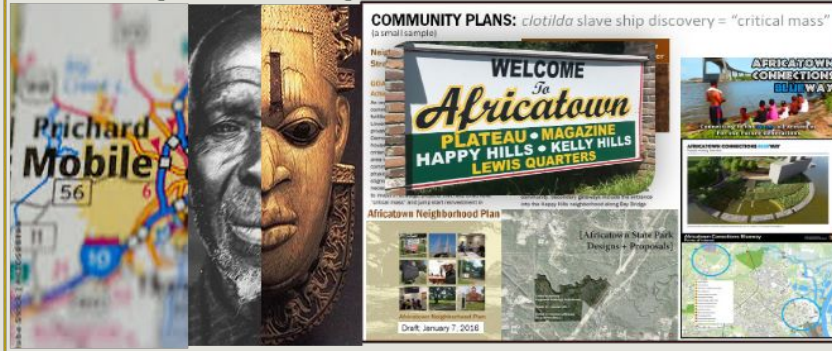
Fellow Introduction



Vickii Howell

M.O.V.E.
 (MAKING OPPORTUNITIES VIABLE FOR EVERYONE)
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

About My Community:



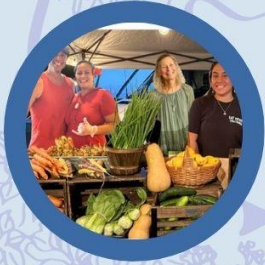
Controlling Our Own Stories

- 1./ DESIGN CONTROL
- 2./ INTERPRETIVE CONTROL
- 3./ ECONOMIC-SITE CONTROL

Revenues and taxes from this PROPOSED Afro-centric tourism system must be captured and re-circulated back into Africatown in ways that will sustain equitable, transformative community regeneration – land banking, food sovereignty, Afro-centric education, entrepreneurial & work-force development, co-ops, environmental justice/science, plus commercial & cultural exchanges with Africa to benefit under-served areas



SUSTAINABLE MOLOKAI



**FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
AND RESILIENCY**



**RENEWABLE
ENERGY**



LAND BACK



**CLIMATE CHANGE
MITIGATION AND
RESILIENCY**





Our Team



Cassandra
Land Transition
Facilitator



Abi
Reunion Program Lead



Jason
Curriculum & Resource
Development



Neha
Strategy Lead,
Ecosystem Convener

This Moment in Time

This is a pivotal moment in the history of our world.

We are in a moment of big transition.

Momentum for justice and liberation is afoot.

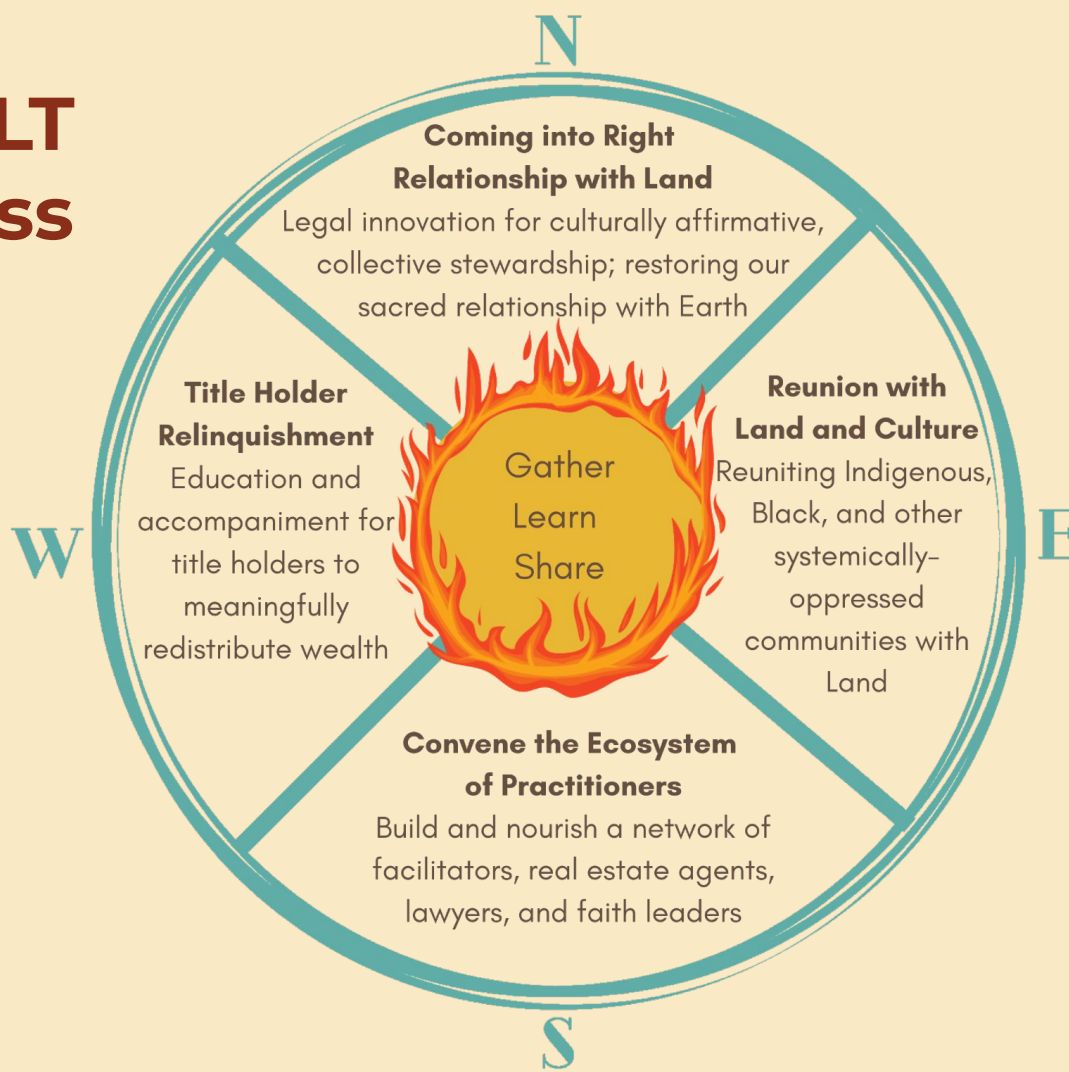
The terms “land back,” “rematriation,” and “reparations” are showing up in more news headlines. It is time to meet this moment and recognize the interdependence of human and land liberation.

Our relationship with Land is at the root of our repair.

It is essential to center Land.

What is the movement infrastructure necessary in this time of just transition?

The CELT Compass



We organize our work in a compass, which orients us to the different aspects of ethical land transitions

Key Noticings

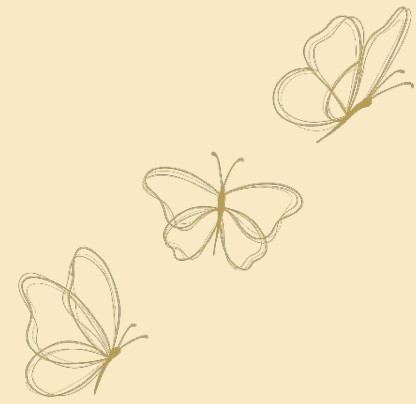
Strategies for land justice are blooming, and ***this is just the beginning.***

Creativity & innovation is key. We can transform the systems of today to create the systems of tomorrow, however we must not allow ourselves to be confined by the default systems.

This movement is not just about rematriation, it is also about reparations and ***justice for all systemically-oppressed communities.***

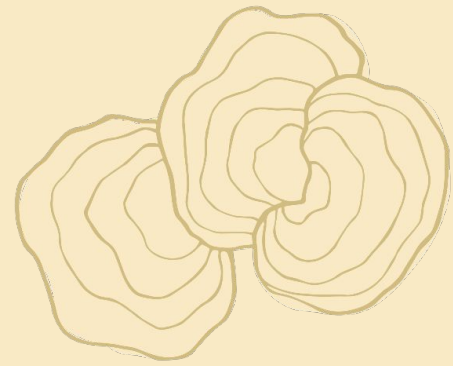


**Shifting Language
for a
Shifting Worldview**



Transaction ~ Transition ~ Transformation





Ownership ~ Stewardship ~ Kinship



The Journey



Reunion

Reunion

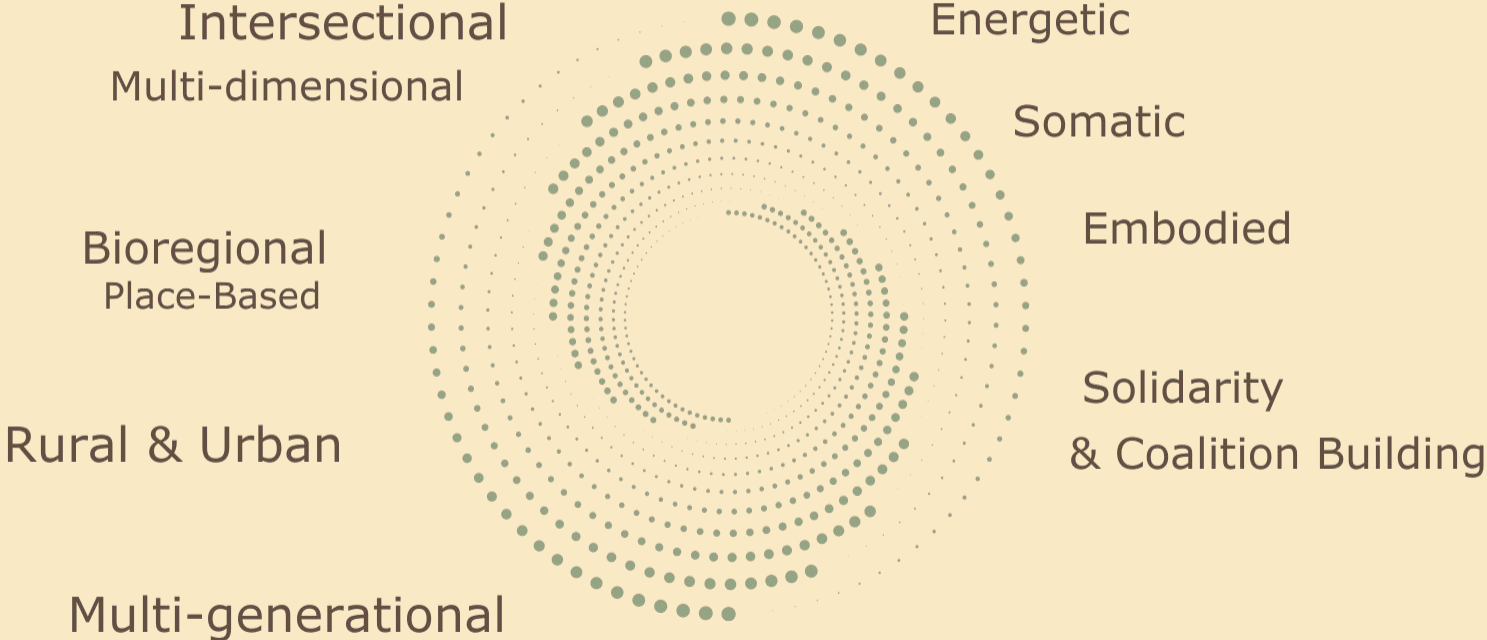


The Reunion Program seeks to shift the narrative of land ownership and accessibility, and support the means by which land is stewarded by people who center life, hold the generations to come in their vision and prayers, and contribute to the balancing of earth systems.

Through our connection to land, Reunion upholds 'right relationship' to one another as well as our relationship to all living things as core. We seek to create a container of remembrance of how to listen, how to speak, how to heal, and right our relationship to the world in which we live.

Most importantly, Reunion seeks to create a container of remembrance that supports our ability to thrive together in these dire and complex times.

Reunion is...







an offering to the future

Case Studies

Concepts in Action

Our Land Transition Approach

-  Align with the interests and vision of those in Reunion
-  Meet title holders where they are at, and help educate wherever and whenever we can. Harm reduction at minimum, healing when possible.
-  Build capacity in the organizations and regions we work in.
-  Nourish innovation in title holding in service to indigenous worldviews.

Movement Generation & Sogorea Te' Land Trust



Photo by Brooke Anderson | @movementphotographer

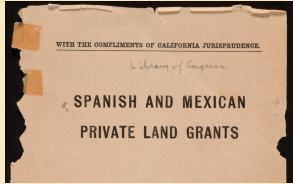


Highlights

**Complex
Racialized Strategy
for Re-acquisition**

**Multiple
Non-Profit Collaborators
toward Rematriation**

The Journey



Relinquishment

Family who bought it from the original Spanish land grant and made significant wealth from parceling and selling. This was the last land holding of the family.

Right Relationship with Land

Land returned to community stewards who are in solidarity with each other

Title is now held in perpetuity by Sogorea Te' Land Trust with 35 year re-negotiable lease granted to Movement Generation



Reunion



The Ecosystem Collaborators



Sustainable
Economies
Law Center



The Collaborators

- **Movement Generation** - 20+ year old California Bay Area movement organizing hub, does trainings on Just Transition → Reunion group.
- **Sogorea Te' Land Trust** - A quickly growing indigenous women led Land Trust in Lisjan Ohlone homelands (Oakland, CA) rematriating land and revitalizing indigenous culture → New title holder.
- **Sustainable Economies Law Center** - Solidarity attorneys for both organizations.
- Xavion Freedom of **Reimagine Realty** and Cassandra Ferrera of **Center for Ethical Land Transition** - Real estate team.

The Land that transitioned

- Rare 43 acres in the East Bay Area - Acquired by a family who bought thousands of acres very cheaply soon after the original Spanish land grant, and made enormous profit selling it generations later. This 43 acres was their last property.

Key Elements

- **Relationship centric** - The caretakers of the land brought the potential sale to the attention of Sogorea Te' - who brought it to Movement Generation.
- **Radical wealth redistribution** - large donor stood with MG to empower the acquisition.
- **Racially prejudiced title holders** - through our assessment of the title holders, we learned of their anti-queer, anti-black ignorance and prejudice.

The Strategy

- **Harm Reduction blended with Strategy** - Strategize use of whiteness as a team and navigate the toxicity together.
- **Protection through Transaction** - The full legal power of the real estate transaction was used to benefit the new stewards.

Somos Tierra

SOMOS TIERRA WE ARE THE LAND

Siembrando un futuro justo

Somos Tierra nace de la liberación y el reclamo de la tierra del mercado, de la resistencia y la lucha de quienes hemos sido desplazados y despojados de nuestra tierras. Somos Tierra buena que los campesinos Indígenas y Latines del condado de Sonoma respaldan el acceso a la tierra para la alimentación, la recreación, la cultura y la lucha de acuerdo a nuestras concepciones ancestrales, y la necesidad colectiva a través de la recuperación de la tierra.

Somos Tierra será el primer colectivo de tierras del condado de Sonoma anclado, diseñado y dirigido por y para campesinos Latines e Indígenas.

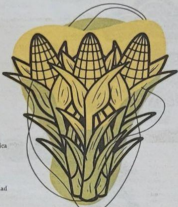
Las semillas que sembramos

- Creemos que la tierra es el centro de todas las luchas: la justicia racial, por las inmigrantes, laboral, la vivienda y climática
- Nos comprometemos con la soberanía colectiva, fuerza a la propiedad corporativa
- Soberanía ambiental, pero el efecto de no dañar el ambiente
- Estamos redefiniendo la pertenencia y el bien común
- Nos vamos juntos con la tierra y conectamos con nuestra ancestralidad

Somos Tierra reafirma una clara distribución del trabajo, el cuidado, la protección y la relación con la tierra que no dependa de la extracción y el lucro. Transformamos nuestra relación con la tierra, materialidad del mercado y poder en la medida de quienes la cuida con sabiduría ancestral.

Para apoyar o saber más sobre esta lucha mande un correo a info@northbay.org.

Escanee para leer más sobre una Transición Justa a través de Movement Generation.



Sowing a Just Future

Somos Tierra was born from the need and demand for the liberation of the land from the market. From the resistance and struggle of those that have been displaced and dispossessed from our lands. Somos Tierra seeks and struggles for Indigenous and Latine farmworkers from Sonoma County regain stewardship of the land for food self-determination, recreation, society and harvesting according to our ancestral knowledge, and healing collectively by reconnecting with the land.

Somos Tierra will be the first land holding collective in Sonoma County that is designed, directed and supported by and for Latine and Indigenous campesinos.

The seeds we sow

- We believe land is at the center of all struggles: racial justice, immigrant justice, labor justice, housing justice, climate justice
- We commit to collective governance over corporate ownership
- We are the soil that is, rather than the effect of, climate disasters
- We are redefining belonging and public good
- We lead together with the earth and connect with our ancestors

Somos Tierra reaffirms a clear distribution of work, care, protection, and relationship to the land that doesn't rely on extraction and profit. We dare to transform our existing relationship to land by transferring it from the market, back into the hands of those who steward the land using ancestral knowledge and wisdom.

To support or learn more about this work, please reach out to info@northbay.org.

Scan here to learn more about a Just Transition with Movement Generation.



SOMOS TIERRA

Nuestra milpa



CEMPASUCHIL - MARGOLID

"El derecho de que tenemos los individuos de que la tierra es de quien trabaja. No por ser tierra. Debemos respetar que no da regresa a ella. De las acciones regresamos a la tierra." - Abel

"It is the right of the workers that the land belongs to those who work it. Not to the gods. We must respect that one day we will return to the land. We were born from the land, and we will return to the land." - Abel

FRIJOL - BEANS

"Liberación de la tierra es liberar la tierra a quienes la tierra para que nosotros vivamos juntos desde ancestros y venir lo que no da regresa los papas bílicas de sí. ... ¡salud la tierra." - Gaila

"Liberation of the land is freeing the land and recovering the land so that we children and grandchildren have a place to plant and receive what their parents did as children... We caring for the land." - Gaila

MAÍZ - CORN

"Se entiende lo que más abuelo y abuela me han enseñado es que el deber tener con respeto, y que no se cree un dueño en el campo, sino que se respeta, como el papá. La tierra es de lo que comemos." - Samra

"I understand the liberation of the land is what my grandfathers and grandmothers have given to plant and receive what their parents did as children... We caring for the land." - Samra

¿Qué significa la liberación de la tierra? What does land liberation mean to you?



CALABAZA - SQUASH

"La liberación de la tierra se refiere a un movimiento a luchar que buena tierra a las comunidades originarias de la región, la justicia y el control por parte de fuerzas estatales, como un movimiento ancestral, colectivo e intergeneracional. Esta puede implicar la recuperación de tierras ancestrales, autonomía política y cultural para los pueblos indígenas y otros grupos marginados." - Ada

"Land liberation refers to movements or struggles that seek to liberate oppressed communities from exploitation, oppression and control by external forces, such as authoritarianism, racism, colonialism or corporations. It can include the recovery of ancestral lands, equal rights and self-determination of national movements, self-determined cultural autonomy for Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups." - Ada



JAMAICA - HIBISCUS

"La tierra no debería tener DUEÑO." - Beada

"The land should have no OWNER." - Beada



Highlights

**Multiple Sector
Collaborators toward Land
Justice for Campesinos/as**

**Complex Multi-year Strategy
for Cultural Support and
Public Land Transition**

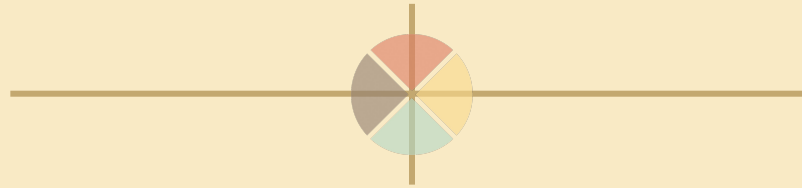
The Journey

Right Relationship with Land

Bridge between a public land initiative and the material needs of the people who work the land

Easements and Entity Structure that serves the Campesino/a community

Relinquishment -
Sonoma Ag and
Open Space



Reunion -
Somos Tierra



The Ecosystem
Collaborators



Sustainable
Economies
Law Center

The Collaborators

- **Somos Tierra** → Reunion Group
- **North Bay Organizing Project & North Bay Jobs with Justice** - Experienced and trusted for on the ground organizing of systemically oppressed communities, in this case, Farmworkers.
- **Sonoma Ag & Open Space** - Public agency stewarding the Vital Land Initiative allocating taxpayer dollars to preserve the agricultural and open spaces of Sonoma County mostly through acquiring easements and an innovative new “Buy*Protect*Sell program” → pass-through title holders.
- **Land Paths** - Land stewarding organization with a commitment to BIPOC access → pass-through title holders.
- **Sustainable Economies Law Center & Center for Ethical Land Transition** - facilitation and design team.

The Vision

- Build a bridge between a public land initiative and the material needs of the people who work the land to create access in order to heal, attain food sovereignty and eventually to build housing.

Facilitation Support

- Multiple organizations formed a coalition to help Somos Tierra articulate their wants, needs, and their vision for culturally affirmative relationship with land.
- These wants and needs have been ongoingly translated to Sonoma Ag and Open Space to support land acquisition, the creation of easements, and a land transition strategy that allows Somos Tierra to hold title in a culturally appropriate manner.

The Strategy

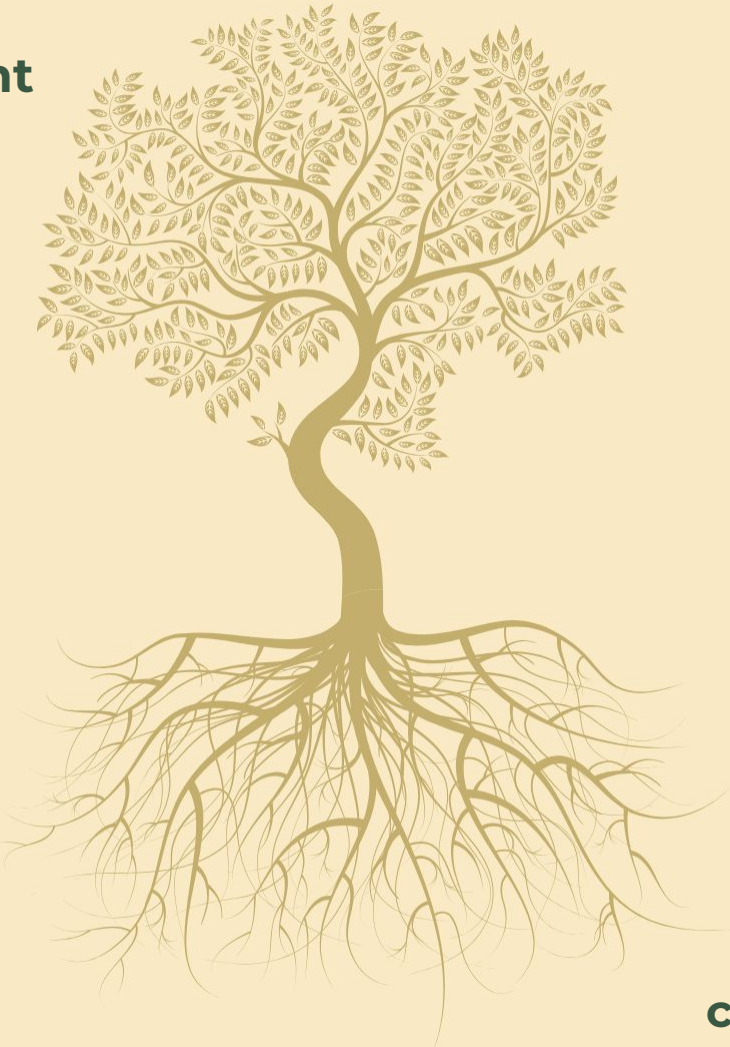
- **Interim Title Holding** - Partnership with Land Paths allows Somos Tierra to reunite with land before having to formalize their entity structure.
- **Liberatory Organizing** - Sustained relationship and collective power building, centering education and regeneration of labor.

Looking Ahead

What's on the horizon?

Nurture the Movement

**Create
resources
& frameworks**



Listen

Learn

**Grow
collective of practitioners**

Stay in Touch



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info@ethicalandtransition.org

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