



# HEALTH IMPACT OF GENTRIFICATION SPURRED BY DUWAMISH RIVER SUPERFUND CLEANUP

JONATHAN CHILDERS, MPH CANDIDATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES

William Daniell, Associate Professor, Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences

**CONCERN:** How will reinvestment spurred by the Duwamish River Cleanup affect health in Georgetown and South Park- two lower income, minority neighborhoods adjacent to the Superfund site?

**Research questions:**

- ? Is “gentrification” in progress in Georgetown and South Park? Is future gentrification likely? Could more equitable revitalization sustain local economic and social diversity?
- ? How would Cleanup-spurred reinvestment and urban development affect health determinants in Georgetown and South Park?
- ? What strategies can maximize health benefits and minimize harm from future reinvestment in the communities?

**INVESTIGATION PLAN:** Characterize urban development conditions and likely future development scenarios in Georgetown and South Park. Discern relevant health implications and appropriate interventions.

**Research methods:**

- Analyze Census data for Georgetown, South Park, and surrounding areas. Interpret recognized indicators of gentrification in-progress and likely future gentrification.
- Investigate programs for promoting equitable revitalization. Interpret prospects for influencing future development in Georgetown and South Park.
- Review literature on urban wellness to determine how reinvestment affects urban health determinants like housing, socioeconomics, social capital, open space and recreation.
- Determine strategies for minimizing harm and maximizing health benefits from future reinvestment and development spurred by the Duwamish Cleanup.

**KEY FINDINGS:**

- ❖ Demographic and economic Indicators reveal gentrification is already in progress and is likely to continue in future development of Georgetown and South Park. Reinvestment spurred by the Cleanup may contribute to ongoing gentrification, worsening adverse health effects.
- ❖ Programs and tools also exist to foster more equitable revitalization during future investment and future development scenarios. Strategic intervention to forestall gentrification and foster equitable revitalization may substantively benefit health in Georgetown and South Park.

**POTENTIAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF REINVESTMENT:**

Factor in Urban Health	Likely Effects of Reinvestment	Potential Health Impact of Equitable Revitalization	Potential Health Impact of Gentrification
Housing	Improved housing; higher home values and equity; higher housing costs	Better housing conditions; less environmental risk for new and existing residents	Healthy housing benefits higher income residents; lower income residents face stress from costs and/or displacement
Socio-economic Conditions	Influx of higher income residents; better local services and amenities; higher costs of living	Local services and amenities meet needs of new and existing residents	New services and amenities benefit higher income residents; lower income residents face stress from costs and/or displacement
Social Capital	More local employment and discretionary spending; more social polarity; greater local political power	Local resources increase collective adaptive capacity and decrease stress for new and existing residents	Local resources increase adaptive capacity of higher income residents; lower income residents face stress, social isolation, and less adaptive capacity.
Open Space and Recreation	Environmental enhancement and infrastructure improvements	Local improvements foster active lifestyles and community interaction among new and existing residents	Community improvements benefit higher income residents; lower income residents face stress from social isolation and potential displacement.

**RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS:**

- Coordinate management of future reinvestment and urban development**  
Formalize coalition of agencies and NGOs to monitor and manage Georgetown and South Park development. Ensure equity in policies, programs, and tools regarding environment and community development, in accordance with social justice requirements in King County and Seattle.
- Produce affordable housing and preserve affordability**  
Promote local development of affordable housing via land use code incentives, tax incentives, and public funding. Facilitate tenant assistance by Seattle Housing Authority and NGOs.
- Promote and protect home ownership**  
Expand homeownership by promoting use of downpayment assistance. Address increased tax liability from rising home values via counseling and tax deferral, exemption and relief. Preserve homeownership through the Seattle Foreclosure Prevention Program.
- Foster local economic strength and sustainable access to basic needs**  
Continue City support for local business districts. Create jobs and raise incomes through employment programs (e.g. Superfund Job Training Initiative). Secure local access to quality foods, promote urban agriculture, and ensure availability of nutrition from food banks and schools.
- Enhance human and natural habitat**  
Create vibrant streetscapes via Seattle’s Complete Streets program. Increase access to Duwamish River, safe open space, and recreation through Seattle’s Shoreline Street Ends program. Enhance local ecological services through tree planting and preservation. Improve aquatic recreation by minimizing Combined Sewer Overflow discharge into the Duwamish River.
- Increase community engagement:**  
Support local grass roots initiatives building social cohesion.

