



2021 ACTION REPORT

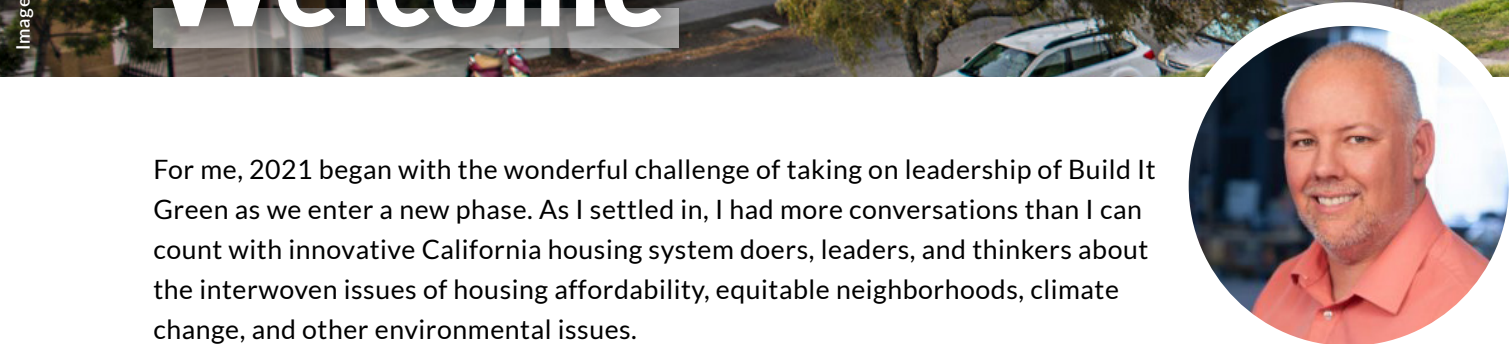
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**Build It
Green**



Welcome



For me, 2021 began with the wonderful challenge of taking on leadership of Build It Green as we enter a new phase. As I settled in, I had more conversations than I can count with innovative California housing system doers, leaders, and thinkers about the interwoven issues of housing affordability, equitable neighborhoods, climate change, and other environmental issues.

The California housing system faces profound challenges, but based on my conversations, I am hopeful. Our state’s housing realm is full of brilliant, dedicated people who reject that environmental, social, and affordability aspirations conflict. When these innovators have the opportunity to truly collaborate, a 21st century California dream unfolds: one where nature and neighborhoods thrive together, building companies and workers jointly prosper, and those who have typically been shut out of community leadership drive decisions that benefit us all.

California needs a forum where developers and builders, policy advocates, state and local decisionmakers, environmentalists, grassroots community leaders, and others can come together, bust silos, and work toward this dream. Build It Green aims to establish this forum. Last December, through the Building Our Future gatherings (read on in this report for details about the gatherings), we brought together 100 housing system innovators and surfaced a host of themes of collective interest—from residential building decarbonization to construction innovation to how to link infrastructure investment to thriving communities. These themes are central to our 2022 work.

Build It Green’s superpower has always been our ability to provide resources, knowledge, and connections to those that actually do the work to make the places we live green, healthy, and affordable. We are now connecting doers to policymakers, regulators, academics, community leaders, and advocates with capacity to accelerate innovation. With these connections made, housing development, construction, and renovation will become instrumental to our state, improving environmental vitality, realizing community visions, and making the 21st century California dream a reality.

I look forward to working with you as we move ahead together!

Jeremy Madsen
Executive Director

ABOUT Build It Green

Build It Green connects changemakers to transform the housing system in service of human and ecological vitality.

Our Role

BIG is a catalyst to transform the housing ecosystem to be regenerative — equitable, holistic, and committed to addressing the interconnected needs of individuals, communities, and the environment. We do this by convening stakeholders, enabling them to work collaboratively, and developing their capacity to work across silos. BIG values being credible and accessible, a trusted resource, and inclusive in our work.

Our Approach

Always working with committed changemakers from different parts of the housing ecosystem, BIG’s approach is to:



Facilitate
ideation to
innovate



Incubate
and demonstrate
to catalyze
action



Convene
to connect



Educate
and provide
growth
opportunities
for practical
applications



Communicate
to elevate
aspirations and
advance change

Sparking Connections

Last year, Build It Green engaged hundreds of diverse players across California's housing system: developers, housing advocates, green building consultants, community leaders, government officials, and more. In speaking with these thoughtful minds individually, we realized the potential of bringing them together. Nobody holds all of the answers. But by creating a space for these innovative leaders, doers, and thinkers to convene, we can build a network with the capacity to take on housing issues that have perplexed California for decades.

In our one-on-one conversations, we explored gaps and opportunities in California's housing system... Three overarching themes emerged:

- 1 There are incredibly big challenges in California around housing affordability and how housing intersects with critical social equity and environmental issues, including climate change.
- 2 We are not making progress quickly enough given the social and environmental crises before us.
- 3 Strategies we have employed over many years are inadequate to meet the challenges we face.

The year is 2030. For eight years, Build It Green has continued to enable collaboration across the housing ecosystem in an effort to advance intersectional, impactful work. How has this approach changed things in 2030?

In 2022, planners were just beginning to focus on enabling communities to dictate their development trajectory. In 2030, in part because of BIG's work to create alignment across the housing ecosystem, resident-led initiatives that address climate change and housing affordability, while avoiding displacement, are the norm.

- Saharnaz Mirzazad, Strategic Growth Council

Unusual suspects are truly working together, not just talking. As a Black-identified queer woman, I drifted away from environmental advocacy because it wasn't always a welcoming space. But in 2030, people like me are fully engaged and leading, because the green world, the affordable housing industry, and community organizing are working together on equity to achieve transformative impact and make sure everyone has a safe, sustainable home.

- Gloria Bruce, East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)

The work is constant but by 2030 the barriers to entry into the construction jobs have literally been removed and the industry is more diverse and inclusive.

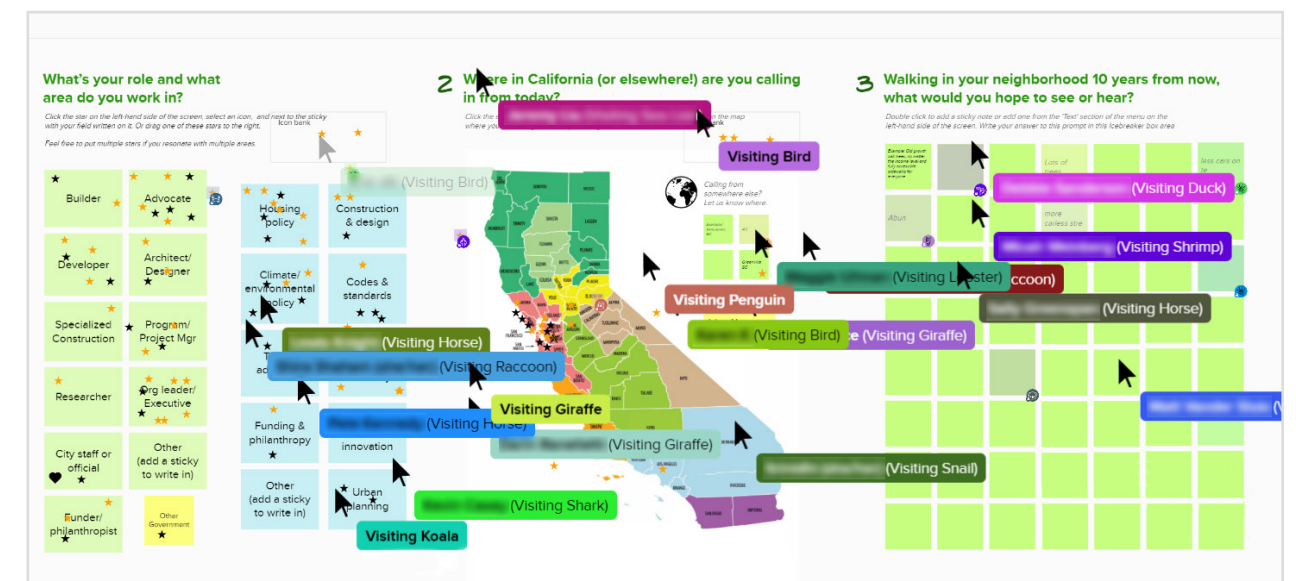
- Mick Penn, Swinerton

Build It Green has helped us to understand customer and construction problems more quickly, and scope better solutions. Their collaborative approach has saved us time and effort as we're getting to grips with the new challenges that decarbonization creates.

- Owen Howlett, Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)

Building Our Future

To end 2021, Build It Green brought together 100 of the housing system innovators that we had engaged over the course of the year. Together, the group explored the overarching themes that emerged from BIG's deep dive into California's housing system. Called "Building Our Future", this pair of gatherings generated over 400 creative ideas and potential opportunities for holistic, cross-sector collaboration. Many of the participants expressed enthusiasm to keep coming together to collectively work on the most promising of the ideas and opportunities. In 2022, Build It Green is hosting working groups to keep the dialogues that emerged from Building Our Future going. Click [here](#) to learn more about what is happening now.



A snapshot of the Building Our Future whiteboard that participants used for introductions, visioning, and collaboration.

What we heard at Building Our Future:

"I definitely took away some reflections on how we can be doing more on resiliency and regeneration, and on different perspectives that people have on [housing] that call out the need for more education."

"I find it very inspiring and exciting to come together with such diverse stakeholders with so much [expertise] on a wide range of interconnected topics! We HAVE to work together to make change. We have so much to learn from each other and there is SO MUCH potential in this 'room.'"

"This event made me more hopeful for the future, despite the urgency of our issues, because of all the people I met who are actively involved and working to solve climate, housing, and community problems."

Centering on Equity

“Blockbusting, the subsequent loss of home values when speculators caused panic, the subsequent deterioration of neighborhood quality when African Americans were forced to pay excessive prices for housing, the resulting identification of African Americans with slum conditions, and the resulting white flight to escape the possibility of those conditions all had their bases in federal government policy.”

Richard Rothstein's Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America

For generations, systems related to housing have discriminated against individuals on the basis of their identities—race, gender, and physical ability are just a few examples. Acknowledging this history and the continued marginalization of these identities is a critical first step in Build It Green's efforts to shape a housing realm that can support the needs of all Californians. In particular, BIG commits to:

- Deepen our understanding of systemic bias and racism, both in our communities writ large, and within the housing system.
- Shift decision-making power and resources to the communities in which we work, especially in historically under-resourced communities and those who will be most impacted by climate change.
- Build a staff and leadership structure (e.g. board of directors, advisory boards, etc.) that are diverse and cultivating an internal culture that is welcoming and inclusive.
- Incorporate an equity lens into our approach to regenerative neighborhood development. Our programming will be responsive to, and reflective of, community needs and priorities and will expand access to the resources and tools BIG provides. We will also apply an equity lens to our internal policies and processes.
- Listen to, and learn from, those most impacted by housing inequities.
- Be transparent and accountable to the communities with which we work.

We welcome partners who share our commitment to the values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Build It Green will evolve as we embrace these commitments and, as we do, the commitments we make to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion will also evolve. In the spirit of transparency, we will update our commitments as they change.

Elevating Voices & Places

Over the past year, BIG has been inspired by the stories of individuals and organizations centering social, environmental, and community needs in their housing and development work. We are committed to amplifying these innovators by sharing their transformative work with our audience.



Community Changers

featuring Julia Hatton, President and Executive Director of Rising Sun Center for Opportunity



Julia talks to us about workforce development and how her organization helps women, individuals impacted by the justice system, and other community members build stable careers in construction. [Read the full piece [here](#).]



Regenerative Insights

featuring Watts Rising

Watts Rising is a neighborhood improvement project in Los Angeles that received funding from the Transformative Climate Communities program in 2019. Its subprojects, which range from greening efforts to transportation improvements, continue to bring employment and capacity-building opportunities to residents. [Read the full piece [here](#).]





Image credit: Sundry Photography | iStock

Creating Impact

In 2021, Build It Green’s work yielded substantial impact. We embraced our new approach, providing a credible and accessible venue for learning, peer collaboration, and resource-sharing. But that wasn’t all. Through the GreenPoint Rated program, BIG continued to set the standard for green, healthy homes in California and beyond.

Learning and Peer Sharing for Impact: Panel Upgrade Group

California is moving at full speed in its push for housing decarbonization, especially electrification, but it is clear that upfront costs and confusing processes have created major barriers to implementation. Home electrical panels are a perfect example—half of California homes need a panel upgrade before electrification is possible, and others require careful planning to avoid those upgrades. Either way, it can be a slow, complex, and expensive process making electrification unattainable for many homeowners and renters. We had the opportunity to speak with residential electrification practitioners and advocates about this challenge, and through these conversations, arrived at a question: what if there was a way to streamline the process, reduce costs, or avoid the need for an upgrade altogether?

BIG hosted 20 electricians, consultants, energy researchers, utilities employees, and practitioners to come together around this topic, and it didn’t take long for the Panel Upgrade Group (affectionately known as PUG) to form. This energetic team is currently focused on identifying barriers presented by code, standard practices, and differences in local requirements. They are also exploring ways that data-sharing, peer-learning, and power-efficient technologies can help simplify upgrades or encourage electrification that doesn’t require them. We are happy to be supporting the PUG as they continue their work to drive home electrification forward.

GreenPoint Rated Program

In 2021, due to the hard work of 81 accredited GreenPoint Raters, the GreenPoint Rated (GPR) certification program achieved:



9,221
HOMES

Earned GPR Certification in 2021



Equivalent of **19,364**
METRIC TONS CO₂ AVOIDED



4,211
CARS OFF THE ROAD

89,444 Homes Certified Since 2008



FUN FACT:

89,444 is approximately the number of homes in Fremont, the fourth-largest city in the Bay Area.

Certified Professional Network

BIG provides practical training for people who design, build, verify, and review green, resource-efficient homes. These homes are not only healthier for the people who live in them, but also for the neighborhoods in which they reside and the planet as a whole.

In 2021, we welcomed 87 new certified building professionals to our community. We also provided professional development webinars and training to 387 attendees. Topics ranged from our Certified Green Building Professional and GreenPoint Rated training programs to several educational events: 2019 Energy Code for ADUs, All-Electric for Builders, and Applying Regenerative Principles at Work.

Special Thanks

HOUSING SYSTEM DEEP DIVE & BUILDING OUR FUTURE PARTICIPANTS

Insights from dozens upon dozens of leaders, thinkers, and doers in the housing system informed Build It Green’s work in 2021 and have shaped BIG’s understanding of California’s housing landscape. We wish to thank everyone who has shared their knowledge, wisdom, and opinions including, but certainly not limited to, the following:

*Note: Conversation Catalyzers helped kick off our dialogues in our Building Our Future event by seeding the conversation with a story from their own personal or professional experience. Their names are recognized in **bold**.*

Katie Ackerly
Ken Alex
Pamela Allen
Jessamyn Allen
Nabihah Azim
Teresa Baker
Jason Baker
Leila Banijamali
Bronwyn Barry
Panama Bartholomy
Nikki Beasley
Louise Bedsworth
Ricardo Benavidez
Rob Bennett
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Amélie Besson
Stephen Bickel
Julia Branco
Adam Briones
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Diandra Lawrence
Robyn Leslie
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Jan Lindenthal
Bill Lindsay
Tony Liou
Alison Littman
Jeremy Liu
Rebecca Long
Fathia Macauley
Jorge Madrid
Matt Maloney
David Mar
Elaine Marshall
Christopher Martin
Craig Martinez
Bruce Mast
Lenore McDonald
Teron Marie McGrew
Andrew McNamara
Ben Metcalf
David Meyer
Carmelita Miller
Saharnaz Mirzazad
Maura Mooney
Sarah Moore
Anu Natarajan
Rafi Nazarians
Vu-Bang Nguyen
Greg Nickless
Ryan O’Connell
Cheryl O’Connor
Elizabeth O’Donoghue
Abhijeet Pande
Daniel Parolek
Ray Pearl
Mick Penn
Howard Penn
Eve Picker
Denise Pinkston
Shelley Poticha

Rebecca Prozan
Darin Ranelletti
Bill Reed
Mathew Reed
Matt Regan
Rafael Reyes
Stephanie Reyes
Sam Ruben
Khanh Russo
Srinidhi Sampath Kumar
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Natalie Sandoval
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Stephen Selkowitz
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Sarah Shull
Mad Stano
Ben Stone
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Donald Simon, Wendel Rosen LLP
Maggie Ullman & Mia Arter, Ullman Consultants
Brian Wilson
Tim Youngs

“Build It Green is embracing its role as a convener and connector, knowing that to achieve a regenerative future, individuals across the housing system must work together holistically. New potential will emerge as diverse perspectives, experiences, and talents unite around the shared aim of community and ecological well-being.”

- Karen Kho, Board President



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