SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Legislative Summary

Res 31681

Record No.: Res 31681 **Type:** Resolution (Res) **Status:** Adopted

Version: 2 **Ord. no:** **In Control:** City Clerk

File Created: 06/08/2016

Final Action: 08/17/2016

Title: A RESOLUTION establishing the shared city and community goals and strategies of the Equity and Environment Agenda as City policy and a critical aspect and foundation for all environment and sustainability work in Seattle.

	Date
Filed with City Clerk:	8/17/2016
Mayor's Signature:	8/16/2016
Vetoed by Mayor:	
Veto Overridden:	
Veto Sustained:	

Notes:

Sponsors: O'Brien

Attachments: Att A – Seattle Equity and Environment Agenda

Drafter: sudha.nandagopal@seattle.gov

Filing Requirements/Dept Action:

History of Legislative File **Legal Notice Published:** ☐ Yes ☐ No

Version:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Mayor	06/14/2016	Mayor's leg transmitted to Council	City Clerk			
	Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was Mayor's leg transmitted to Council. to the City Clerk **Notes:**						
1	City Clerk	06/14/2016	sent for review	Council President's Office			
	Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was sent for review. to the Council President's Office **Notes:**						
1	Council President's Office	06/20/2016	sent for review	Energy and Environment Committee			
	Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was sent for review. to the Energy and Environment Committee **Notes:**						
1	Full Council	07/05/2016	referred	Energy and Environment Committee			

2	Full Council	08/01/2016	referred	Sustainability and Transportation Committee	
2	Sustainability and Transportation Committee	08/02/2016	adopt		Pass

Action Text: The Committee recommends that Full Council adopt the Resolution (Res).

Notes:

In Favor: 2 Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Johnson

Opposed: 0

2	Full Council	08/08/2016	adopted		Pass

Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was adopted by the following vote, and the President signed the Resolution:

Notes:

In Favor: 8 Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Burgess, Councilmember González , Council President Harrell, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember O'Brien

Opposed: 0

2	City Clerk	08/12/2016	submitted for Mayor's signature	Mayor
2	Mayor	08/16/2016	Signed	

Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was Signed.

Notes:

2	Mayor	08/17/2016	returned	City Clerk
2	City Clerk	08/17/2016	attested by City Clerk	

Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was attested by City Clerk.

Notes:

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION 31681

..title
A RESOLUTION establishing the shared city and community goals and strategies of the Equity and Environment Agenda as City policy and a critical aspect and foundation for all environment and sustainability work in Seattle.

..body
WHEREAS, The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies; and

WHEREAS, across the United States, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil; and

WHEREAS, in 2009 the City of Seattle established the Race and Social Justice Initiative through Resolution 31164, affirming the City's race and social justice work and directing City departments to use available tools to assist in the elimination of racial and social disparities across key indicators of success, including health, education, criminal justice, the environment, employment and the economy, and to promote equity within the City workplace and in the delivery of City services; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 Mayor Murray issued Executive Order 2014-02 affirming his intention to continue the direction of the Initiative, and directing City departments to incorporate a racial equity lens in citywide initiatives and policies such as legislation to increase the minimum wage, efforts to ensure affordable housing, coordinated planning for equitable growth and development, and equity areas including the environment; and

WHEREAS, Seattle is a national environmental leader and the STAR Community Rating System (STAR), which evaluates the livability and sustainability of U.S. communities, awarded

Seattle the highest rating of 5 STAR, the area where Seattle showed the greatest room for improvement was environmental justice; and

WHEREAS, communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, and limited English-proficient individuals tend to live, work, play, and learn in specific geographic areas in Seattle, and communities in these geographic areas are highly impacted by socio-economic and environmental challenges including the impacts of air pollution, industrial polluters, major roadways, heavy industrial polluters, food hardship and food deserts; and

WHEREAS, residents in these geographic areas have a 48% higher asthma risk than the rest of the city; and

WHEREAS, 58% of the population living within one mile of the Lower Duwamish Superfund boundary are people of color; and

WHEREAS, despite the increasing racial diversity in the U.S., people of color make up only 12 to 16 percent of those working in environmental organizations, foundations, and government agencies; and the City faces many of the same challenges as the broader United States environmental movement, including that those who shape and benefit from environmental policies and outcomes are primarily white, upper-income communities; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 Mayor Murray launched the Equity and Environment Initiative (EEI) to deepen Seattle's commitment to race and social justice in the environment and to advance three primary goals: All people and communities benefit from Seattle's environmental progress; communities most affected by environmental injustice are engaged in setting environmental priorities, designing strategies, and tracking progress; and people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, and individuals with limited-English

proficiency have opportunities to be part of and leaders in the environmental movement; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 the Mayor convened a sixteen person Community Partners Steering Committee (CPSC) to ensure that those most-affected by environmental inequities would lead in creating the goals and strategies of the Equity & Environment Agenda and guiding community conversations; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 and 2016 the CPSC members engaged in community conversations with people of color, immigrants, refugees, youth, limited-English proficient individuals and people with low incomes to create an Equity & Environment Agenda jointly held by the City and Community; and

WHEREAS, the CPSC is steadfast in the pursuit of Environmental Justice, redefining environment as not just the natural environment, but also where communities work, worship, play, learn and live; and

WHEREAS, the CPSC believes in environmental solutions that connect to and create economic and educational opportunities so that all communities can thrive. To do this necessitates addressing past systemic injustice while creating proactive, transformational solutions for the future; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. The City of Seattle recognizes the need to lead by example and for government, community, and philanthropy to work together to advance the Equity & Environment Agenda so that all benefit from Seattle's environmental progress. The City of

Seattle adopts the following goals as a critical aspect and foundation for all environmental and sustainability work in Seattle:

Healthy Environments for All: Seattle intends to ensure clean, healthy, resilient, and safe environments in the places where communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low-incomes, youth, and limited-English-proficiency individuals live, learn, work, and play. Environmental policies and programs should: leverage community assets; address cumulative impacts of multiple environmental hazards, social, economic and racial burdens; prepare communities to adapt to climate change; increase access to healthy food; and support connections between residents, workers, government agencies, and industries.

Jobs, Local Economies and Youth Pathways: Communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low-incomes, youth and limited-English proficiency individuals have pathways out of poverty through green careers, including careers related to environmental policy and program development. Environmental policies and programs invest in young workers, youth pathways, prioritize local hires and small businesses, and create local, living-wage economies.

Equity in City Environmental Programs: Communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with low-incomes, youth and limited-English proficiency individuals should have equitable access, accountability, and decision-making power in environmental policies, programs, and services. These policies and programs should achieve universal environmental gains while maximizing benefits for these populations by building community wealth, leveraging cultural hubs, preserving affordable housing, and minimizing displacement.

Environmental Narrative and Community Leadership: The environmental movement should be led by and centered on the stories and experiences of communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and limited-English-proficiency

individuals. Environmental policies and programs should invest directly in the community, support community leaders, promote existing culturally appropriate environmental practices, and leverage the creativity of residents to find solutions.

Section 2. The City of Seattle also recognizes the need for a community-centric approach in implementing the Equity and Environment Agenda. The Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) is directed to work with the Department of Neighborhoods to develop an engagement strategy for these goals.

Section 3. OSE is directed to work with City departments, the City Council, Mayor's Office, and community stakeholders to advance the goals of this resolution and shall provide a report via presentation every 18 months to the City Council to demonstrate progress towards advancing environmental justice within City government and throughout the broader Seattle community.

Adopted by the City Council the 8th day of August, 2016, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this 8th day of August, 2016.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the 16th day of August, 2016.

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

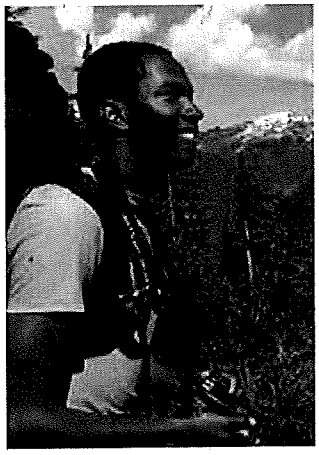
Filed by me this 17th day of August, 2016.

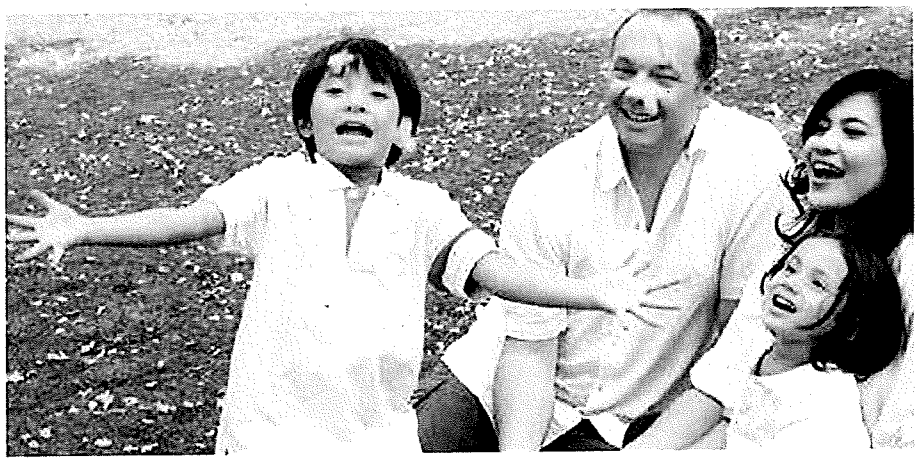
Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

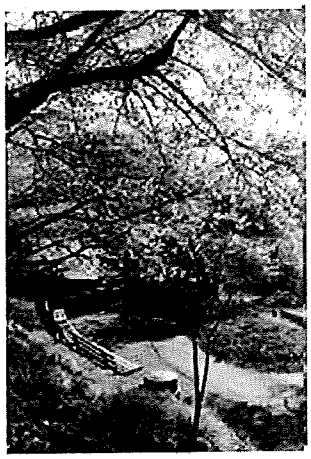
(Seal)

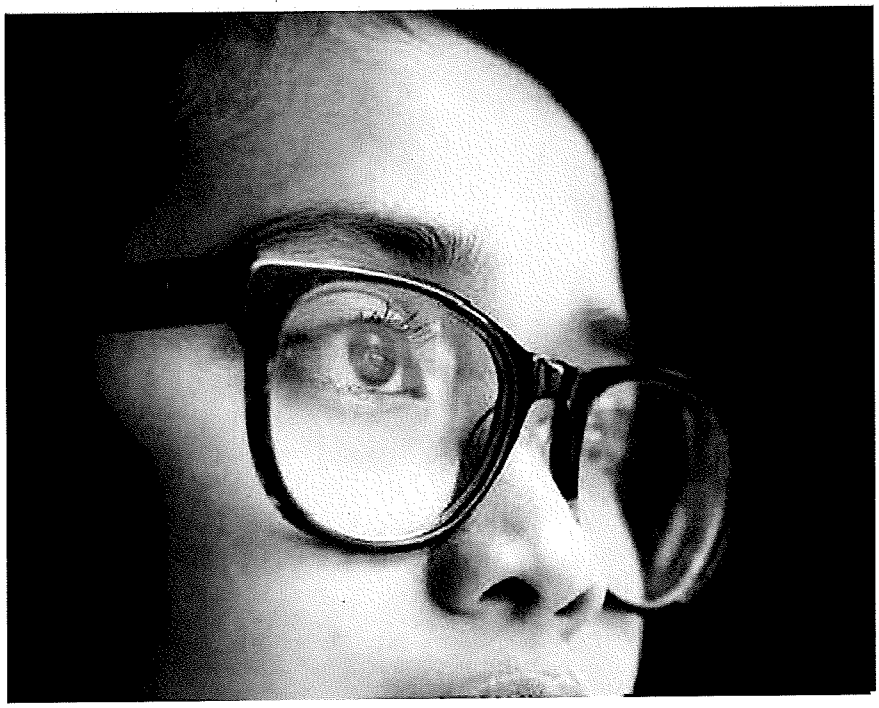
ATT A – Seattle Equity and Environment Agenda

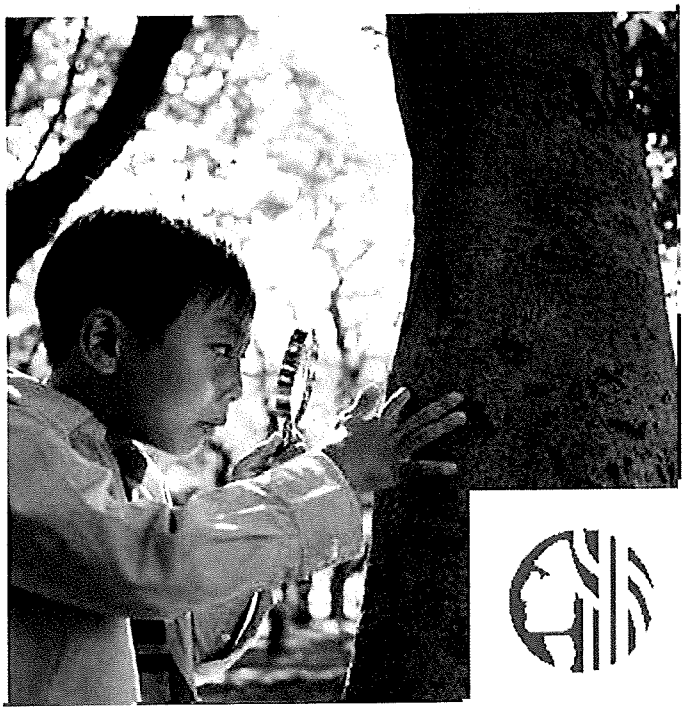
EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT AGENDA











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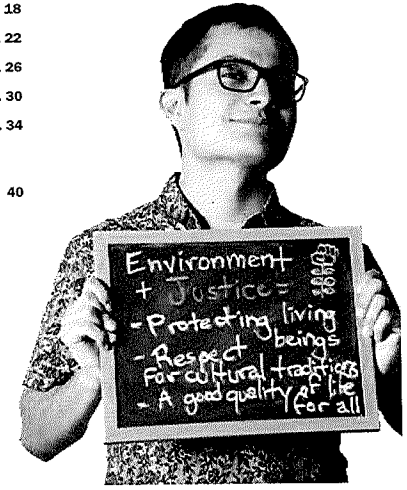
"Environmental Justice is the **fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people** regardless of race, color, national origin, or income..."

— Environmental Protection Agency



Message from Mayor Edward B. Murray

To my fellow Seattleites,

As a city surrounded by natural beauty, Seattle has long been a leader in protecting the environment. We have reduced pollution, cut energy consumption, and invested in public transit so that fewer emission-producing vehicles are on our roads.

These steps are critical to preserving our quality of life. But as we continue our work, we must protect this beautiful place for all of our diverse communities. Too often we see disparities in our lowest-income neighborhoods, where residents often deal with higher levels of pollution. They often face greater risk of severe health problems, and have limited access to healthy foods and open space. Yet, they benefit the least from our environmental progress. This is particularly true for communities of color.

The Equity & Environment Agenda is our strategy to address these disparities and ensure that everyone benefits from our progress. It reinforces Seattle's commitment to racial equity and social justice in our environmental work.

As we develop new environmental policies and programs, we will work with communities of color, immigrants, refugees, low-income residents, and people with limited-English speaking skills. We will ensure the people most affected by environmental injustices have a strong voice in finding the solutions.

In a rapidly-growing world, we face increasingly dire threats such as rising sea levels, air pollution, and tainted drinking water. In the Pacific Northwest, we already see the effects of drought on our forests, our hydroelectric power, and our water supply. It is important that we work together to address these challenges.

I would like to thank the Community Partners Steering Committee for its work on this Agenda. It gives us a good start. It will take all of us — policymakers, community leaders, environmental advocates, businesses, philanthropies and residents, to lead it forward.

Mayor Edward B. Murray
City of Seattle

Att A – Seattle Equity and Environment Agenda
V1

Dear Mayor Murray,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Equity & Environment Initiative's Community Partners Steering Committee. This first-of-its-kind Initiative that leads with the voices of those most-affected by environmental inequities is an exciting initial step to ensure thriving communities where everyone benefits from Seattle's environmental progress.

We know that while Seattle is rapidly growing and gaining recognition for our progressive policies, people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes and people with limited-English proficiency have not received equitable outcomes and often experience disproportionate harm. Addressing these challenges requires bold and systemic changes in our city policies, programs and practices. To advance environmental justice requires going further than policy recommendations; we must fundamentally change the way policies are created and prioritize historically excluded communities to have power in leadership and decision-making.

Through conversations with our community, we developed broad goals to create a unified approach for advancing environmental justice across our city and our region. The associated strategies and actions are intentionally ambitious — building a true commitment to racial equity in our environmental movement is no small task. A challenge of this nature — one that has ramifications for our city's future and for our communities' ability to mitigate, prepare for and adapt to climate change and other environmental issues — requires bold leadership and broad support from Seattle residents. To create a future that is just, we must build collectively, act with thoughtfulness and urgency, and take on the recommended near and long-term actions.

The Community Partners Steering Committee has dedicated our time, energy and passion to this Agenda and we have a deep commitment to the work of the Equity and Environment Initiative. We look forward to continuing to build our partnership with City leaders, other government agencies, mainstream environmental organizations, and the philanthropic community to advance this Agenda and ensure environmental justice for our communities.

Onward,

Jill Mangaliman
CPSC Co-Chair

Dionne Foster
CPSC Co-Chair

City of Seattle Equity & Environment Initiative

COMMUNITY PARTNERS STEERING COMMITTEE

Lylianna Allala
ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Yalonda Allen-Sinde
UMOJA P.E.A.C.E. CENTER

Lisa Chen
FEEST — FOOD EMPOWERMENT EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

Dionne Foster
PUGET SOUND SAGE

Abdullahi Jama
EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

Paulina López
SOUTH PARK RESIDENT

Jill Mangaliman
GOT GREEN

Nate Moxley
LETTUCE LINK - SOLID GROUND

Roxana Norouzi
ONEAMERICA

Alberto J. Rodríguez
DUWAMISH RIVER CLEANUP COALITION/TAG

Roshni Sampath
STATEWIDE POVERTY ACTION NETWORK

Jamie Marié Stroble
WILD PROGRAM — INTERIM CDA

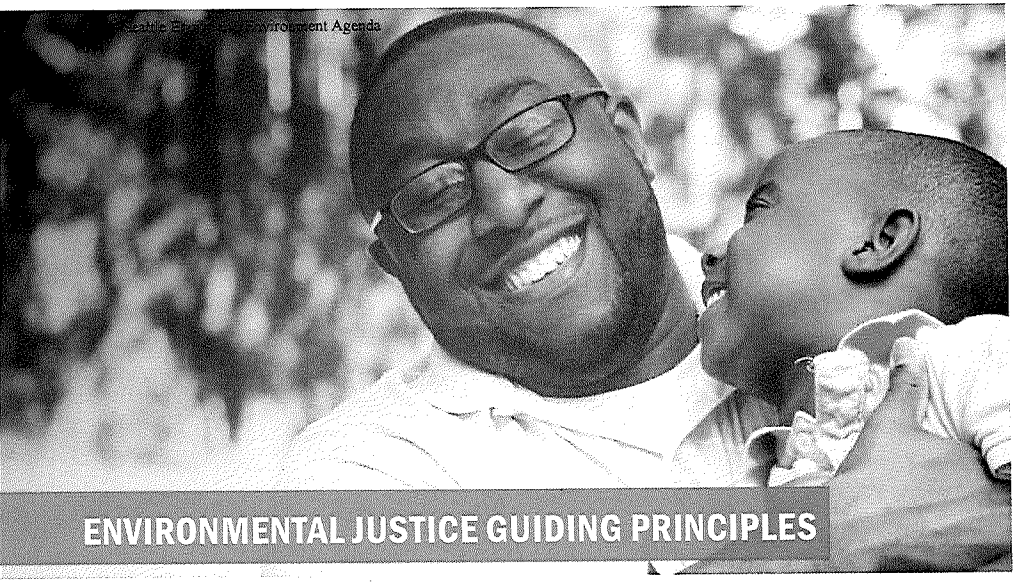
Leika Suzumura
RAINIER BEACH URBAN FARM AND WETLANDS - SEATTLE TILTH

José Manuel Vasquez
LATINO COMMUNITY FUND

Karla Wong
CHINESE INFORMATION AND SERVICE CENTER

Hamda Yusuf
POET AND UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON STUDENT

Approval of these recommendations is solely an expression of support from the individual CPSC members and does not constitute an endorsement by the organizations with which members are affiliated or complete agreement with all actions in this plan. Proposed actions reflect the diversity of community needs required to build a more holistic movement. CPSC members expressed enthusiastic consensus for the goals and strategies of the Agenda.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Developed and adopted by the **Community Partners Steering Committee** to guide the Equity & Environment Initiative.

We are steadfast in our pursuit of Environmental Justice, redefining our environment as not just the natural environment, but also **where we work, worship, play, learn and live.** We believe in a world that respects communities' histories and cultures, and that uplifts self-determination and full participation. We know that **communities of color** are creative, resourceful and resilient, and deeply care about the environments in which they live. Given that, we believe in environmental solutions that connect to and create economic and educational opportunities so that all communities can thrive. To do this necessitates addressing past systemic injustice while **creating proactive, transformational solutions** for the future.

We are collectively committed to achieving environmental justice through the following principles:

Community Driven Strategies

We believe in community self-determination, influence and leadership. We know that communities are resilient and resourceful, and that tapping into their own collective cultural cornerstones of environmental sustainability is key to ownership of initiatives and other efforts, as well as reducing invisibility.

The Influence and Decision-Making of Those Most Affected

We believe that communities who are deeply affected by environmental issues should be highly involved throughout decision-making processes in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways.

Strong Accountability

We believe that affected communities deserve strong, accountable, transparent, accessible, and culturally appropriate solutions that include ongoing oversight of government and other entities to address the negative impacts they have experiences.

Solutions That Recognize Complexity and Interdependence

We believe in doing no harm, here or anywhere. We recognize that all places and people are interconnected, and commit to an approach of collective liberation, which recognizes that the liberation of each person is the liberation of all people.

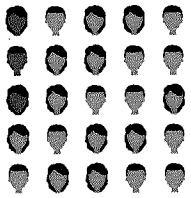
INTRODUCTION

The City of Seattle has long been a pioneer in the environmental movement. Though the City has made great strides to be green, it faces the **same challenge as the broader US environmental movement**: it is primarily white, upper-income communities that shape and benefit from environmental policies, approaches, and outcomes.

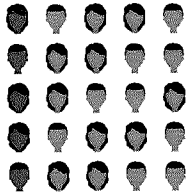
Across the US, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil.[1]

Additionally, the demographics of our country, state, region and city are changing rapidly. This issue is more important than ever. According to Pew Social Trends:

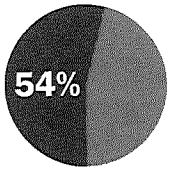
2005: 1 in 8 Americans was an immigrant



2050: 1 in 5 Americans will be an immigrant



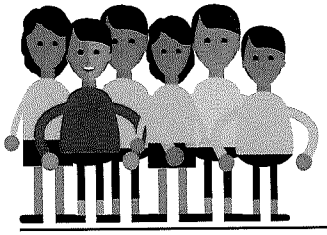
2040: 54% people of color in Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metro area[2]



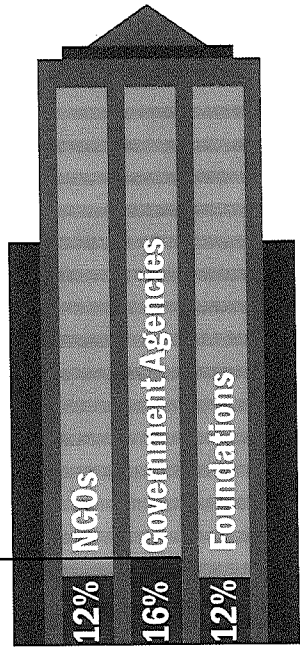
[1] Bryce Covert, "Racism and Discrimination Race Best Predicts Whether You Live Near Pollution," The Nation, February 18, 2016, http://www.thenation.com/article/race-best-predicts-whether-you-live-near-pollution/

One reason environmental justice concerns often go unaddressed is because of the "green ceiling": those who are most impacted are underrepresented in environmental agencies and government. Despite the increasing racial diversity in the United States, **people of color make up only 12% to 16% of those working in environmental organizations, foundations, and government agencies,**[3] a percentage that has been in place for decades.

Systemic and institutional racism continue to keep environmental benefits from reaching all people.[4]



The Green Ceiling
People of color have only ever made up 16% environmental jobs, across NGOs, Government Agencies, and Foundations.



[2] "Indicators: Race/Ethnicity Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area," The National Equity Atlas, 2016, http://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators
[3] Taylor, Dorceta, "The Challenge," The Green 2.0 Report, July 29, 2014, http://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/
[4] "[A] number of studies have reported increased sensitivity to pollution, for communities with low income levels, low education levels, and other biological and social factors. This combination of multiple pollutants and increased sensitivity in these communities can result in a higher cumulative pollution impact." Cumulative Impacts: Building a Scientific Foundation, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Dec. 2010, Exec. Summary, p. ix, http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/cipa123110.html

CREATING THE EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT AGENDA

To deepen the connection between race and social justice and the environment in Seattle, Mayor Ed Murray launched the Equity & Environment Initiative (EEI) in April 2015.

The cornerstone of the first year of the Initiative is the creation of an **Equity & Environment Agenda**, jointly owned by the City and community. Mayor Ed Murray appointed sixteen leaders to serve on the first-of-its-kind **Community Partners Steering Committee** (CPSC) to ensure that those most-affected by environmental inequities would lead in creating the Agenda. The CPSC's primary role was developing the framework of the Agenda, including the goals and strategies, and guiding community conversations.

The EEI focuses on those most affected — communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth and limited-English proficiency individuals — to lead on solutions.

No single organization can reverse environmental injustices or ensure equitable environmental benefit. Only by engaging government, philanthropy, historically white-led environmental organizations and communities most impacted can we create change at scale.

The Equity & Environment Agenda provides goals and strategies which serve as a roadmap for sectors to work together to advance environmental equity in Seattle.

It serves to increase awareness of the issues and opportunities, spur collaboration across sectors, and identifies opportunities for the **City to lead by example.** It also recognizes that many City environmental programs are "historically white-led environmental efforts." The City employs hundreds of environmental staff and spends substantial resources on environmental programs which creates significant opportunity for action. **The Agenda is a call to action** for the City as well as other government agencies, historically-white led environmental nonprofits, philanthropy and business partners to collaborate with communities of color to address environmental justice.

The Agenda will be implemented, and continue to take shape, over time as the City, community and other entities work individually and in partnership to advance these goals. The City of Seattle will assume a leadership role by taking action within government and by creating new partnerships. Others will use this Agenda to chart their own path to increasing environmental equity.

A Community-Centric Approach

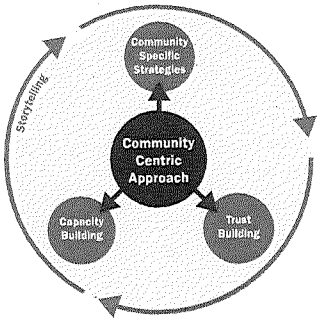
The CPSC led community engagement conversations to lift up ideas and actions for the Equity & Environment Agenda. A crucial part of this work is building new and lasting partnerships between government, foundations, historically white-led (HWL) environmental organizations, and people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and limited-English proficiency individuals.

The CPSC has worked to broaden the conversation about environmentalism in Seattle to the larger community, at community celebrations, in living rooms and at kitchen tables, and on the street.

This is the beginning of equity in action.

CPSC engagement with HWL environmental organizations and city staff in this process revealed an opportunity for a shift in the environmental movement more broadly. The traditional movement has focused on natural and built environments. Incorporating an **environmental justice lens creates greater complexity for HWL organizations.** In particular,

- HWL organizations equate access with equity. While access is important, equally important is the **redefinition** of the movement's **environmental analysis** to **prioritize issues of equity**, and environmental justice such as health, economic opportunity, culture, community leadership and communities of color-defined issues and solutions.
- Given the tendency to filter information through one's own experiences, there is a need to continue to develop HWL organizations', and government lenses to **align with communities of color.**
- There is significant support and interest from government and HWL organizations to **develop more inclusive environmental programs** to overcome barriers and integrate programs with community priorities to deliver multiple benefits. There is also excitement for delivering economic opportunity to those most-affected and investing directly in areas where these communities live.



Environmental Justice in Seattle — What we heard from Community

Many Seattleites, and especially communities of color, call the Chinatown-International District, Beacon Hill, Rainier Valley, Rainier Beach, South Park, or Delridge home. Within these neighborhoods, established residents and new arrivals have worked together to create vibrant and diverse communities. But because they also live near highways and heavy industry, residents in these neighborhoods face the greatest impact of a multitude of environmental hazards. These **impacts are further exacerbated by racial, social and economic burdens.** As communities of color move to other areas of our city, and populations grow in areas such as Lake City and north Seattle, it is critical to proactively bring these communities into environmental progress.

> "It's a very poor neighborhood and we are surrounded by all of these factories."
>
> — Community member, Latino Community Fund

Community members expressed concerns about the interplay of multiple environmental hazards, toxics such as lead, indoor and outdoor air quality, diesel exhaust, noise pollution, proximity to polluted sites, litter, illegal dumping, lack of green space, climate change impacts, displacement, and lack of affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate food. Many also noted that existing regulations and programs tend to focus too narrowly on a single pollutant at a time and fail to address the compounding impacts of other environmental hazards and exacerbating issues of poverty, education issues, racial discrimination, public safety, displacement and gentrification.

Many immigrants and refugees shared that their experience of the natural environment in Seattle is substantially better than their countries of origin and they expressed enthusiasm for strong environmental policies. Yet we as a community still have much work to do to provide healthy and safe environments in which to work, play, and raise our families.

> "I have to drive to a different neighborhood to take [a walk]. The sidewalk does not exist in my neighborhood and has poor pavement."
>
> — Community member, East African Community

STORYTELLING FOR CHANGE

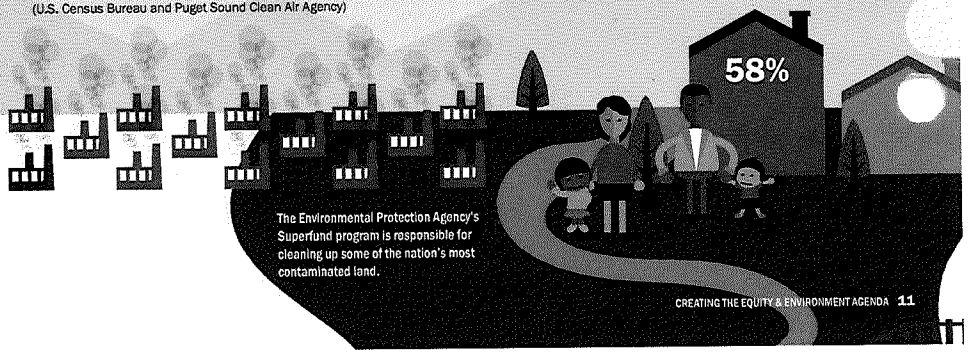
Many **communities of color have strong story-telling cultures.** Through the sharing of personal stories, not only are community members actively engaging, they are doing so in ways that are familiar and culturally appropriate. **Connecting the themes** of the stories **to data and policy** builds a more comprehensive perspective on community issues, leadership, and solutions. Community members shared that stories helped them express the complexity and interconnectedness of their experience of environmental and other issues.

Hazardous Sites

13 of the 14 heaviest industrial polluters are located within half a mile of the places where communities of color, immigrants, refugees and low income residents live.
(U.S. Census Bureau and Puget Sound Clean Air Agency)

Lower Duwamish Waterway

58% of the population that lives within one mile of the Superfund boundary are **people of color.**
(U.S. Census Bureau and EPA)



The Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated land.

Trust Building

The first step to realizing equity is building trust. Many community members have expressed a wariness of government and environmental organizations. Some struggle to participate in environmental programs because they are undocumented, or because they have limited English proficiency.

> "It is hard to participate when we don't speak English and a lot of meetings are in English."
>
> — Latino community member, South Park Neighborhood

Others expressed that their distrust stems from a history of raising concerns and having them go unaddressed. Many discussed the difficulties of addressing issues in a complaint-based system. For instance, in a conversation with East African community members, one resident noted that she was unsure whether she could trust the reports and tests by government officials that her water was safe from contamination. She and others drink bottled water rather than public water, despite annual water quality reports that show Seattle has some of the highest quality drinking water in the nation in terms of purity and taste. Stories of this kind are not unique to public water.[5]

Community Power & Leadership

Community members believe that the most effective solutions come from the community itself. They shared their need for resources to collaborate, make decisions, support existing leaders, build power, and identify new leaders to support their communities on environmental issues.

> "[We need] community-controlled climate resiliency planning. We believe in the self-determination of our communities and already have visions and plans on what makes us resilient and healthy."
>
> — Community member, Got Green

[5] "Water Quality Annual Report," Seattle Public Utilities, Jan, 2014, http://www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/Water/Water_Quality/WaterQualityAnnualReport/index.htm

Economic Opportunity & Youth Pathways

Community members noted that environmental challenges are compounded by issues of low wages, under-employment, and often, unhealthy jobs. In particular, conversations highlighted the importance of **youth pathways for fostering tomorrow's leaders.** Many parents worry about drugs, violence, and the lack of culturally connected youth programs or skill-building opportunities for their children. **Therefore, environmental programs must also address:**

- Improvement of hiring practices, including expansion of local hiring
- Creation of accelerated pathways to leadership for people of color
- Support for those within the community to take on roles in environmental program and policy development
- Support of professional development including mentorship programs
- Connection with local economies
- Expansion of educational opportunities and job training
- Development and promotion of green job opportunities
- Development of paid internships for youth of color and opportunities for undocumented youth
- Development of green careers to support formerly incarcerated individuals
- Connections for youth to environment through art, food, skills-training
- Increased transit subsidies

> "We are part of the environment. So, a green job equals jobs helping people."
>
> — Community member, Environmental Professionals of Color

GREEN CAREERS — A HOLISTIC DEFINITION

Many residents are interested in **green careers** — those that are healthy for the people and the planet. Community members want to work in and develop **green businesses** — those that incorporate and support both culturally appropriate and environmentally friendly practices, such as:

- urban farming; growing and distributing local food
- waste-reduction
- alternative transportation, such as the construction of light-rail or other aspects of our transit system
- green energy and clean tech jobs
- policy/program positions in non-profits and government
- employment in fields, such as health care, education, or childcare, that could incorporate green practices.

Interconnectedness & Cultural Anchors

Many expressed the desire to see their experiences shape environmental priorities and to participate in programs in their own languages and through their own practices. Communities have strong cultural traditions and find that being able to **shape programs through art and music** allows for a more holistic approach to sharing their perspectives.

Community members expressed that their understanding of environmental issues as centered on the interconnectedness of community, culture, economics and business, art, nature, family, health, food, and education.

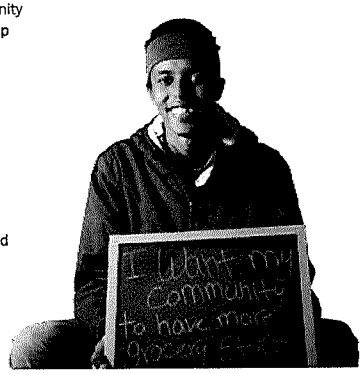
Community members would like more connectedness to environmental programs, focusing in particular on:

- Overall safety, including the improvement of streetlights and lighting at bus stops
- Public schools and grounds, which also serve as green spaces and cultural hubs
- Safe and maintained green spaces, such as gardens, parks, and playfields
- Community centers, community kitchens, and libraries, with more hours open and more programming that would connect youth, culture, environmental issues, and family
- Easy access to healthy, affordable food through farmers' markets, year-round markets, and groceries stores stocked with culturally appropriate food
- Intentional development in order to avoid housing scarcity, increases in rent, or the displacement of people or small businesses
- Easy access to public transportation and improved walkability
- Community-based organizations that would provide services to help community members understand how to integrate, connect with each other, and get help
- Integrating with English-language learning opportunities
- Incorporating art, music and cultural celebrations
- Educational curriculum that showcases community-based environmental practices and supports increased environmental stewardship

Many identified a need for increased **culturally-connected ways to learn about environmental programs** and to interact more regularly with city services. Community conversations indicated a need for strategies specific to various ethnic communities. While some sought more education, others expressed enthusiasm for partnering with the City and other organizations to advance environmental solutions.

"The mosque where we pray, have our roots there. The native food stores, East African food shops, diverse mix of people, cultures, and non-profits creates a cool community service for the neighborhood."

— Community member, Solid Ground



Food Deserts
There are food deserts in **South Park** and **Delridge**, both of which are neighborhoods with large populations of communities of color and low income residents.

Latino Communities
in King County experienced an increase in food hardship from **27%** to **41%**.

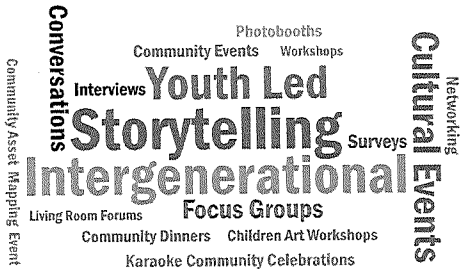
Key Findings from Communities of Color:

- Environmental work should increase community power, collaboration, and connectivity to government and mainstream environmental organizations
- There is historic distrust in communities. Working with (not for) community is critical moving forward
- The City needs a strong framework for advancing environmental justice
- There are concerns about environmental burdens such as indoor and outdoor air quality, toxics exposure, walkability, food insecurity, park safety, and transit service and how these intersect with racial injustice and challenges of economic and social conditions
- Environmental programs can and should support jobs, small businesses, and youth development
- There is underutilized expertise and interest in communities to design programs for everyone, deliver multiple benefits, and address community priorities
- The stories and experiences of communities of color must lead to Seattle's environmental work

[6] Compiled by Communities Count, "Social & Health Indicators Across King County," Communities Count, October 2015, September 2015, http://www.communitiescount.org/index.php?page=food

Over 800 community members from many different ethnicities and cultures participated in the development of the Equity & Environment Agenda.

Activities were as unique as the communities they engaged.



Languages:

Ethnicities and populations:

THE EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT AGENDA

A Call to Action for Government, Nonprofits, Philanthropy, Business and Community

The Community Partners Steering Committee has worked with the community and the City to develop the **Equity & Environment Agenda**. The **Goals, Strategies,** and **Opportunities for Leadership** came from the engagement process. Many specific actions that came up from community during the course of the Agenda creation will be available online and require additional scoping and stakeholder engagement to determine feasibility and implementation.

No single organization can reverse environmental injustices or ensure equitable environmental benefit. Only by engaging government, philanthropy, historically white-led environmental organizations and communities most affected can we create change at scale. The Agenda provides Goals and Strategies which serve as a blueprint for the City to lead by example and for sectors to work together to advance environmental equity in Seattle. While all the strategies have a role for the City, many require collaboration and partnership across the environmental movement to succeed.

Communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth and limited English-proficiency individuals tend to live, work, play, and learn in specific areas of our City. Targeted investments will likely be necessary to advance the goals and strategies of the Agenda in these geographic areas to address disparities, mitigate impacts, and share benefits while minimizing displacement. However, **geographic considerations should not substitute for race**, as many of the concerns of communities would persist even if they moved to a new location.

Specific cultural and population approaches that are not geographically-based must remain a priority, especially as communities move to new areas and new people arrive. Additionally, actions must focus on multi-generational approaches, especially the engagement of and support of youth.

All implementation in this work will require **consistent, creative engagement, with a feedback loop** between community and government as well as a focus on both the process of developing environmental programs/policies and on the end results.

The Agenda uses these shorthand terms:

EEI Focus Areas: The geographic areas where communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes and limited-English proficiency individuals tend to live. These areas are highly impacted by socio-economic and environmental challenges.

EEI Populations: Communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with low incomes and limited English-proficiency individuals. Youth from these communities are also a priority.

HWL Organizations: Historically white-led environmental organizations

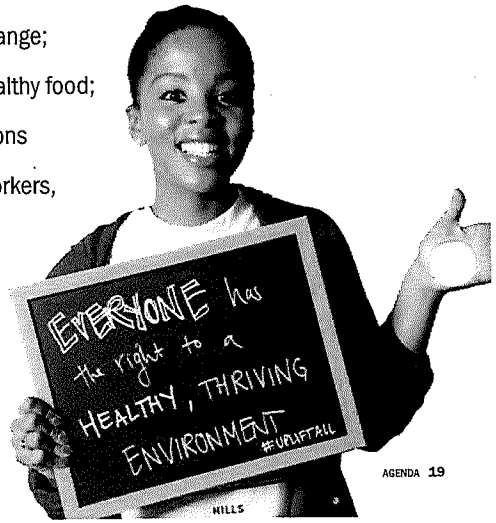
"When my car broke down, I took two buses and walked uphill to get all my groceries home, perishable items from EBT. The healthy stuff is heavy. It's hard to carry on the bus. And heavy groceries with my three year old kid, it was a source of stress."

— Community member, Solid Ground

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL

AIR, WATER, GREEN SPACE, FOOD, SAFETY & QUALITY OF LIFE

Seattle ensures clean, healthy, resilient, and safe environments in the places where communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low-incomes, youth, and limited-English proficient individuals live, learn, work, and play. Environmental policies and programs leverage community assets; address cumulative impacts of multiple environmental hazards, social, economic and racial burdens; prepare communities to adapt to climate change; increase access to healthy food; and support connections between residents, workers, government agencies, and industries.



HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL

AIR, WATER, GREEN SPACE, FOOD, SAFETY & QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGIES

1. **Develop an environmental justice screen/environmental equity assessment** to actively understand and begin to address multiple issues at the same time such as polluted soil, indoor and outdoor air quality, lead and diesel exhaust exposure as well as other identified hazards in EEI focus areas including residential areas near industry.

2. **Improve environmental and public health** and increase access to culturally appropriate fishing alternatives for the Lower Duwamish communities through partnerships with local, regional, and federal agencies.

3. Require projects that have significant environmental impacts to **complete the City's Race and Social Justice toolkit** in partnership with community.

4. **Creatively and proactively address historic and ongoing inequities** in access to and quality of green spaces, public transit, and fresh, healthy, culturally appropriate food while minimizing displacement.

"Public green spaces [should be] accessible to everyone. Not just parks, but community and cultural centers where people can gather."

— Community member, Got Green

"We want mentorship opportunities across all levels of career (entry, mid, and senior level) set up in workplaces. We want this to be the norm and not the exception."

— Community member, Environmental Professionals of Color

JOBS, LOCAL ECONOMIES & YOUTH PATHWAYS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL GREEN CAREERS

Communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low-incomes, youth and limited-English proficiency individuals have pathways out of poverty through green careers, including careers related to environmental policy and program development. Environmental policies and programs invest in young workers, youth pathways, prioritize local hires and small businesses, and create local, living-wage economies.

JOBS, LOCAL ECONOMIES & YOUTH PATHWAYS

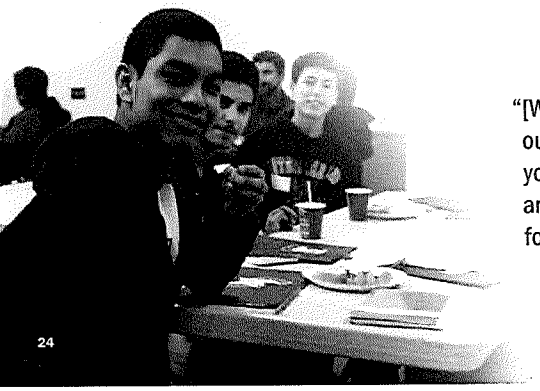
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL GREEN CAREERS

STRATEGIES

1. Ensure environmental policies/programs—both within City government and through partnership with other entities—**directly invest in EEI populations and their businesses and employees.**

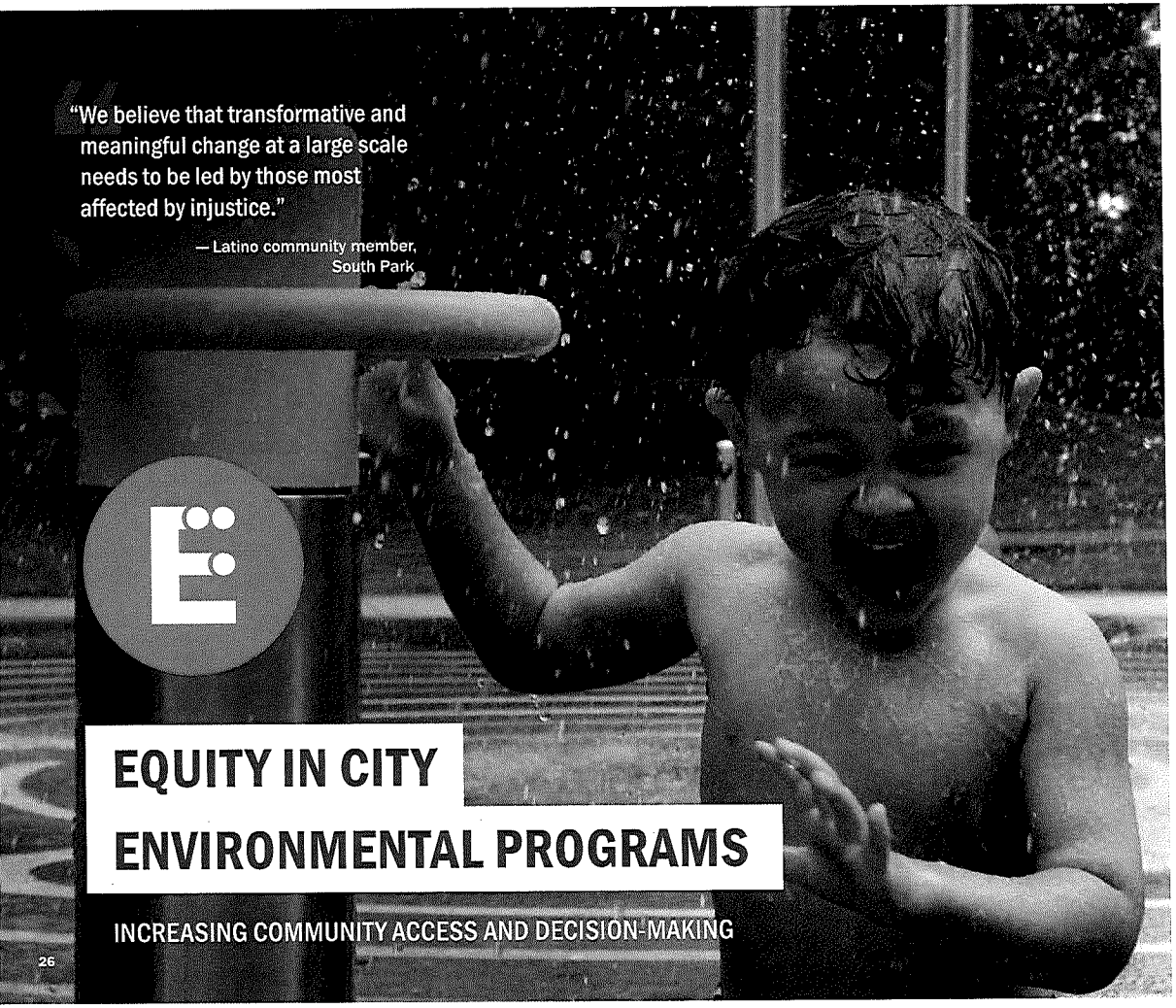
2. **Create pathways and support structures for people of color to lead** in environmental policy/program work through positions in government and partnerships with community organizations, businesses and other environmental entities.

3. **Create opportunities for young people to participate in environmental programs** and develop skills through engagement activities and decision-making opportunities.



"[We need] job training for our youth. We have A LOT of youth in our neighborhood and not too many activities for them."

—Latino community member, South Park Neighborhood



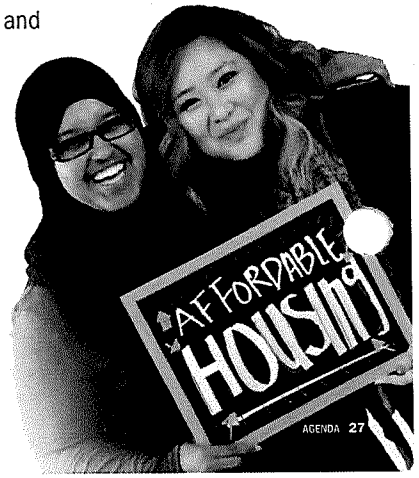
"We believe that transformative and meaningful change at a large scale needs to be led by those most affected by injustice."

— Latino community member, South Park

EQUITY IN CITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

INCREASING COMMUNITY ACCESS AND DECISION-MAKING

Communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with low-incomes, youth and limited-English proficiency individuals have equitable access, accountability, and decision-making power in environmental policies, programs, and services. These policies and programs achieve universal environmental gains while maximizing benefits for these populations by building community wealth, leveraging cultural hubs, preserving affordable housing, and minimizing displacement.



EQUITY IN CITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

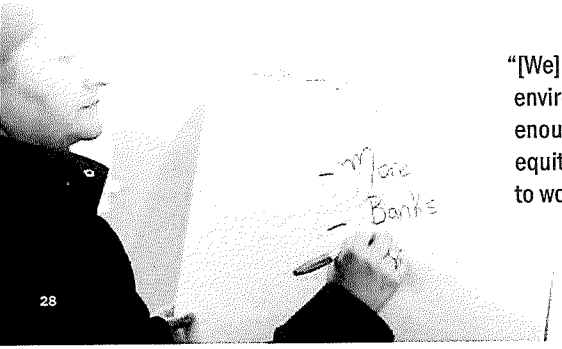
INCREASING COMMUNITY ACCESS AND DECISION-MAKING

STRATEGIES

1. Institutionalize structures for **community decision-making**, **transparency**, **leadership**, and **influence** on design of environmental programs and policies.

2. Refine City environmental policies/programs so that the distribution of individuals and grassroots organizations that participate in and benefit from these programs is **equitable and reflective of communities of color**, immigrants, refugees, people with low-incomes and limited-English proficiency individuals.

3. Design City environmental policies/programs to simultaneously address multiple community issues and include **economic and cultural benefits for EEI populations**.



"[We] understand that addressing environmental issues in isolation isn't enough — if we are to create more equitable, healthy communities, we have to work from these intersections."

— Community member, Puget Sound Sage

"We know that 'environmentalism' has a long history of exclusion; shifting the framing and language around environmental issues is an important first step in engaging our communities in environmental decision-making."

— Community member, Puget Sound Sage

ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVE & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

CELEBRATING STORIES AND INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

The environmental movement is led by and centered on the stories and experiences of communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth and limited English-proficiency individuals. Environmental policies and programs invest directly in the community, support community leaders, lift up existing culturally appropriate environmental practices, and leverage the creativity of residents to find solutions.

ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVE & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

CELEBRATING STORIES AND INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

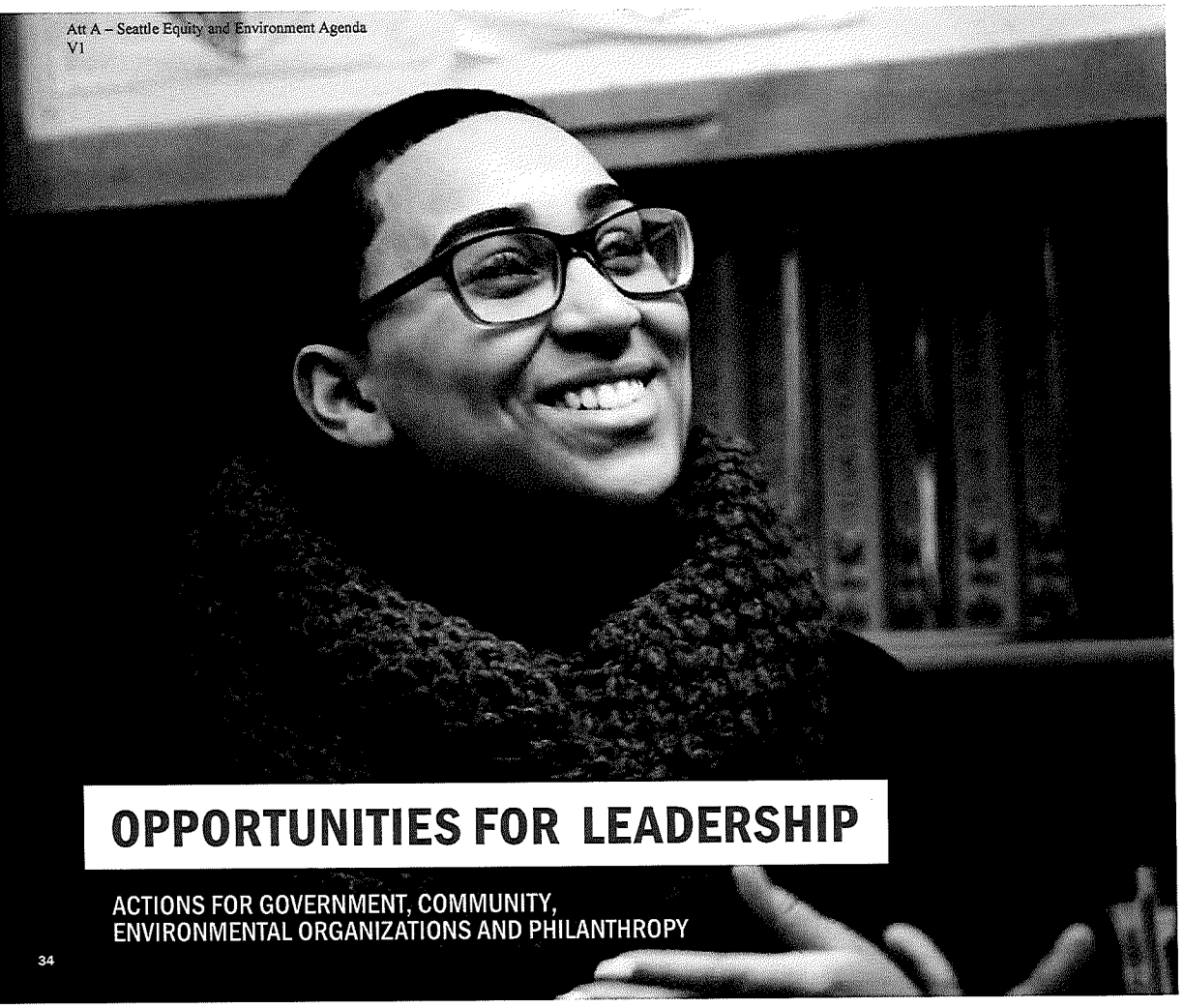
STRATEGIES

1. Support the growth and capacity of a **stronger ecosystem of environmental justice leadership** and collaboration between organizations.

2. Partner with EEI populations to collect and **connect stories and cultural experiences to a broader environmental narrative** to influence policy creation.

3. **Build partnerships with health care, retail, childcare, construction, custodial and other service industry workers** in Seattle to advance environmental progress.

4. **Connect environmental programs to cultural anchors** in ways that enhance those anchors, increase community capacity, and deliver environmental, social and economic benefits.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

ACTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PHILANTHROPY

The following community identified actions have significant support from community members as key opportunities to advance the goals and strategies of the Equity & Environment Agenda. These actions need strong and bold leadership from government, philanthropy, community and environmental organizations to begin to address the complex challenges of environmental justice in our region. While some of these actions only apply to City government, most are also opportunities where the City can lead by example and help create best practices for other partners to follow.

GOALS

- HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL
- EQUITY IN CITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS
- JOBS, LOCAL ECONOMIES, & YOUTH PATHWAYS
- ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVE & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

1. Environmental Equity Assessment/Environmental Justice "Screen"

Build on the existing equity assessments in the City and community to create a **cumulative impacts** assessment methodology that deepens understanding of the **interactions of multiple environmental hazards** rather than only a single pollutant at a time. The assessment or screen must further consider how issues of racial discrimination, lack of economic opportunity and other social conditions are exacerbating residents' and workers' exposures to environmental hazards. This will require partnerships with agencies such as Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and King County Public Health, as well as other city departments. This tool must be shaped through **community-based participatory research and include collecting community stories to augment data**. It should take into account community conditions (transit, housing, food access/insecurity, parks, air quality, sidewalks, climate resiliency, youth development, cultural hubs, etc.) and others to be determined.

IMPACT:
To create a methodology for assessing issues through a cumulative impacts lens, identify environmental justice issues to address, and ensure the community is actively involved in creating measurements and tracking progress of environmental equity.

2. Demographic Data Collection

Accelerate efforts to collect demographic data and evaluate programs, in order to better understand who is currently benefiting from environmental programs. Programs should collect disaggregated racial data when possible or analyze based on zip codes or program type to **understand if "city-wide" programs are truly accessible** or appropriate for all residents of the city. The City can lead by example in this area and other organizations should also explore best practices to collect and share demographic data about participants in their work.

IMPACT:
To provide complementary data to the Environmental Equity Assessment and understand if environmental programs are benefiting all communities.

3. EEI Focus Areas

Utilize the recommendations of the Equity & Environment Agenda to align work across local, state, and federal agencies, city departments, philanthropic communities, community-based organizations, and local environmental organizations to **target investments** in areas where EEI populations live, work, learn, and play. Prioritize building community capacity to reduce exposure to identified environmental hazards, and improving health issues due to those hazards, while increasing climate resiliency. Efforts should also increase community-ownership of solutions and create new environmental programs that **focus on avoiding displacement and alleviating poverty**.

This work can begin immediately in the Lower Duwamish Valley, using the community identified concerns from the EPA Superfund Community Involvement process. This could serve as an example for exploring ways to bring this approach to other EEI focus areas in the future.

IMPACT:
To guide the development of policies/programs to address cumulative burdens of environmental and socio-economic challenges.

4. Environmental Justice Committee

The Committee should be made up of individuals with expertise in **developing programs/policies with and for EEI populations** and connecting these communities with environmental issues. The EJC should **increase community ownership** of solutions by advising on new and existing environmental programs/policies, providing guidance on the implementation of the Equity & Environment Agenda, and advancing environmental justice policies. This committee should include one or two seats for youth participants, ideally with at least one participant who is 18 or younger.

IMPACT:
To ensure those most-affected by environmental inequities have ownership in decision-making, environmental program/policy design and Agenda implementation while enhancing partnerships with City departments and better connecting community-based solutions into government.

5. Environmental Justice Policy for the City of Seattle

Establish an Environmental Justice Policy to serve as **overarching guidance** for leadership and oversight of environmental issues in Seattle. This policy should also recommend new approaches for working with EEI populations and in EEI focus areas. The policy could further clarify how the City can utilize assessments to direct investments, address the interplay of multiple environmental hazards alongside racial, social and economic burdens and create opportunities for community leadership. This policy could also **address community benefits, accountability, transparency**, and delivering on community priorities during capital project design and implementation.

IMPACT:
To create a framework for environmental justice, influence action and increase accountability based on the needs of communities of color and the goals of the Agenda.

6. Career Opportunities for Communities of Color to Lead in the Environmental Movement.

Create mid-level opportunities that **accelerate leadership** such as a fellowship specific to those most-affected by environmental and racial inequities. For those with less professional experience, **increase connections to entry-level opportunities** including streamlining applications for paid internships. Additionally, examine internships to ensure that they are entry-level appropriate, provide mentoring and on-job training, and **pay a living-wage**. To build stronger pathways into careers in the environmental field for youth, programs must recruit in communities of color and partner with academic institutions such as community colleges to ensure that applicants have access to the training and certifications needed for specific internships. The city should lead by example with career opportunities, establish best practices for internships and fellowships that others can utilize and use the Agenda to encourage environmental organizations and green businesses to develop living-wage paid internships and leadership opportunities.

IMPACT:
To accelerate leadership and economic growth, and to address the "green ceiling" in the environmental movement.

7. Partnerships for Action

Government, philanthropy and private entities should collaborate to identify a strategy to **establish an ongoing environmental justice fund**. This fund would invest directly in work led by EEI populations to empower residents and community-based organizations to define and implement local, multi-year, environmental solutions. Efforts should invest in **capacity building, ongoing visioning, collaboration and community-defined solutions** to improve environmental and community conditions, such as climate preparedness, air quality, food insecurity, green jobs and other issues as identified in the Equity & Environment Agenda. The fund should prioritize innovative approaches that work across issue areas to realize multiple benefits that foster environmental stewardship, while connecting with other community issues.

IMPACT:
To create opportunities for transformative leadership through projects developed by communities that improve environmental conditions and advance multiple community-defined values.

8. Center Voices of Communities of Color

Develop partnerships with community, philanthropy, local government, and HWL organizations to launch a multicultural, multilingual unified framework that centers the experiences and stories of leadership of communities of color in the environmental movement. This umbrella framework should **celebrate cultural practices**, community-based environmental justice solutions and showcase creativity through media, art and music. This framework would guide government and HWL organizations in raising the **visibility of community-defined and led environmental priorities**. Utilizing story-telling and story-collection would also help community members connect more deeply into environmental work, support their leadership in this work, build more cross program understanding, and shift the information environmental programs use to analyze and approach problem identification and solutions.

IMPACT:
To reshape the environmental movement to focus on the experiences of people of color and build trust between communities, HWL organizations, and government by strengthening dialogue and supporting community-led action.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT

An Initiative of the City of Seattle

Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment