

# RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Office of Sustainability & Environment  
2015 Progress Report

Sustainability & Transportation Committee

June 21, 2016



# 2015 Accomplishments

## **Added staff and systems to embed equity**

- Hired Equity Manager and launched the Initiative
- Increased staff diversity – 4 out of 5 new hires are people of color
- Expanded size and scope of OSE RSJI team
- Added RSJ as agenda item to management team meetings

## **Utilized equity training and equity principles to guide work**

- Equity and climate justice training for climate preparedness interdepartmental team
- Equity & Environment Agenda development

# 2015 Accomplishments

## **Piloted engagement partnerships**

- Contracted with ~ 20 community organizations to reach communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, and people with limited-English proficiency
- Engaged close to 1,000 diverse community members

## **Made direct investments in communities of color**

- Increased Fresh Bucks use by 25% and new users by 2%
- Achieved 37% WMBE utilization for purchases and 6% for consulting services (statistics do not include contracts with many community-based organizations and individuals)

# Racial Equity Toolkits

- 1) **Equity & Environment Initiative:** Community-driven process to create the Equity & Environment Agenda
- 2) **Climate Preparedness:** Access to cooling facilities in extreme heat events
- 3) **Sustainable Buildings:** Building tune-ups policy development
- 4) **Urban Forestry:** Inclusive engagement to update to the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan

# Racial Equity Toolkits

## **OSE RSJI Team designed and facilitated process**

- All 20 staff participated in one of four teams
- Each team included subject lead and members of the RSJI and management teams
- Office-wide sharing

## **Common themes**

- Reach more diverse communities
- Engage with community as one City family
- Invest in relationships
- Confront data challenges
- Link work to anti-displacement/wealth creation

# Deep Dive: Urban Forestry

**Seattle's Urban Forest Stewardship Plan (UFSP) articulates our goals and strategies for protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the urban forest.**

**Racial Equity Outcome:** Engage people of color, immigrants & refugees, and low-income populations in update of the UFSP

- All residents have access to information about benefits of trees
- Seattle's urban forest services and benefits are equitably distributed
- Investments to plant and maintain 'public' trees are equitably distributed
- WMBE businesses have the opportunity to participate in maintenance/care of Seattle's urban forest

# Deep Dive: Urban Forestry

**OSE internal team:** urban forestry, green stormwater infrastructure, energy benchmarking, and equity

**Urban Forestry IDT:** urban forestry staff across City departments

Potential Benefits	Potential Burdens
Improved air quality and health outcomes	Increased property value may negatively impact renters
Stress reduction and well-being	Tree maintenance needs (raking, watering, pruning)
Reduced heat island effect and associated illness	Competing uses: solar access, daylight into buildings, perceived housing conflicts, garden space (shading)
Increased property value (benefiting owners)	Risk of falling trees or limbs
Jobs related to tree maintenance and/or tree preservation	Sidewalk heaving (safety and potential costs)

# Deep Dive: Urban Forestry

**The past Plan update process engaged stakeholders through meetings, open houses, and public comment but did not reach many RSJ communities so may not address the needs and priorities of those communities.**

## **Key Actions Moving Forward**

- Intentionally engage diverse communities
- Explicitly identify disparities and potential barriers
- Move from outreach to inclusive engagement
- Seek funding to implement partnership engagement
- Evaluate need for translation and interpretation services



# Deep Dive: Building Tune-Ups

**Legislation passed in March 2016 requires energy/water tune-ups on Seattle commercial buildings 50,000 sf or larger. The mandate will be phased in from 2018-2021, with largest buildings first.**

## **Racial Equity Outcomes:**

- All building users benefit from lower energy bills after tune-ups
- Reduced first-cost barriers to smaller building owners/tenants
- Fewer climate impacts on vulnerable communities from reduced emissions
- Better understanding of smaller/mid-size buildings regulated by our mandate
- Empowerment of a broader audience in the policy-making process

# Deep Dive: Building Tune-Ups

**OSE engaged many stakeholders around the Ordinance but was less successful in reaching building owners/businesses outside of trade organizations or associations. The RET process revealed a need engage a broader audience.**

## **Key Actions Moving Forward**

- Learn more about smaller buildings (50,000-150,000 sq ft), which may have fewer resources and greater needs for complying
- Engage smaller building owners and tenants in partnership with Department of Neighborhoods' POEL Program on costs/benefits/needs
- Use findings to inform the Director's Rule to specific barriers and challenges for smaller buildings