

EXHIBIT I

GROUNDWORK USA



Climate Resilience in Action

Through the Climate Safe Neighborhoods program, Groundwork Trusts are developing multi-pronged strategies to reduce the impacts of climate change through community-led restoration and resilience projects. Each Trust is working on both small-scale, but widespread mitigation projects that provide short-term relief to those that need it most, while simultaneously working on large-scale systems change programs that can reshape the environmental landscape. Below are examples of this work in action that can be scaled with additional support.

Elizabeth, NJ - Managing Flood Waters

In Elizabeth, NJ the dated stormwater management system is prone to flooding – particularly in low-income communities have not received equitable investments in system upgrades. Additionally, the density of impermeable pavement leaves residents disproportionately vulnerable to flooded streets, backyards, and basements. Groundwork Elizabeth (GWE) is working at the municipal level to advocate for upgrades to the stormwater systems and working locally to install green infrastructure to help residents reduce the impact of flooding in and around the city. For example, at the Elmora branch of the Elizabeth Public Library, an area prone flooded roads, GWE constructed a variety of green infrastructure projects including the installation of a centralized drainage system, a rain garden, and 55-gallon rain barrels. One of Groundwork Elizabeth's goals is to demonstrate the outsized impact of these relatively low-cost installations on flood mitigation and to install these features on private and public properties across their community in hopes of cumulatively reducing stress on the current stormwater management system.

Yonkers, NY - Reducing Extreme Heat and Flash Flooding

In Yonkers, NY, the Groundwork Hudson Valley team is taking a multi-pronged approach to mitigate both extreme heat and flooding in areas of the city they have identified as disproportionately vulnerable and lacking in the infrastructure to keep their residents safe. They are conducting several larger-scale land reuse projects, such as [restoring the riverbank](#) along the Saw Mill River by removing invasive species and planting native willow trees to mitigate erosion and manage runoff, and are conducting more targeted landscaping projects at Municipal Housing Authority properties. These landscaping projects include planting trees and installing shade structures to provide residents with safer places to gather than their non-air conditioned apartments and installing rain garden, shrubbery, and drainage systems to reduce localized flooding.

Cincinnati, OH – Orchards & Climate Resilience

Cincinnati's Lower Price Hill, a majority African American and Appalachian low income neighborhood, is disproportionately vulnerable to extreme heat and localized flooding, exposed to a lot of air pollution, and is considered a food desert. To address these intersectional challenges, Groundwork Ohio River Valley, is transforming vacant lots into small orchards with a variety of fruit trees as a way to increase access to fresh fruit at no cost to residents and create new cooling green spaces with air quality benefits.

San Diego, CA – Restoring the Watershed

While the Chollas Creek used to be a place of recreation and connection for the neighboring communities, systemic neglect and divestment led to polluted waterways and frequent flooding that has destroyed property and caused sewage backups in abutting properties. Groundwork San Diego is committed to restoring the former beauty of the watershed region through short and long-term improvements. To help mitigate the impact of flash flooding, they are conducting frequent cleanup and dumping days to dissuade residents from disposing of large items in the creek bed. Additionally, they have worked with a large cross-sector coalition to successfully have the Creek officially recognized as municipal infrastructure – unlocking funding for systemic improvements and restoration projects. Lastly, they have been leading efforts to create multi-use walking, biking and education trails alongside the Creek and fitting them with water management and solar features to restore connections between the community and waterway while increasing climate resilience.



Groundwork USA
Advancing Climate Resilience Action
Proposal to the CO2 Cy Pres Settlement Fund

THE OPPORTUNITY

In low resourced urban neighborhoods, residents often face daunting intersecting environmental challenges that impact quality of life and wellness: brownfields and other neglected lands and waterways are common; access to parks and playgrounds, grocery stores, complete streets, and other healthy living infrastructure is limited; and the legacies of systemic disinvestment, poverty, and racism are daily realities. These difficulties are compounded by the disproportionate impacts of climate change on neighborhoods already struggling with environmental neglect. Communities of color and low-income communities are often hit first and worse by extreme weather events and have the least resources recover in the aftermath.

While the task of repairing the environmental harms of the past may seem daunting, the good news is that many solutions to these challenges already exist. To begin to make progress, residents of these communities need champions, guidance, and strategic investments in community-driven solutions that fit their unique needs. By providing this support, we can accelerate restorative actions, address environmental disparities, and increase health, well-being, and resilience for thousands of people living in environmental justice communities.

THE APPROACH

The Groundwork USA network includes 22 locally-based, independent non-profits, Groundwork Trusts, that work hand-in-hand with residents to address the legacy of environmental injustice and advance health, equity, and resilience. Nationally, Groundwork USA builds the capacity of Trusts through strategic national initiatives that enable Groundwork Trusts to collaborate to achieve greater impact and create national models for change rooted in equitable development best practices.

Partners have the option to work with Groundwork USA and the network in three ways:

- Sponsorship of Groundwork USA's strategic national initiatives such as Climate Safe Neighborhoods – for those seeking broad impact on environmental harms through a collaborative initiative.
- Sponsorship of the expansion of Groundwork USA's strategic national initiatives, like Climate Safe Neighborhoods, to new communities – for those seeking to support existing programs in new regions.
- Sponsorship of a national programmatic focus areas – for those seeking national impact in a particular program area such as climate resilience, heat island mitigation, urban forestry, urban gardening, and parks and trail creation, etc., in multiple communities.



PROPOSED SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Based on our shared interest in restoring the environment in environmentally harmed communities, you can find below three potential sponsorship options meet the pressing and urgent needs of our grassroots partners.

Option 1 – Strengthening The Climate Safe Neighborhood Partnership

The Climate Safe Neighborhoods partnership brings together nine Groundwork Trusts to identify climate solutions that mitigate the impacts of climate change based on an exploration of the origins of today’s risks in historical race-based housing segregation. Groundwork Trusts are working to find solutions to two of the deadliest impacts of climate change – extreme heat and urban flooding. While extreme heat and flooding impact millions of people, the costs of a changing climate are not shared equally – formerly redlined neighborhoods are on average 4.5° hotter than their non-redlined neighbors. Through this partnership, Groundwork Trusts are working closely with residents and stakeholders to organize, mobilize, and effect systems change to address inequities in vulnerability to the climate crisis. Current participants include:

- Groundwork Denver (CO)
- Groundwork Elizabeth (NJ)
- Groundwork Hudson Valley (NY)
- Groundwork Milwaukee (WI)
- Groundwork Neighborhood Revitalization Group (Kansas City, KS)
- Groundwork New Orleans (LA)
- Groundwork Ohio River Valley (Cincinnati, OH)
- Groundwork San Diego (CA)
- Groundwork Southcoast (MA)

The Need

While large-scale change will be necessary to address the root causes of this inequity, communities are already feeling the impacts of the changing climate. Groundwork Trusts are urgently working to identify immediate solutions to reduce the impact of climate-related extreme weather events alongside the pursuit of long-term systems change. **With your support, we would be able to expand the efforts of our partners to address the inequities in climate change impacts by implementing community-driven mitigation measures that provide relief in the near term and have an outsized long-term impact on quality of life and resilience.**

Your Potential Impact

Your support would go directly towards the implementation of climate resilience infrastructure to mitigate the impact of extreme heat and flooding on the lives of the 1.3 million people living in climate-vulnerable neighborhoods in participating Groundwork cities. Your investment would support:

- **Identifying Climate Mitigation Measures:** Using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to identify both short and long term mitigation measures that increase climate resilience within the context of unique community needs. Our program seeks to identify solutions with the highest ROI



on community health and quality of life while addressing the root causes of environmental disparities across neighborhoods.

- **Community Engagement for Climate Action:** Structuring and implementing programs to engage community members in identifying risks, proposing solutions, and realizing change in their local environment.
- **Climate Mitigation Projects:** Implementation of community-identified solutions to mitigate the impact of climate-related extreme heat or flooding. These are most often investments in greenspace, stormwater management, and urban forestry. Fully funded, we would be able to tackle at least one large-scale resilience project in each community.

Our Funding Need

With an investment of **\$4M over the next three years** we would be positioned to fully execute on our vision for increasing climate resilience in our current Climate Safe Neighborhoods communities.

Option 2: Expanding The Climate Safe Neighborhoods Partnership

The Need

To ensure the successful implementation of the Climate Safe Neighborhoods framework, each participating organization commits to a three-year program that includes start-up funding, GIS technical assistance, individualized coaching, cohort learning opportunities, and funding for climate resilience demonstration projects. Interest in the Partnership – from within the Groundwork network and beyond – far exceeds our ability to provide the support necessary to ensure a successful launch. Tackling the scale of the climate crisis is going to require an all hands on deck effort. **With your support, we would be able to expand the partnership and provide the tools and training to support additional frontline communities.**

Your Potential Impact

With an investment of \$250,000 over three years, you can fully support the participation of a new organization in the Climate Safe Neighborhoods Partnership. The first organization on our waiting list is Groundwork Jacksonville. Your support has the potential to address the climate resilience needs and improve the quality of life for approximately 110,000 people living in Jacksonville’s urban core. Specifically, your investment would support:

- Hiring of a Climate Safe Neighborhoods coordinator to lead the project in the city.
- Mapping of the present-day and predicted climate vulnerabilities and historic housing policies.
- Development and implementation of community engagement strategies that increase resident knowledge about climate vulnerabilities, available resources, and resident capacity to identify and advocate for solutions they’d like to see in their communities.
- Identification of short and long-term mitigation strategies to meet the specific needs of the community.



- Implementation of 2-3 demonstration projects designed to showcase the ROI of investments in this critical infrastructure.

Fully funded, we would have the capacity to expand the partnership by up to five organizations over the next two years. Now that we have successfully expanded this program across more than 50% of the Groundwork network, we are currently exploring opportunities to extend participation to additional organizations that have expressed interest. Support of this expansion would shepherd this initiative through the next stage of growth, putting the initiative on the national agenda, and provide the infrastructure for additional like-minded environmental organizations to adopt our model for developing and advancing a climate mitigation strategy across the country – potentially impacting millions of lives.

Our Funding Need

With an investment of \$1.25M over the next three years we would have the capacity to add five additional communities to the Climate Safe Neighborhoods Partnership.

OPTION 3: Emergent Environmental Action Fund

The Need

The lack of access to healthy greenspace and other climate resilience infrastructure is at the root of many climate, health, economic, and social challenges in Groundwork communities. While the majority of Groundwork Trusts are pursuing ambitious resilience agendas to increase access to greenspace, expand the tree canopy, and transform neglected or underutilized land into community assets, their progress is impeded not by a shortage of opportunity, but a lack of funding to 1) seed new projects, 2) support the robust community engagement efforts necessary to ensure the success of the project, and 3) ensure sustained follow-through on the community’s vision. **To help accelerate resilience action in vulnerable communities, we propose creating an Emergent Environmental Action Fund where Trusts can submit request for support to implement new greenspace resilience projects – restoring parks, planting trees, establishing community gardens, building new trails, etc. – or to fill gaps in existing programs to accelerate or scale the impact of their efforts – community engagement efforts, technology or infrastructure investment, etc.**

Your Potential Impact

These communities could include:

- California: Groundwork Richmond & Groundwork San Diego
- Virginia: Groundwork RVA
- New Jersey: Groundwork Elizabeth
- Florida: Groundwork Jacksonville

We currently serve approximately 650,000 residents in these environmental justice communities.



Our Funding Need

With an investment of \$1.75M over three years we would be able to implement transformative resilience projects in all five communities.

NEXT STEPS

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal from Groundwork USA. You can find attached to this proposal a document featuring examples of the different types of climate resilience projects that Groundwork Trusts are currently pursuing that have the potential to be scaled through this support. We are happy to provide additional details or more comprehensive project scopes as desired.

We look forward to continuing our conversations about our potential partnership!

Thank you.