

Razing Liberty Square: What's Next

What is Climate Gentrification?

For decades, low-income urban neighborhoods and communities of color have faced systemic disinvestment due to redlining, white flight, and predatory lending practices. These neighborhoods, long overlooked by developers and policymakers, are now being targeted as prime investment opportunities by private real estate companies and wealthy newcomers. As private investment floods in, purchase and rent prices rise sharply, resulting in the [displacement](#) of intergenerational neighborhoods and an erasure of the neighborhood's cultural character.

This demographic and economic shift that displaces established working class communities of color in favor of wealthier newcomers is called [gentrification](#). In the face of climate change, a new and emerging threat has surfaced: [climate gentrification](#). Climate change has led to rising sea levels and shifting weather patterns, causing more frequent and severe weather events, and has put once desirable premium housing at risk of decreased property value and vulnerability. Wealthy developers and residents seek climate-safe property, which can displace long term residents, who in some cases have contributed the least to climate change and have fewer resources to insulate themselves from climate change impacts, forcing them to relocate to more hazardous areas of the community.

Colorado is no stranger to gentrification, with [Denver](#) recently ranked as the second most gentrified city in the U.S. In Eagle County, the housing crisis is particularly acute, as second-home buyers and rental investors outbid locals for available properties. Over [44%](#) of homes in Eagle County are either vacant or used by part-time residents, further tightening the already limited housing supply. This shortage has forced many workers to live outside the county and endure long commutes.

Statewide, temperatures have risen [2.3°F](#) from 1980 to 2022, with the Southwestern and South-central regions of Colorado experiencing the most significant warming. As temperatures continue to rise and the cost of living continues to increase, vulnerable populations—including those who struggle with housing instability and face long commutes—will be hit hardest. Compounding this issue are the increased risks posed by wildfires, droughts, and heatwaves, which further fuel climate gentrification.

What You Can Do

There are actions you can take to help fight climate change and gentrification right here in our local community!

- **Go Green Save Green**

Increasing the resiliency and efficiency of housing can make a big impact on the cost of living. Save money and reduce your energy bills by taking advantage of rebates to help make your home more energy efficient.

There are a variety of rebate options you may qualify for, and a [Walking Mountains Energy Coach](#) can help you navigate the process and find the best opportunities for your situation.

- [ReEnergize Eagle County](#): The program will coordinate and pay for home improvements up to \$7,500. Additional funds may be available from local utilities depending on home location and project details. This year, we aim to provide 66 homeowners free energy assessments and upgrades that enhance comfort, safety, and energy efficiency Families of four making under \$195,150 qualify, and you may, too!
 - Learn more about additional rebates through [Energy Smart Colorado](#) and the [Colorado's Weather Assistance Program](#)
- **Familiarize Yourself With The Eagle County Climate Action Plan**- Eagle County has an in-depth Climate Action Plan as well as teams that work closely to lower the emissions of Eagle County. The plan and associated goals can be found [here](#).
 - **Support Equal Opportunity Housing Efforts**- Eagle County is a relatively small community with highly sought after real estate, and there is a great disparity between the number of residents and the housing available. Eagle County [has several programs](#) for year-round locals looking for assistance purchasing or renting homes.

To learn more about the film, visit [Razing Liberty Square | Climate Gentrification Documentary | Independent Lens](#)