What a year 2020 was! An airless, isolating, and sometimes wrenching year. A surreal and occasionally triumphant year. It was the year we realized that the global ecological emergency manifests itself not just in superstorms and degraded landscapes but in infectious diseases as well: COVID-19, like so many species-jumping diseases before it, is a product of habitat destruction, wildlife trafficking, and shifting climate zones.

Now, as we finally approach herd immunity in the months ahead—in a headlong race between vaccination and viral mutation—we can also say it was a year of surprisingly large impacts for Sightline. Thanks to you, we were able to adapt swiftly and keep moving forward for the values you and I share. Those values, which Sightline has long defined as community, fairness, opportunity, and responsibility, are the organizing principle of this year’s report.

But the organizing emotion is something else. It’s gratitude. Your support and fellowship unleashed big wins for a sustainable Cascadia. We describe them in these pages.

Thank you!
Values we share, Results we celebrate

Here are Sightline’s core values—unchanged in decades—and highlights of how your support advanced them in 2020

COMMUNITY
We are all in this place together, sharing its burdens and benefits, rising or falling together. Sightline stands for strong communities.

The Portland City Council re-legalized middle housing (house-scale buildings with multiple units) on almost every residential lot in the Rose City, the culmination of a six-year effort Sightline helped to lead. It is the best low-density zoning reform adopted anywhere in the United States—a big step forward for affordability, desegregation, and decarbonization.

FAIRNESS
We stand for a well-governed economy that generates widely shared prosperity. We stand for public policies that support citizens equally.

Sightline contributed substantially to the Northwest Congressional delegation’s decisive support for $25 billion of federal rental assistance in the late December COVID relief package. The team published 15 articles on the topics and met with 16 members of the Congressional delegation or their staff. Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski was a key architect of the bill; we worked closely with her office on aid for renters.

OPPORTUNITY
We stand for a society that generates opportunity: where all can thrive and where everyone has a chance to flourish.

Within months of the coronavirus hitting the United States, Sightline’s Democracy team created state-specific guides to enhancing Vote By Mail options for all 50 states and distributed them to election officials and advocates. We focused on urging improvements in Cascadian and battleground states, and were gratified to see record high voter participation rates, driven in part by extremely high rates of voting by mail.

RESPONSIBILITY
Our way of life depends on a healthy natural heritage and strong public institutions. We stand for stewarding our inheritance well.

After many years of hard work, in January 2021, regulatory agencies denied key permits for both the Jordan Cove liquified natural gas project and the Kalama methanol project. We are especially proud of our work on the Kalama methanol project, where Sightline’s analysis of the project’s carbon footprint seems to have been instrumental to Washington State’s denial of the project.
Sightline in the news & online across Cascadia:

Sightline was quoted or cited in, or shaped the content of, 300 media stories in 2020.

We averaged more than 54,000 unique online visitors per month. Our total email and social media subscriptions grew to just over 85,500.

Sightline staff spoke at more than 22 events across the Northwest – both in-person and online.

PROFILE:
Ruchi Sadhir
Sightline Board Member, Volunteer

Finding a home in Cascadia.
My path led me to the Northwest in 2013, after a quarter-life crisis and subsequent career opportunities that awakened me to the fact that one could devote their professional life’s work to the environment.

I grew up outside of Pittsburgh, a place known for coal mining, steel production, unhealthy air and polluted waterways, and with immigrant parents from India who came to this country with little money but an advanced degree and strong ideals.

They championed education, especially for girls, and had a strong push for me to become a doctor, an engineer, or a scientist. I chose the path of engineer, though from my earliest science classes I developed a passion for the environment. With the dawn of the internet, I found myself joining chatrooms about saving the whales and stopping old growth clearcutting, and even organized my school’s first Earth club! My passions were largely a hobby, as I forged ahead in computer science engineering and then law.

The turning point for me was after a law clerkship supported by a public interest grant with the Environmental Defense Fund. Eventually, my work with the Obama Administration and U.S. Department of the Interior brought me to Oregon for a project in 2013, and, instead of returning to Washington, DC, I stayed on when I joined the Oregon Public Utility Commission as a senior policy advisor. Now, within my role as Associate Director for Strategic Engagement at the Oregon Department of Energy, I get to work on an equitable clean energy transition by applying data driven solutions, building coalitions, and implementing systemic change to support a healthy future in Cascadia.
I love that Sightline is focusing on democracy. For better or worse, I think politics is ultimately a reflection of all of us. Equitable democratic processes enable systemic change.

Crossing paths with Sightline.
During my time serving as Oregon Governor Kate Brown’s energy and climate change policy advisor, I had the opportunity to meet Kristin Eberhard (Sightline’s Director of Climate & Democracy). I was impressed with Kristin’s work and all I learned about Sightline and its mission. It was clear that we were working with the same stakeholders and on finding thoughtful solutions to the same issues. We had coffee to share ideas and networks—and from there it was a short path to getting more involved as a board member.

Supporting Sightline’s mission as a board member.
Sightline’s work completely aligns with my professional and personal values and efforts. The focus on data-driven solutions, coalition building—the sweet combination of analysis and building partnerships that provide perspectives that may otherwise not be a part of the political discourse.

Speaking to the current moment.
I love that Sightline is focusing on democracy. For better or worse, I think politics is ultimately a reflection of all of us. Equitable democratic processes enable systemic change. We need to see our votes and voices translated into policy. We need to do more and do it more quickly. At the same time, the process needs to be inclusive. I think a lot about who is going to be left holding the bag. We need to be really thoughtful so that we don’t end up with unintended consequences to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Lifting up the wider community.
In our philanthropy, in addition to the environment, Ralph and I ensure we include annual giving categories such as animal welfare, veterans, civil rights, and media (supporting a free press); as well as international welfare—depending on what’s happening in the world.

Looking ahead.
I have renewed hope after becoming a mom in 2020. I already had a lot of passion and drive—but now it’s amplified even more as my daughter Sahana Preet grows up. We named her Sahana Preet, in part because it means “powerful love”—exactly what the world needs right now. Our family loves living in the Pacific Northwest, its accessibility to the outdoors and nature. I want to go hiking, camping, snow shoeing, and kayaking with her and share the beautiful places in Oregon that I have come to love in living here.
Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2020

**ASSETS**
Cash and investments $4,933,874
Donations and grants receivable 3,000
Other assets 214,097
Total assets $5,150,971

**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**
Liabilities
Accounts payable and accrued expenses $300,324
Total liabilities 300,324
Net assets
With Donor Restrictions 1,001,861
Without Donor Restrictions 3,848,787
Total net assets 4,850,647
Total liabilities and net assets $5,150,971

Statement of Activities
For the Year Ended December 31, 2020

**REVENUE**
Grants $1,465,215
Contributions 652,758
Investment revenue 462,098
Fees for services and miscellaneous income 2,567
Total revenue 2,582,638

**EXPENSES**
Personnel expense 1,363,605
Contract services 483,311
Rent and operations 163,082
Other expenses 54,286
Total expenses 2,064,284
Change in net assets 518,354
Net assets, beginning of year 4,332,294
Net assets, end of year $4,850,647

**Change in Cash and Investments**
For the Year Ended December 31, 2020
Net change in cash and investments $896,641
Cash and investments, beginning of year 4,069,183
Cash and investments, end of year $4,965,824

These figures are preliminary and have not yet been audited by an independent accountant. For a copy of the audited financial statements, please contact Meaghan Robbins by calling 888-447-1880 ext. 110.