

Transcript of *Who Keeps Us Safe?* — Episode 2: CID Not for Sale

Ryan (Narrator) 00:33

Hello and welcome to *Who Keeps Us Safe?*, a podcast by Asian Americans exploring safety in our communities and beyond. This is a collaborative project of PARISOL: Pacific Rim Solidarity Network, a Chinese and Taiwanese diaspora activist organization, and KVRU 105.7 FM, a Seattle community-based radio station. I'm Ryan, and I use they/them pronouns.

Alex (Narrator) 00:58

I'm Alex, and I use they/them pronouns.

Jenn (Narrator) 01:01

I'm Jenn, and I use she/her pronouns.

Andy (Narrator) 01:03

And I'm Andy, and I use he/him pronouns. And over the next several episodes, we will continue to explore the ideas of safety, community, and policing from the perspective of Asian Americans living in Seattle.

Jenn (Narrator) 01:17

Last episode, we started our exploration into the ideas of safety by interviewing community members at a Chinatown-International District cleanup event, as well as interviewing organizers from the Rainier Beach Action Coalition. We found that many of the people we interviewed felt that safety came from community care, and that police did not create safety in their communities.

Ryan (Narrator) 01:41

One other theme that seemed to come up frequently in our last episode was gentrification, specifically Seattle's Chinatown-International District, also known as the CID. Many people define gentrification as the displacement of working-class people from an area by wealthier newcomers who change the economic landscape. Gentrification is a very complex and controversial topic. So we decided to dedicate this whole episode to exploring this subject.

Alex (Narrator) 02:11

In late June of this year, we caught word of a demonstration sponsored by the CID Coalition speaking out against displacement in the CID. Specifically, they were protesting the opening of a building [that was] housing high-value luxury condominiums. We decided this would be a great opportunity to ask participants more about gentrification and how this connects with the ideas of safety in our community.

[Background noise of a crowd chanting, "CID, Not for Sale! CID, Not for Sale!"]

Nina 02:39

So my name is Nina. I have been part of the CID Coalition for about three years. I have lived in this neighborhood for a long time, worked in this neighborhood for a long time. This is where my family came to this country, through this neighborhood. So it means a lot to me. It's kind of my cultural home, my heart home. And I think that's true for a lot of us in the CID Coalition. I am here today because I want this community to have the power to decide what happens here. And I don't want to see these wealthy developers who are kicking out our elders and our friends and our neighbors be given that power over the community. So we're here today to say that we're the ones who get to decide the future of the CID, not them.

Meilani 03:33

Hi I'm Meilani, she/her pronouns, and I'm with CID Coalition. I'm here protesting KODA [Condominiums] because we need to show that developers can't just take blocks and blocks of the CID for themselves and block out community wishes. KODA has been lying to us, they've made and broken so many promises, and we won't stand for it any longer. This is also an ongoing fight for Chinatowns and ethnic enclaves across the country and internationally that are fighting the same fight against gentrification. So many of our community members are being displaced and it needs to stop. And KODA is part of that gentrification and part of that displacement.

Andy (Narrator) 04:30

As you can tell, the people who came out to this demonstration have deep ties to this neighborhood and are very passionate about preserving the rich cultural heritage of the area.

Jenn (Narrator) 04:41

We asked the members of the CID Coalition to expand more on how this fight with KODA Condominiums developed.

Nina 04:49

KODA was approved in January 2019, after a couple years of going through the City's Design Review Process. In that entire process, the community came out and was very vocal that we don't want this kind of development, that this is really harmful for our community because — they're selling units for like up to \$1.4 million, I think, and selling parking stalls for up to \$75,000 in a neighborhood where the average income is about \$35,000. So they're not building this for people in this neighborhood. They're not building it for the existing community. And so our concern is that, you know, we're already starting to see a lot of speculative development coming into the CID and kind of seeing those processes of

gentrification and displacement happening here. And so KODA, and other developments like KODA, are just going to continue that and make it worse.

[Background noise of crowd yelling, "Boba, not KODA!"]

Meilani 06:05

This fight has been going on for years. This is my third action. One of them was at the groundbreaking ceremony where KODA put up fences to keep us out. They mocked us, they mocked our elders, and smiled and laughed as they dug into the ground that is not theirs. The second action I was a part of was an art washing event, where we crash their party. They were celebrating, and introducing all these artists that were not part of the community, trying to get potential buyers interested and showing off all of their "culture." And we came in and presented an award that said, "KODA is great at art washing," and they bought it for a second. And then they realized that we were there to protest them, and then they called the cops on us. They assaulted our friends, our elders, and they called the cops, had the cops follow us until we were dispersing, and then they pulled one of our comrades and arrested them. So those were the first two that I was a part of, and this is our third. And I hope KODA does not escalate, but knowing them, they probably will. So I'm hoping for the safety of all of our friends here today.

Sue Kay 07:46

My name is Sue Kay, and I've been with the CID Coalition since its inception, when there was going to be a 17-story hotel go up, and sort of initiated into what was happening around our community, and met a lot of young people who have a vision for the future. And so I hang around with them.

Alex (Narrator) 08:20

Many members of CID Coalition have also seen how the neighborhood has changed drastically, and how these changes have affected people living and working here.

Sue Kay 08:28

In the broader scheme, I just see our history and our culture being erased. I see a lot of gentrification going on, I hear about people having to move out and I keep a pulse on prices and how many of the immigrants and low-income people who built this neighborhood are now priced out and having to move, just like in the Central District. And soon, like many Chinatowns across the nation, we're going to ... I worry about having an empty culture.

Nina 09:20

I've been in Seattle for like over 10 years now. I just see a lot more of these kind of like fancy shiny buildings coming in that, you know, they'll kind of advertise bringing in like "a cool hip new crowd to the neighborhood," I think is what one of them said. Why aren't the

people who already live here good enough to live in your development? So I'm seeing more of that kind of development coming in, that's very clearly marketed at whiter, wealthier people. Also seeing a lot more chain businesses moving in. So some of the mom and pop businesses that I loved are no longer here. And like, obviously neighborhoods change over time. But what concerns me is that those changes are replacing the community as opposed to adding to it.

Ryan (Narrator) 10:35

Karen Sakata has been a longtime owner of the CID karaoke institution Bush Garden. This establishment was the first restaurant in the country to have a karaoke bar. Here is Karen explaining how she has seen gentrification affect people in the neighborhood over the years.

Karen 10:53

Karen Sakata, she/her, and organizations I work with: Bush Garden is a business, I work with the CID Coalition, also work for the City of Seattle in a program for low-income first-gen high school students. I'm here because I'm really concerned that Seattle has forsaken the history and culture of our communities and neighborhoods, and we're losing it all to developers that are not really connecting to the stories of Seattle, the stories of the neighborhood, and, and just ... it's disappearing, you know, that feeling of community and culture is kind of disappearing, which is really concerning to me, because they build these high rises that are the small 400 square feet. ... You know, who's gonna live there? It's not being designed to maintain a neighborhood in the community. So that's my biggest concern. I think we can welcome new people in, and it's nice, but if they're not building affordable housing, if they're not building it for families so that even lower-income folks can still live in our neighborhoods and live and work in the same neighborhood, [then] I think we all lose out because we don't build relationships with each other. And that's the point I'm really concerned about missing out on.

Andy (Narrator) 12:22

CID Coalition members have also connected gentrification and displacement with safety and police. Here's JM, organizer with Parisol, Covid-19 Mutual Aid, and the Massage Parlor Outreach Project, speaking to the crowd at the demonstration.

[JM is speaking through a megaphone to the gathered protestors.]

JM 12:38

[...] And for me, just the timing of the police raids and massage parlor workers and KODA breaking ground is so connected and tied, because that is [inaudible] to create a Chinatown ID that is palatable and normal to white folks, to rich folks, and kicking out, you know,

elements of CID, the history of CID that has made it so vibrant, that is home to a lot of first-generation Asian immigrants, the cultural place for so many of us who are disconnected from homelands, there's a place for multiracial communities who've built this up over generations. And wanting to erase that history and tokenize it and make it just, you know, locked into museums. So these rich folks can come by and have a sense of cultural connection without the people involved. I mean, that's exactly what's embedded in that timing, that connect, that proximity between police raids of the most vulnerable Asian migrants in our community, and this breaking ground of KODA. And one thing I do want to say is, so much of this is on the City. So much of this is on the City making revenue out of developers, and like increasing land prices, and KODA's just one phenomenon of that. KODA is just one player with just how this City makes money out of kicking out poor folks from Seattle, and then making a whole lot of other money out of saying they want to support poor people, right, "building credibility," and they're getting us on both ends by creating the conditions that make our people suffer, and then creating an image of themselves as this progressive liberal beacon within the states that actually gives a shit about poor folks. But we know the City through the Seattle Municipal Court, through SPD, is constantly disenfranchising poor folks, Black, Brown, Indigenous, you know, immigrants. And that's not changing and we need to draw that connection between the criminal legal system, this oppressing, exploiting Folks of Color through institutions like this, and talk about the complicity of the City, private property, developers, real estate, all that is part of the work that we have to do to build the city we actually want. So thank you to CID Coalition for doing this. F*** KODA all day, every day, and all y'all who want to live here in this dumb place. But let's reclaim Chinatown-International District for all folks.

[Crowd cheers.]

Nina 15:16

So in terms of development, I feel like that kind of coded language around "public safety," that's one of their top talking points, as they say, like, "Oh, we want to make this neighborhood safer, the CID isn't safe." And so if we bring in wealthier people, somehow that will magically trickle down and make houseless people and your elders who are like afraid of walking around, and like that's going to magically make everything better? But displacing people and taking away their homes and not addressing the root causes of public safety, that doesn't make people safer. So I think part of it is that, we see developers bringing out these public safety talking points, but what they're proposing doesn't make the community any safer and actually makes us less safe because you are bringing in, generally, more police to the neighborhood, you're bringing in residents who are going to be more comfortable calling police for minor issues, or you know, people who are going to be calling the cops on our houseless neighbors here. I think tied to a lot of these developments, we've seen a lot of anti-houseless sentiment where people blame the unhoused people in our community for public safety issues, but don't look at the developers who are causing people to be unhoused.

Sue Kay 17:09

I see the police coming in. That's one of my main peeves because I remember Donnie Chin and the struggles he had as he tried to protect people who were ... We had no ambulance service and the language was always a barrier. But he tried to bridge that and it's still going on. When I see police come into the neighborhood, I worry about the safety of people who have English as a second language, and just the treatment that they receive in general, the lack of respect and so forth.

Alex (Narrator) 18:18

Attending the CID Coalition protest gave us lots of insight into gentrification, displacement and how it affects people in the CID. But still, we were just scratching the surface on how all of this is connected to safety and police. So, we decided to invite the members of CID Coalition into the KVRU studio to find out more about gentrification, the history of the organization, and how it all ties into safety.

Ryan (Narrator) 18:43

We first talked with Cynthia Brothers, a founding member of the CID Coalition, about how the current movement to fight gentrification started.

Cynthia 18:52

My name is Cynthia Brothers, she/her pronouns. I'm the founder of Vanishing Seattle and a founding member of the Chinatown-International District CID Coalition, aka "humbows not hotels." Back in 2016, I wrote an article for the Seattle Globalist. So my grandmother (my Po Po), she lives in Legacy House in the International District, which is an assisted living facility. And one day, just going to visit her, I noticed that the building across the street, there was a new land use action sign that had just gone up that was announcing plans for a 14-story hotel. So I was concerned about this because it's right across from where my grandma and a lot of other vulnerable elders lived. So that was kind of what led me to write this article about what would be the impact of this hotel, not only on the residents of Legacy House, but also what does it mean in a larger sense for the CID.

And in the course of interviewing folks for that article, talking to different nonprofit directors and leaders in the community, a lot of them did express concern about the developments. They also shared that ICHS and (inaudible) two of the nonprofits, they had tried to buy that parcel of land to turn it into a nursing facility. So folks like my Po Po and their level of need for care escalated, that they could just move across the street instead of having to go outside of the community. So they had tried to purchase that property and they were outbid by private developers, which is a pattern that we've seen increasingly over the past few years.

In talking to a lot of these folks and nonprofit leaders, one of the takeaways was that there wasn't necessarily a body or a space to mobilize and organize around these issues of gentrification and displacement. Part of writing the article is just a huge learning process for me about well, what can be done when you see this big change coming? Like, what are the interventions? How do you push back against it? And it seemed like there was kind of a vacuum at that time, even though, as we all know, the CID has a very rich legacy and history of organizing and activism at that particular juncture, there didn't seem to be much around displacement.

So I was very fortunate that when that article was released, I guess I got some traction and folks read it. And then the next thing I knew, I was contacted by a few folks that were starting to self-organize and to convene a space to talk about this, and what could be done in response, and that was in early 2017, I believe. So I just kind of showed up to one of the meetings, maybe the second or third meeting that happened at that time, and then it just kind of grew from there. So that's how I got involved and met all the awesome leaders and organizers and grassroots folks that have been doing this work since, and before as well.

Andy (Narrator) 22:19

Here's Karen Sakata again, telling us about the beginnings of the CID Coalition and the struggles they faced.

Karen 22:26

When that first hotel was going to be built, that was kind of a rallying call for everybody, because the placement of that hotel was right across the street from the Legacy House, which is, you know, assisted living facility for elders. It was right across the street in that same building, there was a child care center, a Head Start program that serves low-income families. It was kitty-corner to the library and the community center, and it would create a whole different environment. And I think those kinds of, you know, going for the retail, going for the money in the business, tend to detract from the fact that it is a neighborhood and a community. And so that was one of the first big ones more recently.

Jenn (Narrator) 23:33

CID Coalition members are informed by past movements to fight gentrification in this area and constantly insert these teachings into their current strategies.

Yin 23:44

Hi, this is Yin, she/her pronouns, part of CID Coalition, PARISOL, Seattle People's Party. I think gentrification is a new, "newer-ish" word for what's been happening. Where the Chinatown-International District is located is the third location. The first location is located by the waterfront, the second location is in Pioneer Square. And then now this is the current third location. And in Pioneer Square, you could actually see various buildings that do have

that second level, that association balcony. So you still see remnants of what was the second location of Chinatown. And then that (was) displaced when Smith Tower, the first skyscraper, that was built in Seattle. And the CID was pushed away from the water to be where its current location is at. So gentrification I think is just a different word that they have given us to describe what is happening and continuously happening. So I think about Matt Remle, who is Standing Rock Sioux, local Native organizer, who reminds us that the first legislation that was passed by the City Council in Seattle was to push out the Natives on their land.

Karen 25:22

But if you really think about back in the '60s when Uncle Bob, and all the work that all the community activists did back then that, you know, preventing the takeover of fast food places. Like, we don't want hot dogs, we don't want McDonald's to come in, we didn't want to see a bunch of chains coming in and make it look like every other strip mall anywhere in the United States, but that [the CID] had its unique nature because of all the independent small businesses that people ran, and it just creates a different sense of community. So and then the one that I got involved in was because of the people that want to develop the Bush Garden building. And to me, that building has a lot of history for the Japanese American community in particular, but actually, it was a community gathering place and it was one of those places, you know, used to seat 300–400 people. Before all the hotels were built downtown, that's where all the big community events were held. People had their weddings there, before weddings, after weddings, funerals, whatever it was, before a community organizing event, a lot of that was held there. So I see it as a place that brought people together. Plus it tells a story of immigration. And, you know, people coming in from another country, how they created a small village and how it made a space not just for that immediate Japanese community, but also for the broader community, for a place to connect. So I don't want to lose those stories, lose that history, and that unique nature of that particular neighborhood.

Jacqueline 27:25

I'm Jacqueline Wu. I go by she/her/hers (are my pronouns), and I am part of the CID Coalition. Some important historical events and people that have influenced the anti-gentrification movement: Definitely around the 1960s, 1970s when first the I-5 moved into Chinatown, splitting the neighborhood in half, that was a key development. Another one was the creation of the Kingdome, as well. Some important people at that time who were creating relationship, building coalition with people to ensure that their voices are heard. They demonstrated at the King County Executive's office at the time, and also the mayor's, around this...

I know people always talk about Uncle Bob, and I'm going to talk about the other people. I'm going to talk about (inaudible) the Manong who actually lived in the hotel, you know, all Filipino cannery workers. Like, just having them come down to politicians and saying like

“this is f****d up,” you know, old, angry — just like think about it, old angry Filipino men, bachelors who worked in the cannery like, that is frightening [chuckles]. There’s, you know, Al Fujiyama as well, Freddie, you know, those two guys both passed away recently, but a lot of people don’t give them credit for what they’ve done in terms of like accountability and relationship, starting the Asian American family magazine too. And, you know, our documenters — Ron Chu, who was the editor of the International Examiner, being the voice, the newspaper of the community, documenting that stuff, along with Eugene ... what’s, what’s his name? Takawa. Yeah. You know, taking photos of what’s going on, as well. I think those historic people are really important.

I think now looking back at it, a lot of the young people and a lot of people in our coalition also always talk about Uncle Bob or like other people, but I wanted to make sure that the people who are in the background also get a shoutout, but you know, contemporarily we use what happened with the Kingdome, what happened to I-5, as kind of examples of how history is repeating itself. But gentrification I think for us, now we’re looking at like the hotel on 8th Lane, that kind of galvanized a lot of people.

A big person in our coalition was Cynthia Brothers, who wrote this amazing op-ed in the Seattle Globalist about “Will my grandma have a place to live, will my Po Po have a place to live in the CID?” And I think that resonated with a lot of, you know, third, third-to-fifth-gen folks, as well. I think the KODA development is another point for gentrification, also anti-displacement as well, it being the first high-luxury high rise in the neighborhood too, with \$75,000 parking spots when the median income of the neighborhood is like \$30,000.

Alex (Narrator) 31:21

With so much work being put into fighting gentrification, we asked the group what significance gentrification has on the CID and how the neighborhood is affected by it.

Jacqueline 31:29

The destruction of homes, the destruction of families, the destruction of community and the destruction of ethnic enclaves is the loss of history. So thinking about the CID as like a place, and if we were to go back into history, a place where white people that don’t want Chinese people, either they push them out of the water, they push them onto the water, we didn’t want you, we’re going to redline you into this area, you know, anywhere east of Occidental, that’s where you’re gonna be. And like going into it now, that’s exactly what’s happening.

Gentrification is the loss of the community through these systematic racial systemic ways of like the City developer saying, I’m gonna build this, drive up rent prices, drive up commercial rent, so that small businesses, families cannot live here, so that communities cannot build relationships here. So what that does is that we lose businesses, we lose

young entrepreneurs who want to come into this neighborhood and say, like, I want to do a pop-up, or I want to start a store, or I want to take over my family's business because the rent is so unaffordable, or like families saying I cannot come here but I am willing to make the two-hour drive so I can get my health care at ICHS. So I can go to lion dragon dance, so I can volunteer, so I can intern. So I can work here. I'm willing to make that two-hour trek because it might be the only place I can work or I can find community or find the vegetables that I need for groceries.

So I think that gentrification is significant because there is such a loss of community, there is a loss of having these ethnic enclaves, having Chinatowns throughout the U.S. which are just being destroyed, being eliminated, being gentrified. Seattle is not the only one, L.A., San Francisco, New York, Boston. Anyone will tell you that because these places are in prime real estate places, you know, they're the first to go. We're driving away the Chinese again, we're driving away communities again. And the connection between safety and gentrification is all about relationships. When you don't know your neighbor, how are you supposed to feel safe? If you can't communicate with your neighbor, how are you supposed to tell them like oh, so and so is, you know, there are activity around their block. Not everyone had the same access to like, Citizen or like the neighborhood app, either. And so it kind of disintegrates in terms of being able to build relationships, being able to like see the same restaurants or the same grocery stores that service your family for years, and then all of a sudden being [replaced] by like a white gift shop owner.

Ryan (Narrator) 34:37

Because our podcast is focused on the ideas of safety, we had to ask the group to explain how safety, policing, and gentrification are connected in the work that they do. Especially regarding the Chinatown-International District.

Karen 34:52

People look to police for safety and those kinds of things, but I also see the way people were wanting to see police come in and behave and treat people that are living in the neighborhood in a way as if they're criminals or those kinds of things. I think that's — that's not community. That's not a sense of community. And what's been really interesting about the International District, the CID, is that there's a lot of different kinds of people from all walks of life, all backgrounds, you know, and all levels of income really, people come down to be a part of that neighborhood. And what I love about it is kind of like, it doesn't matter how much money you have, if you're on the streets or whatever, that people still have some kind of connection with each other.

Losing that kind of sense of community is something that I think you start treating certain populations as if they're, you know, as if they're criminals and not just have them be a part of the community and figure out how to, you know, how we can all support each other, then I

think we're dehumanizing people. And, to me, that's not the direction to go in. So that's how they're being used in this process as they want to change or make their neighborhoods safe is to, in the name of safety, they're using that as a way to respond to people in a neighborhood that they don't like or see in a particular way.

Meilani 34:52

So we know the police are not here for safety reasons, the police are here to protect private property. As the CID becomes increasingly gentrified, and increasingly higher property values, there's more police here to protect that property value. The people with the higher income that are moving into the neighborhood, they're demanding police to protect their property. And we know that police bring violence and especially against Communities of Color and unhoused folks (which is what a lot of our neighborhood consists of, is People of Color and unhoused folks!) and I don't think welcoming in violence is a good tactic to build community. I don't see a future of the CID with a police presence. I think our communities can exist and can thrive without the need for policing. If we can build community pathways to support each other, we won't need to rely on calling 911, we can rely on our friends and our neighbors to bring in the services that supposedly the police can provide but do not provide to our community.

Jacqueline 38:19

I think police are very much connected to gentrification, because essentially the police become the privatized army of developers. Whenever developers don't get their way, or if the community comes out and rally and protest against them — who do you think developers are gonna call? They're gonna call 911. They're gonna call the police. They're gonna go after protesters for practicing their First Amendment right. Even if the neighborhood was going to be gentrified, having police presence does not mean that the neighborhood is safe.

My dad's a small-business owner, and one day he was parking his car outside in a no parking zone, because he was just checking out if there's additional parking spots. The police came, started writing him up a ticket. He tried to explain in his best English like, "Hey, I'm just trying to move my car later." They thought he was resisting and like fighting him, and so they started to beat him up. So having police in the neighborhood does not equate to having safety in the neighborhood. If anything, having gentrification and additional white people would just not make it safe for community members who are already there. They're just gonna go after people who don't look white.

Yin 39:54

For me, in the CID, safety is having the aunties and uncles on the streets, hanging out, selling vegetables on the corner. And, you know, not being able to say no and buying double the vegetables amount. You know, that is the neighborhood feel. And what I see from police is they use this as a pass-through. They're punishing people who are poor, and

maybe committing crimes of poverty. I know that businesses get hit, sometimes the same one three times in one week, that is definitely an issue. And that's an issue of the City, of the resources, of what they're needing to survive. What we get to see is the impact of the City not serving the community. Little Saigon is filled with so much litter that is not taken care of. I know we did a cleanup last time. But you know, it has to be more regular, we can't fill the role that the City should be doing. I feel like that's oftentimes the burden that the nonprofits become — they become a buffer of the violence of the city to fill up the roles and services that the City should be doing. And then, you know, we, as grassroots communities, try our best. I know there are mutual aid [groups] that are out there constantly. There are folks providing water and survival necessities, that's because we're trying to take care of the community when the government should be doing their job.

So the connection to police is that the CID has always had to learn to not depend on police because they never came. That was the relationship with CID, you know, they had to create their own systems. That's why nonprofits were formed at Bush Garden when people were talking and hanging out. So the police right now, I think serve a more class-privilege folks, serve more wealthy businesses, serve a more conservative population. But in reality, we can't outsource safety to them. We can only provide safety to our own communities. And that's the invitation is, how do we provide safety for ourselves for our own communities and not have to outsource this work to this entity that is too well resourced and funded.

Andy (Narrator) 43:01

We heard members from the group say that Seattle's Chinatown-International District isn't the only Chinatown being gentrified. So, we wanted to hear if there was other work like this being done in other Chinatowns nationally and internationally. Here's what CID organizer Yin had to say.

Yin 43:20

So in an effort to intersect our work, CID Coalition has created various networks locally. We started conversations with a group of folks called the Historically Redlined Community Coalition and just having local conversations with CD and South Seattle around gentrification. Nationally and internationally, we also helped create a network called Coast to Coast Chinatowns Against Displacement Solidarity Network and it includes the core founding orgs of CCED: Chinatown, Community for Equitable Development in L.A., Chinatown Art Brigade in New York Chinatown. We also have friends up in Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, so it's across the colonial borders. It allows us to celebrate our wins with each other.

When we had our groundbreaking KODA action, the folks in L.A. and CCED were telling us how inspired they were that you can do the groundbreaking when the construction is happening, that we were still out there letting them know that there was resistance, that we

did not want them there. And I think for us, like when we're fighting James Wong [Vibrant Cities] for Bush Garden, who you know, uses his Asian identity and says that he's a local person who grew up in Beacon Hill. As if that allows him to displace Bush Garden, as if that allows him to build a 17-story luxury building there. Also the City's complicit, right? There's a historical line that stops right before Bush Garden, it doesn't stop at the streets, or should end, but it's somehow stopped in the middle of a building.

So for me, being connected to the other fights and other Chinatowns, I'm able to see that oh, we're fighting patriarchy, or we're fighting imperialism, or we're fighting capitalism, classism, you know, all of these -isms in our fight are intersectional. And that those are just symbols, those figureheads that we know their names and where their offices [are and] can show up outside, they are just a representation of the bigger system that enables them to exist.

And so it's been great because Seattle hosted a couple years ago now for Red Canary Song to come from New York, folks from Boston, Chinese Progressive Association in Boston. We hosted the CCED folks and the Vancouver community. Yeah, they're great. They all came down to Seattle, and we hosted them, and it was a conversation around decriminalize sex work, and also learning about massage parlor workers. It was a much-needed analysis and conversation around gender violence and our work. So I feel like it's so important for us to learn from each other and build a deeper relationship across struggles. We were just in New York also in 2020, before the COVID shutdown that weekend. And we were able to protest Atlas Capital, for the CCD folks in L.A. they were fighting their luxury development. And we were all able to show up and convene in New York to protest outside of [Atlas Capital's] headquarters.

It's so important for us to be in solidarity with each other, to be able to create a different story, and be able to support each other. Because I know that our cannery workers and our mechanical workers in Seattle radicalized the Chinese folks because the Filipino cannery workers unionized, and that's how the Chinese folks were politicized. And then when the [Chinese] Exclusion Act was pushed onto the San Francisco Bay Area, that's how the Chinese Progressive Association was founded in the Bay Area. That's what I learned from the uncle that started the organization. Our movement has always been across borders, our organizing have always been coastal. And so we call ourselves "Coast to Coast Chinatowns."

Jenn (Narrator) 48:23

Gentrification can be a complex issue, but the CID Coalition has a way about explaining the issues that really puts things in perspective. We had some major takeaways after attending their demonstration and sitting down to chat with them.

Alex (Narrator) 48:39

First, gentrification has huge effects on a range of people in the CID. Whether it be People of Color, unhoused people, working-class people, or elders, economic displacement seems to hit them the hardest. And when it comes to Chinatowns throughout the nation and internationally, culture and history become some of the bigger casualties.

Ryan (Narrator) 48:59

Another takeaway from our interviews is that history repeats itself. As we heard from this group, gentrification is just a new name for the displacement that has been happening for generations in Seattle. However, there has also been a rich history of resistance to displacement and economic manipulation that has informed the modern day activists who continue the fight.

Andy (Narrator) 49:23

Lastly, the CID Coalition was quick to point out that developers of land projects in the CID and the police are part of the same system that pushes working-class People of Color and unhoused people out of areas to make way for wealthier white people. Through gentrification, safety is created for specific populations, while the rest of us have to fight just to keep our communities intact.

Jenn (Narrator) 49:49

We'd like to thank all the members of the CID Coalition for their time and thoughts, KVRU 105.7 FM for their technical support, and Parisol for supporting us in the creation of this podcast. See you next time on *Who Keeps Us Safe?*.

Ryan (Narrator) 50:04

The podcast hosts for today's episode — Andy, Alex, Ryan, and Jenn — are a small team of local community organizers who also produce and edit the episodes for *Who Keeps Us Safe?*. Special thanks for music and audio editing by Andy, artwork by Tian and Jiéyì, translation support by Matilde, Chelsea, and Alex.