

Building Blocks: Community Planning for Racial Justice**Presenter Bios****Jason Corburn, *Assistant Professor of Urban Planning, Columbia University***

Jason Corburn is an Assistant Professor in the School of International and Public Affairs and the Urban Planning Program in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. He teaches courses in planning practice, environmental risk and justice, land use planning and public health, and the science of sustainable development.

Corburn's research explores how "local knowledge" can improve decision making in urban planning, environmental science, and public health, while simultaneously enhancing deliberative democracy. Drawing from concepts and methods in public policy, urban planning, public health, and science and technology studies (STS), his work aims to integrate social justice into environmental health policy making from the neighborhood to the international scale. Corburn is also working with the San Francisco Department of Public Health, helping the agency design and run the Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment, a process linking urban land use planning and the social determinants of health. Finally, Corburn is working to build new theory and practices that can act as an alternative to conventional risk analyses, with the aim of making policy analysis more socially just, participatory, and attentive to persistent racial and ethnic inequalities.

Corburn is the author of Street Science: Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice (The MIT Press, 2005), which explores the role of local knowledge in science policy making and urban environmental health. Professor Corburn received his BA in politics from Brandeis University and a Masters in City Planning and a PhD in urban environmental planning from MIT.

Joseph H. Neal, *South Carolina State Representative, District 70*

Representative Neal is in his eighth term as Representative from District 70, in the South Carolina House of Representatives, where he also serves as the Deputy Democratic Leader. Rep. Neal has served on a number of House committees, including currently on the Rules and Ways and Means committees. Throughout his career, Rep. Neal has sponsored numerous pieces of legislation for improving the quality of life for all people, and he continues his battle to end predatory lending in South Carolina. Rep. Neal is also a member of the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus.

In addition to his impressive legislative service, Rep. Neal has served on the boards of several community organizations: NAACP (local), Chairman; South Carolina Fair Share, Inc., former board member; Founder, the Area Communities in Economic Development and the Rural Sumter Communities for Economic Development; Chairman, Citizens for Hopkins Neighborhood Associations; Co-founder, South Carolina Environmental Watch Network; Former co-chair, South Carolina Progressive Network, a statewide grass roots organization. He currently serves as a board member for The African American Environmental Action Network, a southern regional environmental rights organization.

As his “day job” Rep. Neal works as a Senior Consultant for New Horizons Systems of Columbia. Rep. Neal is a graduate of Benedict College. He also has studied at the Colgate School of Divinity, Rochester, New York, the Pittsburgh Theology School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and at the University of South Carolina.

Colette Pichon Battle, *Executive Director, Moving Forward Gulf Coast, Inc.*

A native of Slidell, Louisiana (located just north of New Orleans across Lake Ponchartrain), Colette Pichon-Battle is a dedicated and driven leader in her home region. She is the co-founder and Executive Director of Moving Forward Gulf Coast, Inc, a Louisiana-based non-profit that has provided direct disaster assistance, community development programs and community advocacy training in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. Her demonstrated leadership after Hurricane Katrina impacted communities throughout the Gulf Coast region: she developed direct assistance projects for Katrina survivors, partnered with and supported numerous organizations, and co-convened Operation Gulf Coast, a national coalition of private companies, concerned individuals, faith-based organizations and national non-profit organizations all dedicated to identifying the needs of the people of the Gulf Coast and developed programs that matched needs to available responses. Ms. Pichon Battle obtained her law degree from Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge and has worked in immigration law in Louisiana, Florida, and Washington D.C.

Maya Wiley, *Director, Center for Social Inclusion*

Ms. Wiley is the founder and director of the Center for Social Inclusion, a national policy advocacy organization which works to dismantle structural racism. A civil rights attorney and policy advocate with over fifteen years of experience, Ms. Wiley graduated from Columbia University School of Law in 1989. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Dartmouth College in 1986. She has litigated, lobbied the US Congress and developed programs to transform structural racism in the US and in South Africa.

Prior to founding the Center for Social Inclusion, Ms. Wiley was a senior advisor on race and poverty to the Director of U.S. Programs of the Open Society Institute, and helped develop and implement the Open Society Foundation -- South Africa’s Criminal Justice Initiative. She has worked for the American Civil Liberties Union National Legal Department, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. in the Poverty and Justice Program and the Civil Division of the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York.

She has served on the Boards of the Institute on Race and Poverty and Human Rights Watch. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Tides Network Board and as an advisory board member of Families United for Racial and Economic Equality. She is a contributing author to the National Urban League's 2006 [State of Black America](#), and has authored a chapter, *Race, Equity and Land Use Planning in Columbia, South Carolina* in the recently published [Growing Smarter: Achieving Livable Communities, Environmental Justice and Regional Equity](#), R. Bullard, ed. The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA (2007).