

## 2016 SPU Racial Equity Toolkit Application Overview

*The following is a synopsis of the 2017 four racial equity toolkit application submissions from SPU:*

### 1. Spot Drainage Program

The Spot Drainage program assists property owners experiencing problems resulting from right-of-way storm water that enters their property. The program depends on customers who report spot drainage problems, and due to under reporting from low income communities of color needs to better understand if it does not serve all customers equitably. The racially equitable outcome goal is for program staff to study patterns of reporting (using GIS), and to make program improvement to better serve communities of color.

### 2. Natural Drainage Systems (NDS) – Longfellow Creek Basin

Eligibility for NDS requires home ownership, capital for payment before reimbursement, and a desire to personally be involved in supporting environmental stewardship through on-property storm water management improvements. NDS has historically achieved greater support in wealthier, white neighborhoods, and the program needs to better understand how to overcome barriers to participation by persons of color. The racially equitable outcome goal would be racially diverse engagement and participation, reflective of the demographics of the neighborhood.

### 3. Drainage and Wastewater (DWW) Line of Business Ranking Criteria

Ranking criteria is used to prioritize fixes or otherwise strengthen the City's DWW infrastructure system. Until recently this process did not account for under reporting from communities of color, and the need to offset customer-generated data historically used (in-part) to determine DWW priorities. The racially equitable outcome goal is to include racial equity criteria in this prioritization process, and in the future expand its' use (with minor modifications) to other prioritization efforts within the DWW line of business.

### 4. Decentralized Systems

Traditionally, utility services have been provided through centralized systems that distribute water, drainage and waste water, and solid waste services via a city-wide treatment and distribution network of pipes or solid waste collection systems. Most decentralized or distributed approaches seek to replace or augment centrally provided services with site-scale facilities – in some cases, seeking to go completely off the grid. While still a tiny piece of the utility pie, these decentralized systems could, over time, have far reaching effects on the provision of utility services. The racially equitable outcome goal is to determine potential rate impacts to customers and to account for opportunities for underrepresented customers to participate in ways that work for them.



**4. Please describe up to five key actions – things that you will do differently or begin to do now – of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which will increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for people of color. (Max 300 characters each)**

1. Program will map and analyze complaints and overlay with demographic data, informal drainage, and problem areas irrespective of complaints so that they may identify areas of possible inequity in service.
2. Develop an internal FAQ for SPU staff (including Operations Response Center) who may receive complaints to consistently direct complaints to correct channels.
3. If inequities are uncovered, a comprehensive approach is needed that can be supported by available resources. This would include multi-lingual outreach materials.

**5. How will leadership ensure implementation of the actions described in question 4? (Max 800 characters)**

Leadership of the Engineering and Technical Services directed application of the RET to the Spot Drainage program. Next steps and recommendations outlined in the memorandum will be elevated to the One Team Executives. Follow up tasks that are within current program capacity are slated for implementation in Q1 and Q2 and tied to performance measures for the programs and its manager. These include mapping efforts and an FAQ for consistent routing of complaints.

**6. How have/will you report back to your stakeholders? (This includes the people who were directly engaged in this RET process, those who will be affected by decisions made, and other departments or divisions impacted by the RET findings and the actions described in question 4.) (Max 800 characters)**

The final memorandum outlining recommended next steps will be sent to all RET participants in Q12017, and to the SPU Executive Team. A portion of the recommendations extends to the Customer Service Branch and will need input and agreement from other SPU line of business leadership and work groups. A clear pathway on these action items has yet to be developed, but hopefully will be addressed this year.

**7. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation (i.e. working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity). (Max 800 characters)**

The need for a comprehensive approach to outreach regarding drainage infrastructure has been a recognized issue that requires elevation, resource allocation and support at the Executive level.



**Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) Summary Sheet: Cover Sheet and Questions**

*Please fill in below to identify the RET completed:*

**Department/Office:** Seattle Public Utilities – Drainage and Waste Water (DWW) Capital Projects  
**Name of policy, program, etc. analyzed:** Natural Drainage Systems Program – Longfellow Creek  
**Names and titles of key staff that led this RET process:** Vicky Raya, April Mills, Bob Spencer, Marieke Rack, David Goldberg (OCPD)  
**Dates of RET process:** 8/2016-10/2016

This Summary Sheet should be completed by those who worked on this RET with input from Change Team members and department leadership. Representatives from these different groups should review the final version so that there is consensus on content before it is shared with the Mayor's Office. Please fill out a separate Summary Sheet for each of the 4 required RETs that your department named in your director's Performance Plan with the Mayor.

For questions about using this Summary Sheet, please contact your OCR RSJI Liaison.

***Please respond to the following questions on a separate document (no more than two pages). Please include this page as the cover sheet along with your response.***

**1. List the racial equity outcome(s) that you set in Step 1 of the RET process. (Max 300 characters)**

Eligibility for NDS requires home ownership, capital for payment before reimbursement, and desire (messaging to mainstream audiences), to support clean water and environmental stewardship. NDS has historically achieved greater support in wealthier, white neighborhoods. A racially equitable outcome would be racially diverse engagement and participation, reflective of the demographics of the neighborhood.

**2. Which stakeholders (groups and/or key individuals) did you engage in this RET? In what ways did you engage them? (Max 600 characters)**

Engaged in RET application were the SPU service equity advisor, the project manager, communications lead and communications consultant, two capital projects coordinators, a representative from the Office of Sustainability & the Environment (OSE) and a representative from the Office of Community Development and Planning (OCDP) familiar with the Delridge neighborhood. Most of the team was engaged in the entire set of toolkit application meetings, except for the OSE representative who was only available for the initial meeting.

**3. Please describe up to five key benefits and/or burdens for people of color of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which the RET process helped you to identify or confirm. (Max 300 characters each)**

1. Flood control in a neighborhood that under-reports the problem.
2. Support for a SDOT walkability goal, generated by residents.
3. Internal acknowledgement that a standard 2% budget allocation is not adequate to engage a racially and linguistically diverse neighborhood.
4. Multiple pathways are needed for approaching site selection, design input, and location nomination by residents.

**4. Please describe up to five key actions – things that you will do differently or begin to do now – of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which will increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for people of color. (Max 300 characters each)**

1. Communications planning will account for language capacity, gender of outreach staff, and door-to-door outreach scheduling.
2. Ranking criteria for final siting will account for technical feasibility AND racial diversity. Racially equitable distribution of raingardens if those customers welcome it.
3. A recommendation that future projects allocate up to of 4% of their project's budget for outreach in racially-diverse neighborhoods.

**5. How will leadership ensure implementation of the actions described in question 4? (Max 800 characters)**

Executive leadership approval of the Business Case for NDS Longfellow requires signed commitment from the project team on a RET memo listing the tasks and recommendations outlined in question 4.

**6. How have/will you report back to your stakeholders? (This includes the people who were directly engaged in this RET process, those who will be affected by decisions made, and other departments or divisions impacted by the RET findings and the actions described in question 4.) (Max 800 characters)**

Most persons directly involved in this RET process are on the project team and they are involved in the next-steps as identified by this RET. SDOT is a partner on the NDS program and will be engaged by the project manager in planning and implementation. SPU Communications is including customer follow up as a component of their plan to notify customers on follow up if siting is accepted or explanation if declined.

**7. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation (i.e. working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity). (Max 800 characters)**

The two most salient issues revealed by the RET are:

- 1) the need for a programmatic RET before initiating individual projects; and
- 2) consideration of increased outreach budget allocation to account for challenges posed by the demographic profile of a neighborhood.





**Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) Summary Sheet: Cover Sheet and Questions**

*Please fill in below to identify the RET completed:*

**Department/Office:** Seattle Public Utilities-Drainage and Waste Water (DWW) Planning

**Name of policy, program, etc. analyzed:** DWW Ranking Criteria

**Names and titles of key staff that led this RET process:** Michael Davis, Joan Kersnar, Bruce Flory, Sego Jackson, Leanne Galati

**Dates of RET process** 9/2016 – 10/2016

This Summary Sheet should be completed by those who worked on this RET with input from Change Team members and department leadership. Representatives from these different groups should review the final version so that there is consensus on content before it is shared with the Mayor's Office. Please fill out a separate Summary Sheet for each of the 4 required RETs that your department named in your director's Performance Plan with the Mayor.

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**1. List the racial equity outcome(s) that you set in Step 1 of the RET process. (Max 300 characters)**

The racially equitable outcome goal is to determine potential rate impacts to customers and to account for opportunities for underrepresented customers to participate in ways that work for them.

**2. Which stakeholders (groups and/or key individuals) did you engage in this RET? In what ways did you engage them? (Max 600 characters)**

Because this effort is in the exploratory phase, only project team members and the sponsor were engaged. A RET orientation was held for project team members including an overview of the difference between equity and equality. There was a RET SME assigned to be part of the team and lead the application of the Racial Equity Toolkit and Stakeholder Analysis. Application of the RET requires knowledge of the decentralized systems including potential benefits and impacts

**3. Please describe up to five key benefits and/or burdens for people of color of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which the RET process helped you to identify or confirm. (Max 300 characters each)**

Application of the RET helped the team acknowledge the need to engage customers to understand the potential impacts and benefits for people of color.

1. The RET process helps to elevate the potential benefits and impacts to customers from decentralized systems.
2. Potential rate impacts may require significant cash upfront for customers to participate.
3. Decentralized Systems could be funded by developers could be passed to future users
4. Decentralized systems could create inequity in service delivery with some customers being able to buy into decentralized systems.
- 5.

**4. Please describe up to five key actions – things that you will do differently or begin to do now – of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which will increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for people of color. (Max 300 characters each)**

We are in the early phase of trying to understand the potential impacts and benefits of Decentralized Systems. We will work closely with the EJSE Community Partner Team to engage people of color and low income customers to determine if they are aware of and using decentralized systems. We will also engage Customer Programs staff to determine if they have the capacity to educate and provide support to customers regarding decentralized systems. We will also engage RainWise program staff to see where it is being implemented in the city and look at what they are doing to evaluate it.

**5. How will leadership ensure implementation of the actions described in question 4? (Max 800 characters)**

This effort is being sponsored by leadership in the Director's Office. The Policy and Performance director serves as the sponsor of this effort and the team is made up of staff from all lines of business. Project team members will work with their project manager to engage Customer Program staffs and other spu staff as needed. EJSE's Community Partners will be engaged to support customer engagement when we are ready.

**6. How have/will you report back to your stakeholders? (This includes the people who were directly engaged in this RET process, those who will be affected by decisions made, and other departments or divisions impacted by the RET findings and the actions described in question 4.) (Max 800 characters)**

The persons all directly involved in this RET process meet regularly and are involved in the next-steps as identified by this RET. The project sponsor is engaged on a regular basis to inform them of progress and to get input on priorities and direction.

**7. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation (i.e. working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity). (Max 800 characters)**

No additional racial equity issues have been identified. We know that we will learn of new racial equity issues when we are ready to engage customers to determine awareness, including potential benefits and impacts.



**Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) Summary Sheet: Cover Sheet and Questions**

*Please fill in below to identify the RET completed:*

**Department/Office:** Seattle Public Utilities-Drainage and Waste Water (DWW) Planning

**Name of policy, program, etc. analyzed:** DWW Ranking Criteria

**Names and titles of key staff that led this RET process:** Steve Hamai, Holly Scarlett, Don Anderson, Annalisa McDaniel, Helen Welborn

**Dates of RET process** 8/2017 – 12/2017

This Summary Sheet should be completed by those who worked on this RET with input from Change Team members and department leadership. Representatives from these different groups should review the final version so that there is consensus on content before it is shared with the Mayor's Office. Please fill out a separate Summary Sheet for each of the 4 required RETs that your department named in your director's Performance Plan with the Mayor.

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***Please respond to the following questions on a separate document (no more than two pages).***

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**1. List the racial equity outcome(s) that you set in Step 1 of the RET process. (Max 300 characters)**

Racial equity is built into DWW ranking criteria. The criteria is used to prioritize fixes or otherwise strengthen the City's DWW infrastructure system. As a result, DWW (non-emergency) will account for the socio-economic condition of communities, offsetting customer-generated data historically used in part to determine DWW priorities.

**2. Which stakeholders (groups and/or key individuals) did you engage in this RET? In what ways did you engage them? (Max 600 characters)**

Application of the RET requires knowledge of the DWW system and past decision criteria. Knowledge of DWW system performance, historical efforts to make improvements, and rules and regulations governing DWW infrastructure is also helpful. The team engaged a subset of internal SPU stakeholders including: DWW LOB Branch Management, Planning and Policy Programs, System Modeling, Regulatory Compliance, Capital Portfolio Management, CSO Program, and Water Quality and Drainage Programs. SPU affinity groups, the Office of Planning and Community Development, and the Creeks, Drainage and Wastewater Advisory Committee will be consulted for feedback on the criteria in 2018.

**3. Please describe up to five key benefits and/or burdens for people of color of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which the RET process helped you to identify or confirm. (Max 300 characters each)**

Application of the RET helped the team acknowledge, think-through, and identify a way to fix customer-driven influences on DWW planning and prioritization efforts.

1. Multiple datasets, including customer call complaints and customer damage claims, are used to help prioritize planning and capital projects.
2. Past prioritization efforts did not account for under reporting from low income communities of color.
3. This led to biases of 'squeaky-wheel' syndrome, where customers who complained the most were more likely to have their neighborhood prioritized.
4. This has been confirmed through past work the utility has conducted to study racial and socio-economic customer disparities, but at the time was not translated into actionable steps.
5. The RET process helped to engage and educate a broad swath of DWW staff to acknowledge this issue, with short and long term solutions going-forward.
6. As a more-immediate action, adding equity criteria offsets the influence of existing customer-generated data fields.
7. Engagement and education communities that under-report is a long-term strategy with multiple pathways needed.
8. Part of the long term strategy is the hiring of a new position to conduct DWW outreach (funded and staffed in late 2016).
9. Universal and segmented customer engagement strategies are in development now, and will begin mid-2018.

**4. Please describe up to five key actions – things that you will do differently or begin to do now – of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which will increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for people of color. (Max 300 characters each)**

The new prioritization criteria is expected to become standard in 2018 and can be applied (with minor modifications) to different prioritization efforts within the line of business. As a result, equity criteria is an expected and embedded item within this process, creating fairness for communities that under report problems in the prioritization process. Roll-out of an inclusive customer engagement strategy is expected mid-year.

**5. How will leadership ensure implementation of the actions described in question 4? (Max 800 characters)**

Leadership in the DWW Line of Business sponsored this effort. The Manager of the DWW System Planning Unit participated in early beta-testing of the new criteria. As a final 'product' the new criteria was presented to top-level DWW management, including the DWW Planning and Program Management Director and DWW Line of Business Deputy. Although not yet scheduled, a presentation of the new criteria may be provided to the DWW Branch Equity Team. Full adoption of the criteria is expected to occur in 2018. As a 'standard' item, any future changes (to either modify or eliminate the equity criteria) will have to go through a vetting process to include EJSE staff.

**6. How have/will you report back to your stakeholders? (This includes the people who were directly engaged in this RET process, those who will be affected by decisions made, and other departments or divisions impacted by the RET findings and the actions described in question 4.) (Max 800 characters)**

The persons all directly involved in this RET process are within the same DWW division, and they are involved in the next-steps as identified by this RET. The plan to engage eventual users of the new criteria has not been developed, as the focus is (now) on developing a user-guide. The guide will include specific reasoning and direction on the inclusion of equity criteria. Drafts of the guide will be shared with end-users for feedback. As a successful 'product' it is hoped that this criteria can be shared with other departments, and can be used when jointly working to make improvements within the right-of-way.

**7. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation (i.e. working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity). (Max 800 characters)**

Under-reporting from low income communities of color in regard to infrastructure system performance is more than likely a universal issue for all utilities. We benefitted from a recent study of customer Damage Claims data, which helped compel the organization to think about under-reporting and ways to (both) improve reporting and account for current conditions. Future partnership opportunities with other similar City departments (in particular SDOT and SCL) should be encouraged, including examination of data as well as developing multi-department supported outreach strategies (encompassing all City utilities).





City of Seattle

## Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) Summary Sheet: Cover Sheet and Questions

*Please fill in below to identify the RET completed:*

**Department/Office:** Seattle Public Utilities – Project Delivery and Engineering (PDEB), Engineering and Technical Services

**Name of policy, program, etc. analyzed:** Spot Drainage Program

**Names and titles of key staff that led this RET process:** Vicky Raya, Michael Brennan, Justin Twenter, Don Anderson, Joseph Herold

**Dates of RET process:** 8/2016 – 9/2016

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**1. List the racial equity outcome(s) that you set in Step 1 of the RET process. (Max 300 characters)**

The Spot Drainage program assists property owners experiencing problems resulting from right-of-way drainage that enters the property. With actions as a result of RET application, staff can understand if this program does not serve all customers equitably due to under reporting from low income communities of color. The goal is for program staff to improve drainage services for communities of color.

**2. Which stakeholders (groups and/or key individuals) did you engage in this RET? In what ways did you engage them? (Max 600 characters)**

Participation in the RET application for this program requires knowledge of program scope and capacity, technical knowledge of drainage infrastructure and possible fixes, understanding of criteria for complaint ranking and operations and maintenance (O&M) experience of customer interface. The SPU service equity advisor, program manager, line of business representative, supervising and lead program engineers, and two O&M crew members participated in the RET with final agreement on a racial equity memo summarizing next steps.

**3. Please describe up to five key benefits and/or burdens for people of color of this policy, program, project, or other decision, which the RET process helped you to identify or confirm. (Max 300 characters each)**

Application of the RET helped the program to acknowledge, think-through, and identify ways to uncover structural inequities.

1. Historical underreporting of complaints and Claims by communities of color may delay infrastructure improvements and burden low-income communities with costs for Utility fixes.
2. Complaint-driven process may have resulted in disproportionate resources going to “squeaky wheel” areas in wealthier neighborhoods.
3. Mapping and analysis of drainage complaints can identify inequitable service and help prioritize future Spot Drainage solutions and outreach efforts.
4. Customer service representatives, although helpful to customers, can cause complaints to “jump to the front of the line” due to established complaint turnaround metrics.