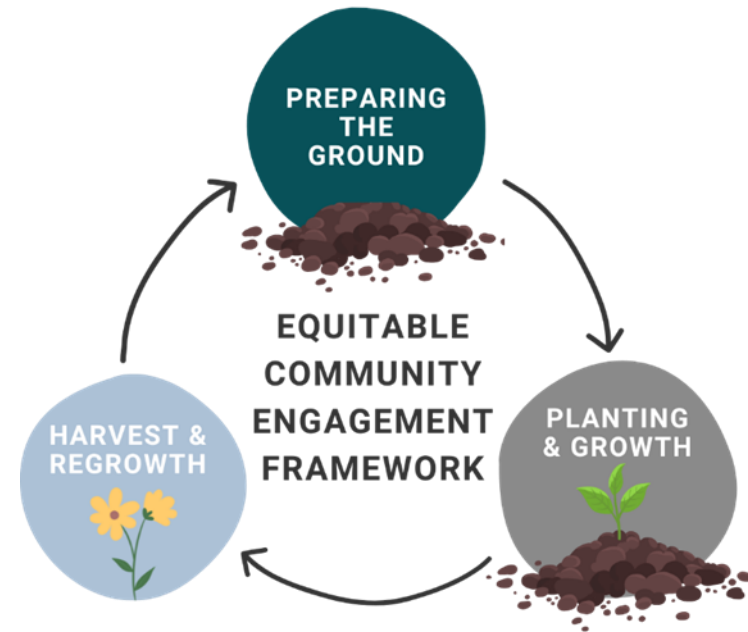# Appendix 3: Education & Outreach Action 3 - Equitable Community Engagement Framework

This framework completes action EO-3 in the Sustainability 2030 Plan and is informed by:

- City of Durham's *Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint* by the Neighborhood Improvement Services Department
- Race Forward's *From Seed to Harvest: A Toolkit for Collaborative Racial Equity Strategies* by Leah Obias and Emi Yoko-Young
- Urban Sustainability Directors Network's *The Nexus: Guidance for Local Governments Centering Racial Equity in Climate Planning and Practice*

Introduction and Background

The Sustainable Resources Division recognizes equity as both an outcome and a process. As a process, racial equity is applied when those most impacted by structural racial inequities are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives. Focusing on racial equity provides the opportunity to use a framework, tools, and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization. Leading with race is not based on the intent to create a ranking of oppressions, but rather to create intersectional strategies that will impact all communities. We must use equity as a process to reach racial equity as an outcome. The Equitable Community Engagement Framework outlines community engagement practices that the Sustainable Resources Division will follow to actualize our commitment of working in partnership with the communities we are privileged to serve.

This framework is sectioned into three categories: **Preparing the Ground, Project Planting and Growth,** and **Harvest and Regrowth**. This process of building equitable practices for equitable

outcomes is iterative and dynamic, not linear, and we use this framework with an attitude of growth, not perfection. Each section illustrates what the Sustainable Resources Division has done to implement said practices and what we plan to do moving forward. Future Sustainability 2030 Plan updates will include amendments to each of these sections.

Framework

Preparing the Ground

Just as one would get to know the type of land they're about to garden in and ensure the soil is at optimal conditions, our team should get to know the community we serve and internally assess and build our capacity to meaningfully engage our community. Building trust and relationships in our community is necessary to repair historic and present-day harm while also figuring out how to move from a community engagement to community ownership model. While this section is listed first in the framework, the practices listed below are constantly happening, not just at the beginning of a project.

Build an understanding of power and a shared language: Both as a team and as individuals, we must recognize our personal and positional power and learn how it shows up in our work and interactions with others. The result is a greater culture shift within our division where we question the norm and critically assess the way we work.

- Allow time and space for internal staff learning and capacity building to create a baseline understanding of inequities and equitable practices. This includes taking trainings, sharing resources, and reading books, articles, etc. on racial equity.
- Organize and implement practices that operationalize equity in everyday work.
- Assess organizational readiness to build relationships with frontline communities and assess past engagement strategies using the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership Guide.

Invest in trust and relationship building: Having trust within our community is at the core of equitable

Definitions

Equity is achieved when all people – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, neighborhood, or other factor – have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to reach their full potential.

Equity assessments proactively seek to eliminate racial inequities while advancing equity for all. This process involves collecting and analyzing information to determine the extent to which a practice, policy, program, etc. is equitable to each member of the community. Equity assessments provide opportunities for deep examinations of the root causes of inequities, helping us better understand how to serve our communities more equitably.

Frontline communities are those who face historical and current inequities in multiple ways, whether by being confronted with systemic barriers, being historically underserved, or both. These communities include those who are and will be disproportionately burdened by climate change, often experiencing the first and most acute impacts.

community engagement. Without it, there can be no meaningful involvement of frontline communities. Recognize that building trust and relationships takes time and that this practice is always happening. Community is built at the speed of trust.

- Identify opportunities and set time aside to listen to the community. Continue to show up to community group meetings. Use these opportunities to learn *if* and *how* community members want to be engaged and what their priorities are.

Get to know and prioritize frontline communities: Learning about what communities care about and are challenged with helps to ground our work in community priorities.

- Identify organizations and partners who are doing racial equity work and are maintaining accountability to the communities they serve.
- Learn about community priorities and align with project goals. Go to where community is already meeting.
- Better understand what our organization can offer and share these resources with our community.

What we've done:

- Trainings taken (non-exhaustive):
    - Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) Equity Foundations and Equity Foundations 2.0.
    - WA State Government to Government Tribal Relations
    - Racial Equity Institute Groundwater
    - How We Got Here: A Reckoning with U.S. and Tacoma History (video)
- Hired a full-time Equity and Engagement Associate Planner to lead equitable engagement for the Sustainability 2030 Plan and future updates.
- Created equity workgroups to keep up the momentum of operationalizing equity in everyday work. Workgroups include Equitable Community Engagement; Internal Education and Training; and Budget, Assessment, and Data
- We currently maintain relationships with: Tacoma Pierce County Health Department Communities of Focus, Walk and Roll Pierce County Coalition, Springbrook Connections and Partners, Franklin Pierce Youth First, White River Partnership, Lakewood Youth Council, Pacific Islander Health Board of Washington, Safe Streets, Red Barn Youth Center, and more.

Moving forward, Sustainable Resources will...

- Have new staff complete the USDN Equity Foundations 2.0.
- Seek out new trainings and resources that advance our division's capacity to practice and implement equitable engagement.
- Continue our equity workgroups and re-evaluate workgroup progress, objectives, and projects.

- Meet with and build relationships with community-based organizations we haven't talked to yet.

Project Planting & Growth

Preparing the ground gives us a solid foundation for developing different strategies and tools we need to equitably engage our community. This is where we put what we learn into practice.

Develop and/or use tools for equitable engagement: Various tools can help guide equitable engagement. These resources can be found online and adapted to our organization's specific needs. For example, Pierce County developed the following tools that are designed to center equity in County decision-making.

- Pierce County Equity Note: An Equity Note must be completed with any proposed resolution or ordinance that is sent to the County Council. The Equity Note includes information about the proposal, how it was developed, populations and/or geographies impacted, and how impacts and unintended consequences will be monitored.
- Pierce County Equity Index: This Index includes an overall Opportunity Index rating which is made up of five categories (Livability, Accessibility, Economy, Education, and Environmental Health), and 32 individual data points, including poverty rate, kindergarten readiness, and access to a household vehicle.

What we've done:

- Tools created: Equity Assessment Tool (see below), Community Connections Database (in progress), Community Events Guidance Rubric, Environmental Education Rubric, and Avoiding Bias in Visual Communications Guide
    - As mentioned in the table of definitions, equity assessments are designed to identify burdens, benefits, and unintended consequences of a specific action and to propose alternative solutions. The Sustainable Resources Division created the Equity Assessment Tool found on page 19 to assess potential outcomes of all external community-based actions listed in the Sustainability 2030 Plan and plan for equitable implementation. As of May 2023, 11 actions have been run through the tool.
- Use Washington Health Disparities Map and Equity Index to help prioritize which community events to attend, where to host events, and which communities to center throughout the Sustainability 2030 Plan update.

Moving forward, Sustainable Resources will...

- Continue to operationalize and re-evaluate our tools to advance equity in our division programs and projects.
- Determine a best path forward for sharing the Equity Assessment Tool among Sustainability 2030 Plan partners.
- Run all external Sustainability 2030 Plan actions through the Equity Assessment Tool, prioritizing Community Priority actions (see page 9).

- Organize and report back on the Equity Assessment results of Sustainability 2030 Plan actions.

- Use the Equity Assessment Tool on other division actions, practices, and programs.

- Complete Pierce County's Equity Note and Index for all work that goes before the County Council.

Harvest & Re-growth

In this phase, we establish accountability, evaluate the impacts of our community engagement practices, and share and celebrate successes.

The following practices allow for deep reflections that support the creation of new processes for collaborative governance that center racial equity.

- Building long term relationships: continue to show up and follow through.

- Evaluating success and gaps: How are we defining success? Does this definition reflect our community's definition of success? What measures does our organization have in place to assess progress?

- Ensuring accountability: How will we report back to our community on what we heard, learned, and are working on? Do we have an accessible way for community members to share feedback?

- Leading by example for other organizations and sharing what has been done.

What we've done:

- Report out Equity Workgroup progress at division staff meetings.

- Shared the Equity Assessment Tool among other Pierce County Departments and Divisions.

Moving forward, Sustainable Resources will...

- Establish a process for accountability and reporting back to our community on equitable practices and progress.

- Share our equitable community engagement practices and framework with other cities and towns.

- Continue building relationships with communities most impacted by climate change by showing up, listening, and integrating community priorities into our division's programs and practices.

Conclusion

The Sustainable Resources Division is currently functioning in the Preparing the Ground phase and is moving into the Project Planting and Growth phase. The special attention and amount of time spent in this first phase will make for fruitful and meaningful partnerships with those in our community most impacted by climate change. We will continue to revisit and revise this framework as we see fit.

Equity Assessment Questionnaire

Background

This equity assessment is designed to complement Pierce County's Equity Note process. Adopted in early 2023, the Equity Note is used when a proposed resolution or ordinance is sent to County Council for consideration. The Equity Note is filled out at the end of a project and includes information about the proposal, how it was developed, populations and/or geographies impacted, and how impacts and unintended consequences will be monitored.

This Equity Assessment Questionnaire is designed to help us remedy long-standing inequities and, in-turn, fulfill County goals. These questions were influenced by a variety of similar tools used locally and across the country, including Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)'s Racial Equity Toolkit, Chicago United for Equity's Racial Equity Impact Assessment, and King County's Equity Impact Review Process. These questions may be updated as assessments progress to best aid in equitable plan and program implementation.

Questions

Step 1: Determine Outcomes and Interested Parties

Q1: What is the action* and what problem is it trying to solve? (*Replace action with other words as applicable i.e., policy, program, practice, etc.)

Q2: Who are the key groups impacted by this problem?

Q3: How will these groups be involved in decision-making and ensuring equitable outcomes?

Step 2: Look at Numbers and Narratives (see data sources listed below)

Q4: What data will we collect and look at? Why?

Q5: Where do we see disparities in the data (qualitative and quantitative)?

Q6: What can we learn from histories and narratives to better understand this data?

Step 3: Measure Benefits and Burdens

Q7: What are the benefits and who is most likely to receive them?

Q8: What are the burdens and who is most likely to bear them?

Q9: What are potential unintended equity-related outcomes?

Step 4: Examine Alternatives or Improvements

Q10: Does this action align with community values and priorities? If not, how could it?

Q11: How could this action address root causes of inequities?

Q12: What are different options to make this action racially equitable?

Step 5: Evaluate and Be Accountable

Q13: How will we evaluate the impacts and report back on the outcomes of our solution? I.e., how will you track outcomes and success of the action? How will you communicate progress with those most impacted?

Step 6: Summary / Discuss Next Steps

Q14: Which of the County goals does this action integrate and how?

Q15: List next steps. What are the deadlines and who needs to be assigned to which tasks?

Q16: Fill out the summary table below with findings after answering these questions.

Action:				
Key groups impacted (frontline communities)	Equity gaps (disparities)	How we address equity gaps	Desired equity outcomes	County goal(s) integrated

Data Sources for Step 2: Numbers and Narratives

Pierce County

- Open Pierce County Portal Open Pierce County (piercecountywa.gov)
- Pierce County Equity Index Home Page - CAI Live (caimaps.info)
  - User guide: Tacoma and Pierce County Equity Index (caimaps.info)
- Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) 2015 Health Equity Assessment Full Report Draft_JC2 (tpchd.org)
- TPCHD Pierce County Covid-19 2020 Health Equity Assessment tpchd.org)
- TPCHD Health Equity Maps Health Equity Maps | Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (tpchd.org)
- Census reporter (US Census Bureau) Pierce County, WA - Profile data - Census Reporter

State of Washington

- Washington Quickfacts (US Census): U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States
- Washington Tracking Network Information by Location Tool: Information by Location | Washington Tracking Network (WTN)
  - How-to video: Information by Location Tool - Washington Tracking Network in

English on Vimeo Available in Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese
- Front and Centered Community 2021 Report on Environmental Justice Front and Centered - EJ TF Community Report
- Environmental Justice (EJ) Task Force 2020 Recommendations for Prioritizing EJ in WA State WA State Environmental Justice Task Force Final Report

Federal

- US Census Explore Census Data
- 2020 Census Gateway (US Census) Decennial Census of Population and Housing by Decades