

Extreme Heat Scenario-Based Pilot Project in Frontline Communities Community-Driven Planning Process

Racial Equity Mini Evaluation

Commissioned by
City of Seattle
Office of Sustainability & Environment

Conducted by

Equity
*matters*TM

December 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Equity Matters would like to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who shared their time, experience, and thoughtful insight to support the Racial Equity Mini Evaluation. We also want to acknowledge the Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment for dedicating resources to support their racial equity commitment, and for being vulnerable enough to expose their processes so we all can learn from this project.

Project Planning Team Members:

- **Landon Bosisio**, *Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, Partner Agency*
- **Melissa Krueck**, *Public Health - Seattle & King County, Partner Agency*
- **Robin Pfohman**, *Public Health - Seattle & King County, Partner Agency*
- **Sinang Lee**, *Public Health - Seattle & King County, Partner Agency*
- **Tania Park**, *Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, Partner Agency*
- **Tracy Morgenstern**, *Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment, Lead Agency*
- **Valerie Pacino**, *Project Lead, Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment, Lead Agency*

Community Partner Input Provided By:

- **Alan Lai**, *Interpreter, Chinese Information & Service Center, Community Partner*
- **Jamie Lee**, *IDEA Space, SCIDpda, Community Partner*
- **Kim Lundgren**, *Vietnamese Senior Association, Community Partner*

Finally, many thanks to the **community partners**, who took time to respond to another inquiry for input, to **Tracy Morgenstern** and **Tania Park** for their input into the draft report, to **Marki Schillinger** for offering an outside perspective, and to **Erin Okuno** at Okuno Consulting for editing support.

A NOTE FROM EQUITY MATTERS

About a year ago, I watched Melody Hobson's TED Talk, 'Color Blind or Color Brave.' She pushed me to really think about how I practice being 'color brave' in my work, and how I can be explicit about race, racism, racial disparities, and racialized structures (also often referred to as systems of White supremacy, particularly within communities of color). Too often community engagement and equity work is inhibited by our ability to speak plainly and explicitly about what we really mean. I want to be clear here that I am talking explicitly about racial equity, and also looking for how race intersects with socio-economic class, language, and place.

Part of being Color Brave is ensuring readers have a clear understanding of how I am using the term 'race,' and how race is being constructed in the standard practice of evaluation.

“Race is not biological, but racism is still real.”

“Race is still a powerful social idea that give people different access to opportunities and resources. Our government and society have created advantages to being white. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not.”

- Race the Power of Illusion

“Colorblindness will not end racism.”

“Pretending race doesn't exist is not the same as creating equality. Race is more than stereotypes and individual prejudice. To combat racism, we need to identify and remedy social policies that advantage some groups at the expense of others.”

- Race the Power of Illusion

Evaluation is inherently based in White norms.

“It is important to note that traditional evaluation, as it is often practiced in the U.S. today, reflects a number of assumptions consistent with white cultural norms. For example, quantitative information (numbers, counts) often gets more weight than qualitative information (interview information, stories, observations, history) – particularly when their findings conflict. Similarly, “objectivity” is privileged. The term is generally taken to mean an outside observer (someone not directly involved) describing other people's experiences; this alone, however, does not account in a serious way for the multiple filters (e.g. internalized advantage or internalized oppression, heterosexism, ageism) the observer is likely to bring to that understanding.”

-Racial Equity Tools

One of the ways I am noticing race being constructed is the high level of concern about how people within the agencies, especially White people, might receive this mini report. For example, could they react with defensiveness or discomfort to using the term 'systems of White supremacy' in my opening paragraph. I strongly believe that all the agencies involved are committed to racial equity, and that while there has been good work done, there is still plenty of work for us all to do. In an effort to practice the 'brave' aspect of being color brave, my goal is to write with the freedom to not be overly concerned about how White people, especially White people holding power might react, but to stay centered on communities of color. My role is to help make invisible racialized practices visible; practices that are disproportionately centered on the comfort and control of White folks, and impact all of us negatively.

Thank you for engaging in this hard, uncomfortable, and important conversation, and for allowing me to be a part of this learning.

Heidi K. Schillinger, MSW

Equity Matters, Owner and Principal

heidi@equitymattersnw.com * www.equitymattersnw.com

Perceptive influenced by experiences as an international transracial adoptee, gaysian (gay Asian), Korean-American, cis female, middle-class, college educated social worker, Seattleite, professional trainer on equity, consultant to government, non-profits, among others.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
A Note from Equity Matters	3
Introduction	5
Analysis & Findings: Community-Driven Planning Process	8
Analysis & Findings: Community-Centered Outcome	10
Overall Assessment	13
Lessons Learned	15
Appendix	19
Racial Equity Framework Resources	24

INTRODUCTION

Brief Description of Pilot Project

With funding from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, the Office of Sustainability & Environment is leading a pilot project in collaboration with Public Health – Seattle & King County and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency to understand how these public agencies can better support low-income communities and communities of color during extreme heat events (defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as “summertime temperatures that are substantially hotter and/or more humid than average for location at that time of year.”). Focused on Rainier Beach and Chinatown/International District [neighborhoods], the main goal of the project is to understand existing social networks, assets within the community, current strategies for dealing with extreme heat, and opportunities to implement community-driven solutions.

The process includes convening community leaders to advise on the project design, interviewing community based organization representatives working in each community, designing a scenario-based exercise based on this input, recruiting community members to participate in a workshop in each community, hosting the scenario-based workshops, sharing recommendations with staff in each agency.

In effort for this pilot project to inform the City’s ongoing climate preparedness planning, OSE has engaged Equity Matters to evaluate the process from the initial planning stages through execution of the workshop. The evaluation process will identify which planning tactics used support the goal of identifying climate preparedness strategies which are equitable through a community-driven process and where improvements could be made.

- Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment

Grant Proposal Language

a. Problem statement

Due to a legacy of institutionalized racism and classism leading to a higher prevalence of pre-existing health conditions, poorer quality health care, lower building quality and fewer resources to respond, Seattle’s low-income neighborhoods and communities of color are disproportionately vulnerable to heat waves, which will become more frequent as the climate changes.

b. Hypothesis

Resilient communities respond to the assaults against them through complex, diverse, and dynamic processes. Low-income communities and communities of color are amongst our most resilient; however, current city planning processes, which are influenced by institutionalized racism and classism, are not well designed to understand and support the complex systems that support residents in culturally diverse communities in times of stress.

c. How success will be measured

Shifting power from institutions to residents, this community-driven planning process is an innovation that pushes well beyond inclusive outreach or community engagement. By sharing power and decision-making responsibility, this model builds off of the complexity and diverse cultures of a community, requires collaboration across sectors, builds sustained leadership in historically underrepresented groups, and explicitly attempts to reverse institutional racism. At the end of this project, we will better understand how to conduct community-driven planning processes which advance equitable adaptation policy and action.

- The Urban Sustainability Directors Network Innovation Fund Request for Proposal Application

Racial Equity Evaluation Question & Areas

To what extent was a community-driven planning process in place to advance racially equitable adaptation policy and action?

- **Community-Driven Planning Process:** Evaluate to what extent people of color (and low-income residents) in the Rainier Beach neighborhood and the Chinatown/International District neighborhood held power in the planning process.
- **Community-Centered Outcome (Design of Workshop):** Evaluate to what extent people of color (and low-income residents) in the Rainier Beach neighborhood and the Chinatown/International District neighborhood were centered in the design of the workshop and how much they felt their voices mattered.
- **Identification of Racially Equitable Planning Tactics:** Identify specific planning strategies that lead to a racially equitable and community-driven planning process.

Evaluation Approach

- Researched racial equity evaluation frameworks
- Observed planning meetings and workshops
- Analyzed planning documents, demographic information, post-workshop evaluations, and survey input from planning team members

Evaluation Frameworks

There is no standard racial equity evaluation framework, yet general agreement among racial equity research documents that assessing organizational process or practice equity is related to power. In particular, how much power¹ communities of color hold in planning, designing, and resource distribution. I chose to base this report's framework on the qualitative information provided by Yawo Brown. In his article, "The subtle linguistics of polite white supremacy," he outlines three ways systems of power are upheld to advantage whiteness; comfort, control, and confidentiality.

The other framework used here is the King County Community Engagement Continuum. It is a specific framework that offers tangible stages of community engagement from "inform" to "community directed." This framework is used to measure "to what extent" the project is achieving racial equity or community directed processes and actions.

- Equity Matters Racial Equity Evaluation Framework (see appendix page 20)
- King County Community Engagement Continuum (see appendix page 21)

Centering the Perspectives of People of Color in this Report

One organizational practice that defaults to a color blind or color mute approach is clumping all the data and responses into one broad summary. In an attempt to use a 'color brave' organizational practice, this evaluation explicitly racially disaggregates data and highlights the voices of people of color. Specifically, the voices and perspectives of the two people of color, both Asian women on the core planning team, are raised in various sections. Their voices are most prominently raised due to the fact that they are the people of color who interacted most closely with the planning process throughout the project. It is important to acknowledge that neither of these two individuals are from the identified communities of Rainier Beach and the Chinatown/International District. Regardless, it is important to not lose their voices and perspectives.

Additionally, when possible, the perspectives of community partners are highlighted. Three community partners, all Asian (people of color), gave additional input. One participant gave overall impressions and two provided a more detailed response to the project. These three individuals had the most involvement with the

¹ Power indicators are defined as comfort, control, and transparency, and in this report analyzed with through a racial lens
[Racial Equity Mini Evaluation](#)

project, although limited participation in the ongoing planning aspects and were not members of the core planning team. Again, it is important to note that none of the community partners are current residents of the identified communities, but rather, staff at community based organizations deeply embedded in the Chinatown/International District or Rainier Beach community.

Finally, you will see the term “centered” used numerous times throughout this report. I realize there is a risk of having the reader write off the term as jargon, and hence miss an important opportunity to draw real attention to the point I am trying to raise. The absence of another word has led me to keep “centered” as a term, and I want to create a clearer picture of how I am using that word. One of the origins of the term “centered” comes from the medical world, as a way to draw a distinction from “doctor-centered” medicine to “patient-centered” medicine. A more current metaphor is the Black Lives Matter movement, and how it is working to draw our attention away from the (unintentional) pitfalls of just saying All Lives Matter. The term “centered” or “community of color-centered” is defined as intentionally focusing on people of color, to physically and mentally shift, and pivot from the default habit of centering and prioritizing whiteness.

ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PLANNING PROCESS

To what extent did people of color (and low-income residents) in the Rainier Beach neighborhood and the Chinatown/International District neighborhood hold power in the planning process

INFORMED Process	CONSULTED On Process	DIALOGUED About Process	COLLABORATED To Create Process	COMMUNITY-DIRECTED Process
Based on 3 planning meeting observations, email correspondence review, meeting agendas and notes, demographics of planning team, number and types of interactions with community partners, and planning team member input.				

Process Key Findings:

- The core planning team did not include any people of color (or low-income residents) from the Rainier Beach (RB) or Chinatown/International District (C/ID) neighborhoods, although there were two people of color, from government partner agencies, on the planning team.
- The core planning team made all of the foundational and final decisions for the project, with consultation from a few community partners.
- The majority of the core planning team members agreed, with the people of color on the team strongly stating, that this did not achieve the goal of a community-driven planning process.

Demographics of Project Planning Team (see appendix page 19)

Sharing power and decision making starts with the makeup of the core planning team. In this project the planning team was made up of all government agencies; the City of Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment, Public Health - Seattle and King County, and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency. Over 70% (5 of 7 members) of the planning team are White, and none of the team currently lives in the Rainier Beach or International District communities. Notably, this pilot project ended up as a good example of interagency collaboration, but missed an opportunity to authentically share power in the planning process with the people of color in the identified communities. This core planning group met approximately 7 times and made the foundational and final decisions for the project; regarding communities to include, implementing the project’s objectives (which were determined by the Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment prior to the agency partners coming together), budget and stipend decisions, timeline, interview guide questions, meeting agendas, workshop design and agenda.

Involvement of Rainier Beach & Chinatown/International District Communities in the Planning Process

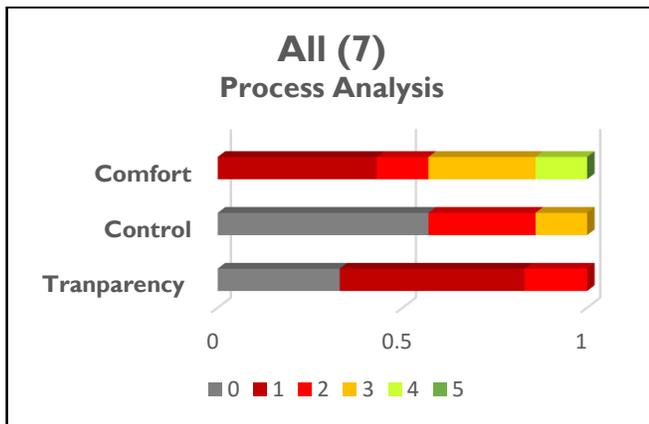
There were intentional efforts made to include the Rainier Beach and Chinatown/International District communities in the planning process as consultants and advisors. The process included one community planning meeting in the Chinatown/International District. This meeting was hosted by a community partner, yet the core planning team created the agenda, facilitated the meeting, and had seven participants present versus three community members. During this meeting, community members offered feedback on the interview guide questions, provided connections for key informant interviews, and shared thoughts regarding interpretation needs, location, and food. There were plans for a similar planning meeting in the Rainier Beach community, but it never materialized. This was in part due to time constraints and limited pre-existing relationships within the community. Overall, the existing community connections in the Chinatown/International District were stronger, primarily due to individual past relationships developed by team members from the partner agencies (Public Health and Puget Sound Clean Air Agency).

During the planning process, key informant interviews were also conducted in both communities; five in the Chinatown/International District and three in Rainier Beach. These interviews were conducted by the core planning team members, with interpretation as needed. The interviewees were asked to share their experiences with extreme heat. The interview guide questions covered project content (extreme heat experiences) questions, and did not ask for input regarding the planning process. In addition, the input provided was analyzed by the core planning team.

The core planning team engaged and compensated community based organizations for their help in planning and recruiting community members. The community based organizations recruited community members to participate in the workshops, managing RSVPs, tracking interpreter needs, and one served as a fiscal sponsor. In addition, two community members were compensated for participating in a planning meeting, and additional funding for one community member for the extra work he did in event logistics.

Planning Team Member Process Analysis (see appendix page 21 for questions)

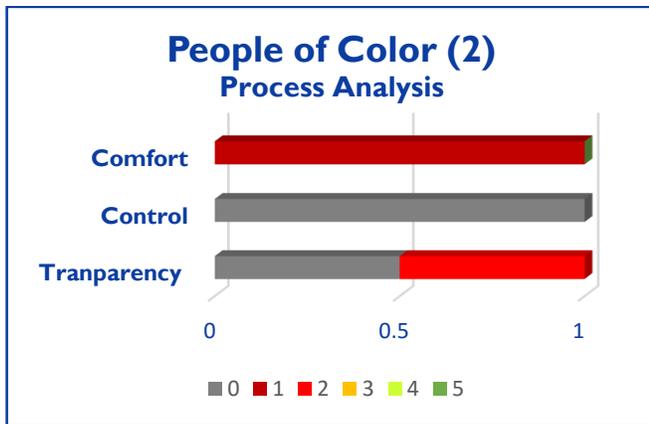
As mentioned previously, despite not having any people of color from the identified communities, there were two people of color who participated on the core planning team as representatives from partner agencies. Even though two is a small number (~30%), it is still important and revealing to disaggregate their answers from the larger core planning team as whole. We clearly see that overall, the two people of color had similar perspectives on the planning process.



Voices of People of Color Planning Team Members COMMENTS ABOUT 'CONTROL'

“This was a multi-agency-directed activity from the beginning (from scoping the project's objectives/timeline to leading planning meetings to designing the data collection guides; setting and executing the agendas for the workshops). There were selected people of color from the C/ID (community reps) that participated as 'advisors', but were not truly leading/directing the project from planning to final decisions.”

“It [agenda] was largely set and determined by our government partners. A tight time-frame for completing the 'project' of workshops was also an inhibiting factor to getting broader [community] input.”

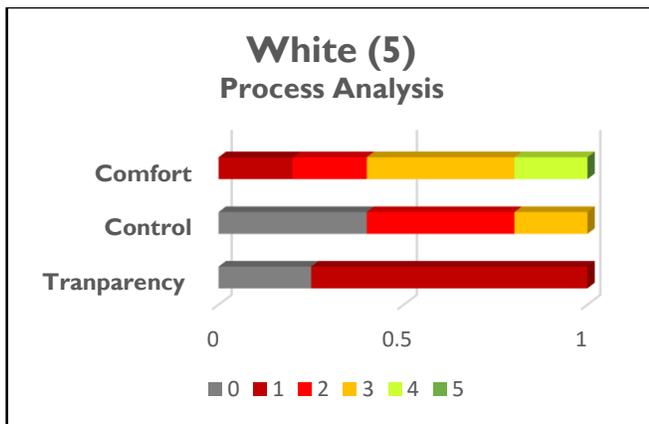


Voices of White Planning Team Members COMMENTS ABOUT 'CONTROL'

“Due to time constraints, people of color were actively recruited to be involved with the effort, but did not really join until the workshop.”

“POC did not write or lead meetings, though they did control scheduling. Research and best practices were rooted in local people of color, insofar as our formative research about community cohesion and heat response was through key informant interviews with community leaders in RB and C/ID. Whether we are successful in handing over decision making processes and resource distribution remains to be seen in how these workshops are represented in the Climate Preparedness Plan.”

“No, but I'm not sure it was set up that way [for people of color in RB and C/ID to have control in the planning process], if they were going to want to do that, they would have needed to have much more ownership of the project. As I saw it, they weren't getting paid enough to do much more than attend a few planning meetings there were with them in the C/ID and this part of the project never materialized in the RB.”



ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

COMMUNITY-CENTERED OUTCOME (DESIGN OF WORKSHOP)

To what extent were people of color (and low-income residents) in the Rainier Beach neighborhood and the Chinatown/International District neighborhood centered in the design of the workshop and how much did they feel their voices matter

INFORMED About Extreme Heat Responses	CONSULTED On Extreme Heat Responses	DIALOGUED About Extreme Heat Responses	COLLABORATED To Co-Create Extreme Heat Responses	COMMUNITY- DIRECTED Extreme Heat Responses
Agency Led Presentations	Agency Led Interviews, Focus Groups	Agency Led Interactive Workshops, Planned Follow Up	Planned Community and Agency Led Ongoing Interactions	Planned Community Led, Agency Supported, Ongoing Interactions
Based on workshop observations, meeting agendas and notes, demographics of participants, roles of community and community planning team members, workshop evaluation, and planning team member input.				

Workshop Key Findings:

- Approximately 39% (less than half) of the workshop participants were people of color (or low-income residents) from the Rainier Beach or Chinatown/International District neighborhoods. 88% were people of color (or low-income residents) regardless of whether they were residents of either location.
- Participants in both workshops rated their experience and feelings regarding how much their voices mattered mostly positively.
- The core planning team created the final agenda and design of the workshops, including preparing interpreters, facilitating English speaking small group discussions, and making final decisions. The only significant opportunity for community members to influence the workshop process was through their roles as interpreters (Vietnamese, Somali, and Chinese- Mandarin and Cantonese).
- Community partners appreciated the extra efforts taken to recruit and compensate participants, and expressed the challenge of ongoing community input sessions, yet the lack of any noticeable changes.

Workshop Demographics

The first question to be answered regarding the evaluation of the scenario workshops is, “Were the participants in the workshops people of color (and people with lower incomes) from Rainier Beach and the Chinatown/International District?” According to the demographic information collected (see appendix page 23) from participants, 39% of the overall participants (27 of 69) were people of color or rent a home (an imperfect proxy for class and income) and from Rainier Beach or the Chinatown/International District. If we just look at the number who are people of color or rent a home regardless of location, 88% (or 61 of 69 participants) fit into those demographic categories.

	Rainier Beach Participant Demographics		Chinatown/International District Participant Demographics	
	% of Total	% Residents of RB	% of Total	% Residents of C/ID
# of Participants	28 Total Participants	39% Residents of RB	41 Total Participants	41% Residents of C/ID
People of Color	71% of 28 Participants POC	36% POC & residents of RB	98% of 41 Participants POC	39% POC & residents of C/ID
Rent a Home	68%	25%	68%	41%
Speak Language Other than English at Home	39%	14%	88%	34%
Person of Color OR Rent a Home	71%	36%	100%	41%

Participant Evaluations

After the workshops, participants filled out a short post-workshop evaluation to express their opinion on the three areas: comfort, control, and transparency (see appendix page 22 for the specific questions). The data collection forms were color coded based on the language groupings. The post-event workshop findings were consistent across language groups. Differences had more to do with how the table facilitators asked for the information. Overall the participants in both workshops rated their experience and feelings regarding how much their voices mattered mostly positively. It should be noted that ‘comfort’ rated noticeably higher than ‘control and transparency.’



Workshop Roles

It is important to draw attention to the fact that the core planning team created the final agenda and design for the workshops, conducted most of the large group facilitation in both sessions, prepped the interpreters, facilitated the small group discussions at all the English speaking tables, and will ultimately analyze and make decisions around how the information will be used. Addressing language needs, through interpreters, provided the only opportunities for community members to hold some control during the workshops.² The Rainier Beach workshop had five small groups, three of which were conducted in English with notes, facilitation, and report outs performed by members of the core planning team. The other two small groups were conducted in different languages, Vietnamese and Somali, with interpreters acting as facilitators and note takers using a facilitation guide written by the core planning team. The Chinatown/International District (C/ID) workshop only had one English speaking table, again, facilitated by a core planning team member, and another four tables conversations were facilitated by interpreters in Vietnamese, Mandarin, and two in Cantonese. The opening of the C/ID workshop was led by a core planning team member and the closing report out section was facilitated by a community member. According to the written agenda, it was not planned to have the community member facilitate at the end, but more of an impromptu act in response to the fact that most of the people in the room were getting restless, and the community member could hold the attention of the room and provide interpretation.

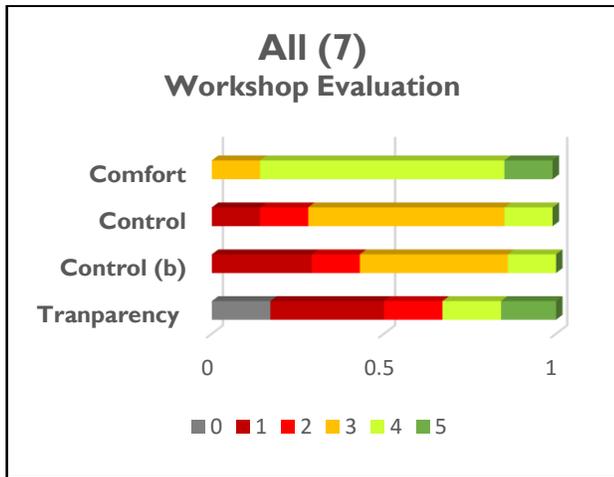
Community Partner Input

This input is restricted to the perspective of the Chinatown/International District (C/ID) workshop. All of the community partners had positive impressions of the C/ID workshop. In particular, one partner cited being impressed by the strategy in using various community based organizations to invite participants, and appreciated the stipends offered directly to participants. This appreciation was also expressed with some cautiousness. Residents of the C/ID have provided input on different projects for many years, and they feel very little has changed, and nothing is different. There is a lack of trust or faith in government projects that ‘drop-in’ to mobilize community members around a pre-identified interest area, and then do not return or do not make any noticeable difference. Despite culturally relevant efforts to get community members to input sessions, there are very real underlying questions about the true impact. Community members, based on past experiences wonder, “Is this just a waste of time? Does it really matter? Will anything really change?” It was mentioned numerous times that follow up will be a key part of maintaining trust and demonstrating to community members that their input and voices did make a difference. Without the follow up, accountability, and transparency, the project falls into yet another example of outside agencies being ‘askholes,’ a term

² One planning team member felt that an interpreter at the Chinatown/International District session played a greater role. The majority of the planning team members did not note this difference.

recently used in local nonprofit blogger and community leader, Vu Le’s article, *Are you or your nonprofit or foundation being an asshole?* Furthermore, drop-in community engagement, does not foster a true partnership or trust, especially when the community is not asked what they want to mobilize around.

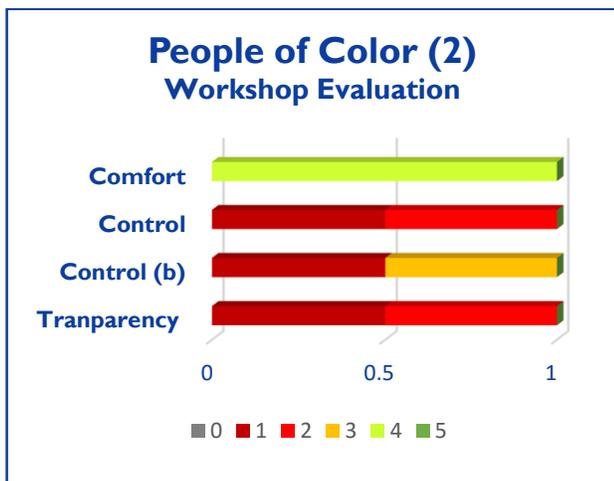
Planning Team Member Workshop Analysis (see appendix page 22 for questions)



**Voices of People of Color Planning Team Members
COMMENTS ABOUT ‘CONTROL’**

“Uncertain what the intended outcomes will be for extreme heat communications. We were not clear on when and how next steps will unfold for those who participated, and could not articulate that to the participants.”

“The RB workshop had small group discussions led by interpreters as facilitators. It is not clear whether they also represented the RB community. They received a short 30-minute training on the facilitation guide, so they did not truly hold the control over the workshop - they still served in a more supportive role. For the English-speaking small group discussions, the agency reps led and facilitated the discussion. The RB workshop also had a mix of participants from outside RB.”



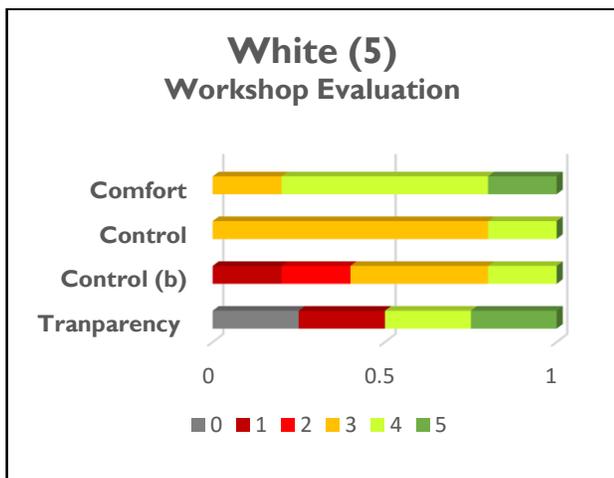
**Voices of White Planning Team Members
COMMENTS ABOUT ‘COMFORT’**

“Yes, it was located in their community at a building that was comfortable, translation, and seating arrangements were utilized culturally appropriate food was provided.”

COMMENTS ABOUT ‘CONTROL’

“The C/ID workshop was very successful along these lines. [One community member] really owned that meeting handling everything from registration, to report out to catering issues, helping other tables complete final demographic questions and W9s etc.”

Besides [one community member], who did act as a major facilitator (and interpreter), there were no other community members who acted in that role. I think the timing of the project did not allow for a deep enough dive to find interested community members who have the time and energy to take a larger role.



OVERALL ASSESSMENT

SHARING POWER & DECISION-MAKING

To what extent was there a community-driven planning process to advance racially equitable adaptation policy and action?

	INFORMED	CONSULTED	DIALOGUED	COLLABORATED	COMMUNITY-DIRECTED
All	14%	43%	29%	14%	
POC	50%	50%			
White		40%	40%	20%	

Project Key Findings:

- This project falls into the ‘consult’ stage of King County community engagement continuum, and did not achieve the goal of a racially equitable community-driven planning process.
- The Chinatown/International District efforts were more successful than the Rainier Beach efforts, primarily due to pre-existing relationships.
- Community partners appreciated the extra efforts in recruitment and compensation, and the project left them still wondering if this is another (unintentional) example of government agencies wanting to say they talked with communities, rather than really listening to what is being said.

This project aimed to achieve an admirable goal of a racially equitable community-driven planning process. Using the King County community engagement continuum as a scale we see the majority of the core planning team indicated this project falls into the ‘consult’ stage. When the data is disaggregated by race, we notice that the people of color on the planning team rated the project lower than White team members. Based on observations, input, and quantitative data, Equity Matters rates the overall project at the ‘consult’ stage as well.

Within this project there were two distinct efforts at a community-driven planning process. Overall, the Chinatown/International District (C/ID) efforts were more successful in engaging community partners and this engagement was reflected in a better attendance and a more community oriented feel to the workshop. As stated before, pre-existing relationships facilitated a deeper connection in the C/ID. The Rainier Beach effort lacked pre-existing or transferable relationships, coupled with a limited amount of time to develop necessary relationship to support the project. On the community engagement continuum the Rainier Beach effort falls more closely to the higher end stage of ‘inform’ or lower end stage of ‘consult.’ While the C/ID effort falls closer to the higher end stage of ‘consult,’ with the potential to move into the ‘dialogue’ stage in a future project if relationships are maintained and nurtured. In reality, only a few community partners had multiple conversations with the planning team, and as one planning team member articulates, “most interactions that occurred were primarily one-offs.”

Voices of People of Color Planning Team Members

“This project was primarily for data collection with the intent to inform agency plans (e.g., Seattle Climate Change; Public Health’s heat alert communications). Community members and representatives primarily served as informants (e.g., key informant interviews and focus group participants). Agencies developed the questions to ask; agencies listened and captured the community information, but did not have an in-depth conversations that led to immediate decisions. This could serve as just a first step of engagement; there is an opportunity here to build upon the momentum and continue with more in-depth dialogue with RB and CIID, and eventually collaboration to support community-driven solutions. But it would benefit the City’s climate change engagement process if it aligned or integrated future engagements (if possible) with existing community-driven process around climate change (Got Green!, Puget Sound Sage Climate Justice) - and not have a separate agency-driven process.

Voices of White Planning Team Members

“I would say consult, but if given more time, I think this project could easily have been more of a dialogue or even collaboration. However, most interactions that occurred were primarily one-offs. A few were more than that, especially for the few that were interviewed and attended workshops.

Community Partner Input

Overall, there was a genuine appreciation of how the project in the Chinatown/International District was conducted, especially the efforts to compensate community based organizations and community members for their time. However, questions remain for some of the community partners. Will these efforts truly impact the Chinatown/International District, or will this project be another example of an outside group that “is more interested in being able say they talked to the Chinatown/International District versus really hearing what we have to say and using it.” Is it an effort to “make people feel like they were heard, rather than really hearing them?”

LESSONS LEARNED

IDENTIFICATION OF RACIALLY EQUITABLE PLANNING TACTICS

We know that the project did not achieve shared decision-making (shared power and control) with communities of color in Rainier Beach and the Chinatown/International District, but it did highlight some important lessons learned as we all work towards identifying racially equitable organizational practices.

FOUNDATIONAL PRACTICES

One challenge in racial equity work is that many mainstream (defined as primarily White, middle-class led, using White, middle-class norms) organizations and agencies are looking for action steps and ideas that can be implemented quickly. While this is a well-intended sentiment, the desire to move quickly, without fundamentally changing who is in the room, often means short cuts are taken, defaulting to practices, processes, and relationships that reinforce 'business as usual,' also referred to as "trickle down community engagement by nonprofit blogger, Vu Le. This results in very little progress, frustrated staff, frustrated community members, and a continued power imbalance that upholds institutional racism (also referred to as systems of White supremacy). Mainstream organizations, agencies, and departments need to spend time internalizing and operationalizing these foundational pieces prior to jumping into racial equity efforts.

Quick Check: How do I know if my agency is ready to embark in Racially Equitable Community Work? Have you -

- Clearly distinguished racial equity from inclusion and engagement?
- Identified organizational practices that center communities of color (and de-center whiteness)?
- Connected and embedded racial equity into broader organizational practices?

1. Clearly Distinguish Racial Equity from Inclusion and Engagement

We need to be clear that inclusion and engagement, while very important, are not synonymous with racial equity. Defaulting to what is familiar, only leads to inclusion and engagement activities, but doesn't lead to true racial equity.

Racial equity is about shifting power and control. It means acknowledging that power and control have been disproportionately held by White (and middle and upper class) people. It means allowing people of color (and people with lower incomes) the ability to resource and control their own programs/projects.

To use a simplistic gender identity analogy, most of us can clearly see how an all-male or mostly male planning team that is working on women's issues would be problematic. Yet, we continue to not make the same connection to nearly all White planning teams making decisions, especially decisions that disproportionately impact communities of color.

Two excellent articles that further explore this distinction are, Kÿra's *How to Uphold White Supremacy by Focusing on Diversity and Inclusion*, and Black Girl Dangerous' "*How Can White Women Include Women of Color In Feminism?*" *Is A Bad Question. Here's Why.*

2. Identify Organizational Practices that Center Communities of Color (& De-center Whiteness)

If we don't clearly stay centered on communities of color, our organizational practices will default to centering on White norms, comfort, control, and direct benefit.

Here are a few specific examples of how the project (unintentionally) defaulted to centering Whiteness; the make-up of the core planning team, maintaining majority of the control over agendas and facilitation, and even this evaluation is for the primary benefit of the agencies. It is potentially an impossible task to eliminate every practice centered on Whiteness, but we have the ability to become more aware who our practices and

processes are centered around, enabling us to clearly see how the disparities manifest. At the same time, agencies need to change specific practices to clearly center on communities of color. This can feel uncomfortable, even for communities of color, but the results will be stronger and close disparity gaps. Using data to track results will help to see how changing practices improve outcomes for communities of color.

One practice is to ask, at every step along the way, how are communities of color centered in this process and action? Flexibility and the ability to change course, if necessary, are critical components in responding to community needs. During this process, there were a number of times members of the planning team commented that the core planning team did not reflect the community, yet the process kept moving along.

Another practice is to raise up the voices and perspectives of people of color, even when they are only a few voices and we also need to be honest about the number of community voices that are really represented. **This requires seeing race and collecting demographic data during the process.** On too many occasions we collect information or data without the ability to disaggregate by race. If we use a collection method or relationship that favors White voices, then the voices and people of color tend to get lost and folded into one grouped perspective that is often labeled, 'the community,' when in reality it represents primarily the 'White community.'

How can we reimagine a similar project that is designed to center the practices and processes around communities of color, and specifically communities of color in Rainer Beach and Chinatown/International District? Imagine if the core planning team was made up of members of these communities, meetings were held in these communities, communities held control of the agenda and budget, the languages used by community members were used in planning meetings, information was gathered in forums that are already happening in the community, and the government agencies acted as consultants or advisors. If you are thinking this is a challenge because of time, relationships, or trust issues, then that is a good indication of whether you and your agency is ready for a community-driven planning process. **Being community of color centered means communities of color are in control of the process, and not just recipients of the process.**

3. Connect & Embed Racial Equity into Broader Organizational Practices (recognize racial equity is not a project)

There is an organizational readiness factor that needs to be in place before engaging communities of color in true shared decision-making processes. We cannot jump straight to racial equity if the foundation and context has not been built within the organization. Without proper organizational readiness, there is no systemic will to slow down and take the necessary time to adjust course or build relationships, and often these efforts unintentionally end up as fake equity (a new coined term to capture fake equity) and further erode trust between communities of color and mainstream organizations. Racial equity efforts are easier when the surrounding context and systems also default to racially equitable practices and priorities. There is no questioning the genuineness of the intent of individuals or agencies involved in the project, but the systems set in place position working towards shared decision-making with communities as extra work, rather than the default model of work. Individual relationships and efforts are not substitutes for systemic practices and processes. Individuals leave, yet the organizational practice remain. We are already seeing the lack of organizational relationships impact the evaluation. The lead project staff person left the agency just after the workshops concluded, and her relationships have been a challenge to connect to this evaluation. The number of relationships that are maintained and nurtured by the agencies involved will be one good indicator of systemic impact.

This is not a call (or excuse) to go slower; more the total opposite, it is a call to work on your organizational systems quicker, and this includes your hiring practices and the racial make-up of your staff team and leadership. This is also a request to not approach equity as a project. A truly racially equitable project is the result of a broader racially equitable ecosystem (organizational context, systems, and practice), and cannot sustain an existence (as an exception or) in isolation within an unchanged system. The constant and uncoordinated 'community input' requests the Chinatown/International District receives is an example of

larger systems trying to approach equity as isolated projects instead of working to change inequitable organizational practices. Two great resources if you or your agency are interested in moving quicker toward racial equity include the Western States Center's *Racial Justice Assessment Tool* and Fakequity's *Equity isn't a thing to solve* article.

TACTICAL PRACTICES

One challenge to using a written report to convey ideas, is that the format tends to default to presenting information in a linear and logical fashion. As we move into the more tactical practices, it is important to know the practices are deeply intertwined and connected. In many ways, one practice can act as barrier or a stimulus to another practice.

Quick Check: How do I know if my community work is racially equitable?

- Does the make-up of the core planning team reflect the identified communities of color?
- Has a realistic and flexible timeframe been set by the identified communities of color?
- Is there deep established mutual trust between the identified communities of color and your agency?

4. The Make-up of the Core Planning Team Must Reflect Communities of Color (Control)

Working towards racial equity must start with the make-up of the core planning team (in addition to your agency staff make-up). This project highlighted how much decision-making happened in the core planning team group, and where power was concentrated. Interestingly, one strength that many of the core planning team members mentioned was the agency collaboration, especially at the planning team level. In fact, the work in the Chinatown/International District directly benefited from the relationships facilitated by Public Health. While the collaboration was a strength, it hindered having community members on the planning team.

The core planning team intended to have a community-driven process and build stronger relationships in Rainier Beach and the Chinatown/International District, but without members from those communities on the planning team the process was an agency-driven process. In order to balance perspectives and power, the planning group would have needed to be 15-20 individuals to allow community members a significant voice. Or agency partners would have needed to explicitly have taken a different role, including not participating as members of the core planning team. Rather, what we saw was a process that defaulted to what was most familiar to members of the core planning team. This team must be rooted in the community, led by the community, and representative of the community. This means a significant investment in compensating community members and/or community organizations at the same level as any other technical consultant.

5. Timeframe Needs to Be Realistic & Flexible and Centered on Communities of Color (Comfort)

Nearly every planning team member mentioned the tight timeframe as the biggest challenge in this project. Fixed timelines and pressure, defaulted the project to a more inclusive version of traditional efforts. There was no flexible time built into the project to respond to challenges that arose during the process. For example, when efforts to assemble a community planning meeting in Rainier Beach did not come together initially, the project did not take the necessary time or make adjustments. There was also no time to develop new relationships or create different processes that allowed community members to be equal partners. When time is limited, we rely on what we already know, who we already know, and what is familiar. Two important lessons can be emphasized from the challenge of time in this project. One lesson is that when time is not a pressing issue this can and should be when new relationships are formed and nurtured. The second lesson is that tight or inflexible timeframes push people to take organizational shortcuts that omit or only provide superficial discovery of new voices, new relationships, and new processes, which are essential motivations for trying to conduct a process or project differently.

From the community perspective, there is a sentiment that many of these projects are controlled by the City's (government's) timeline. Often in the name of political expediency, when people in positions of power ask for something to be done quickly or if an agency is working to meet a grant deadline, then community members

are asked to match the set timeline or not be 'included.' This common scenario also puts agency staff in unreasonable positions. At the beginning of this project, the Chinatown/International District was dealing with the death and shock of a beloved community leader, Donnie Chin. This tragedy, combined with the day to day work community based organizations are engaged in, the constant requests to gather community members to give input, and the logistical challenges of organizing in numerous languages, provides a picture of a community context that is often not considered when timelines are set. Yet, there is a community perception, and great frustration, that the government wants to move slowly when the community asks for support around community identified priorities, such as investigating crime in the ID or naming a park after Donnie Chin. Control over time, deciding when issues should to move fast or slow, is one way power manifests.

6. Spend Time the Necessary Time Building Authentic Relationships and Trust (Transparency)

There is a saying, "partnerships move at the speed of trust" (source unknown). There is a trust gap that exists between government agencies and many communities of color that needs to be acknowledged. Part of the trust gap by communities of color stems from unchanged outcomes. Government agencies must also acknowledge and work to close the trust gap on their end, whether intentional or unintentional, regarding the lack of ability to give up control to communities. This gap is both rooted in structural racism, and also individual (unconscious) distrust. We will never be able to bridge this trust gap if we are unwilling to talk openly about it. We must be willing to have these hard, uncomfortable, and honest conversations with each other. We must be willing to create the space and spend the time to ensure these conversations are surfaced and resolved to the satisfaction of both sides.

Building authentic relationships is one of the keys to bridging the trust gap. Reminders about relationships are so commonplace, they almost have no real impact any more. Everyone knows on an intellectual level that relationships matter, take time, and that some relationships take longer to develop. Yet this is one area where words and intentions are not often congruent with actions. The lack of time to build relationships in Rainer Beach is one example of intentions not matching actions regarding relationship building.

Ask yourself, how much time have you and your agency really spent in communities of color just learning, listening, and connecting. How many of your interactions are solely transactional, short term and focused on what you need to get done for your project or work? If you're thinking relationship building is too difficult because of time, language, or cultural differences, this is where the concept that equal is not equitable applies. Of course, building relationships across language, culture, race, and class difference takes longer, which is exactly why we are engaged in racial equity work. It should also be mentioned that compensation, while extremely important, is not a substitute for relationship building.

FINAL THOUGHTS

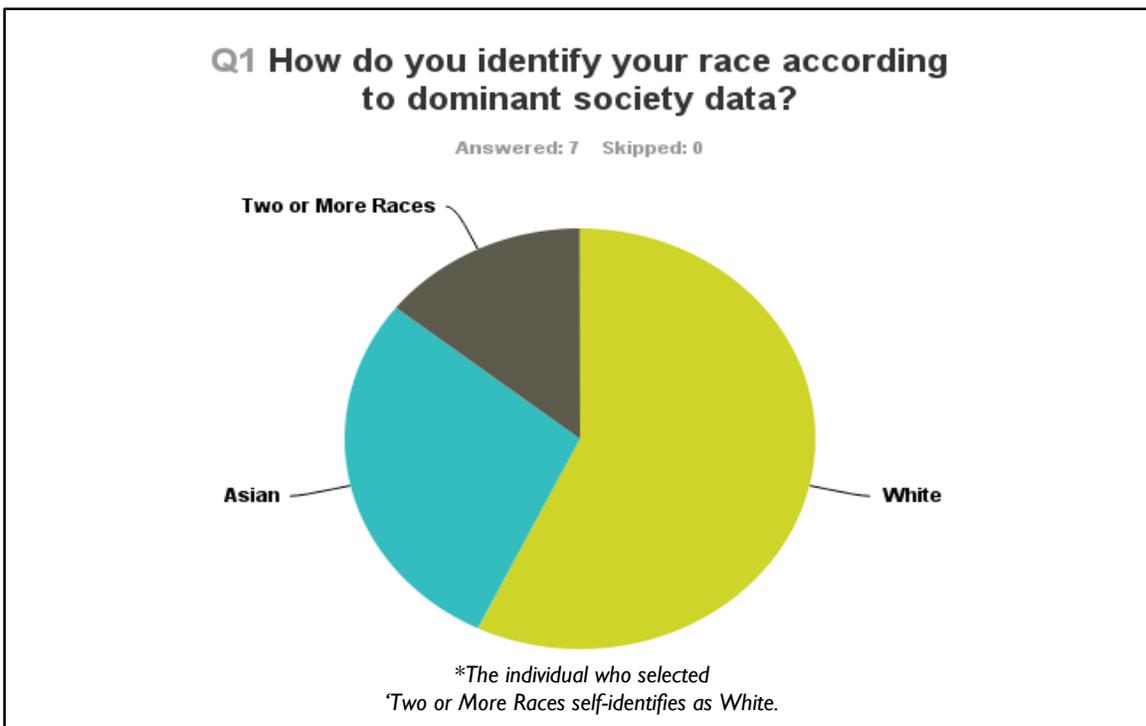
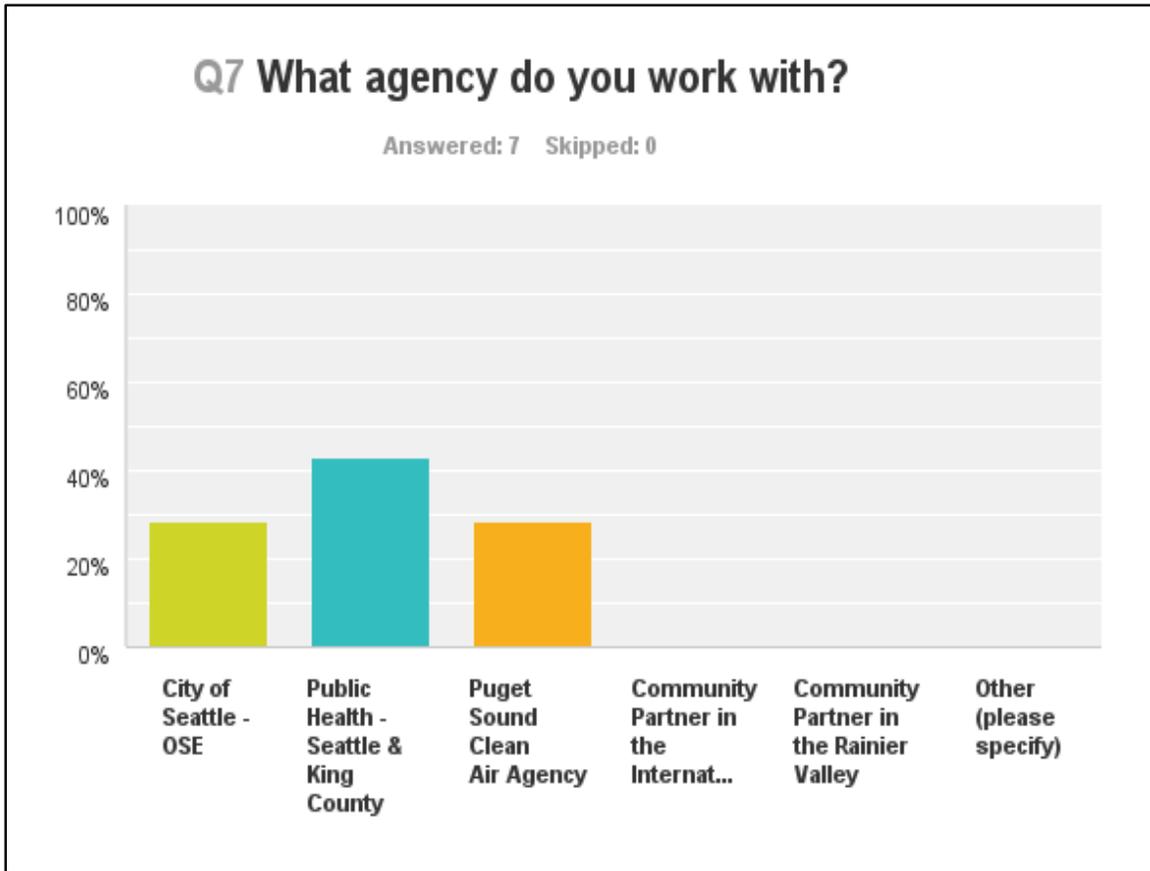
Too often it feels like we are trying to tweak a system that keeps reverting back to 'business as usual.' This takes an incredible amount of energy. If the effort does not result in racial equity, it feels defeating and impacts our will to engage in this work. If we were to pull all of the lessons learned together, what we really ought to take away is that **our approach to racial equity needs to be redesigned**. The new approach must be designed to default to centering the comfort of communities of color, centering control with communities of color, and ensuring transparency for communities of color. For this to happen, communities of color must be the designers, not just the recipient of the design. **Staff hiring is an integral part of creating a racially equitable system**. Internal planning teams must begin to reflect the racially diverse communities being served.

Finally, **government agencies must support efforts already happening in communities of color** and stop trying to create separate processes and practices in isolation. In the Seattle and King County area, we are fortunate to have many great examples of community-driven planning process, often referred to as community organizing models in communities of color. This means (appropriately) spending time in the community and resourcing community efforts.

Racial equity is measured by outcomes, not intentions and will.

APPENDIX

PLANNING TEAM DEMOGRAPHICS



APPENDIX

EQUITY MATTERS RACIAL EQUITY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

EQUITY MATTERS RACIAL EQUITY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK		
Goals	Power Indicators*	Data System
<p>Community-Driven Planning Process To what extent people of color (and low-income residents) in the Rainier Beach (RB) neighborhood and the Chinatown/International District (C/ID) neighborhood hold power in the planning process</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Comfort</p> <p>Overt discussions about role of structural and institutional racism, white supremacy, etc.; multiple languages used during meetings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Control</p> <p>People of color in RB/ID are setting (writing) meeting agendas, leading meeting, and controlling scheduling; final decision makers over processes and resource distribution; research and best practices are rooted in communities of color (people of color, preferably local people of color)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Transparency</p> <p>Transparency in process - how decisions are made, budget and resource distribution</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quantitative</p> <p>Meeting Notes Planning Team Demographics Research/Best Practice Demographics Observations King County Community Engagement Continuum</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Qualitative</p> <p>Team Member Reflections Interviews/Input from Community Members Observations</p>
<p>Community-Centered Outcome** (Design of Workshop) To what extent are people of color (and low-income residents) in the Rainier Beach neighborhood and the Chinatown/International District neighborhood centered in the design of the workshop and how much do they feel their voices mattered</p> <p><i>**Final Outcomes should be measured through an assessment of how much the recommendations and subsequent actions reflect the input received.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Comfort</p> <p>People of color in RB/ID are more comfortable working with and participating in government activities; relationships with government have been developed and deepened</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Control</p> <p>People of color in RB/ID are confident their input and participation will greatly influence/change the government's response to extreme heat in their community</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Transparency</p> <p>People of color in RB/ID are confident they will be kept informed about future decisions and actions regarding the government's response to extreme heat in their community</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quantitative</p> <p>Workshop Notes Workshop Leader Demographics Observations Post-Workshop Evaluation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Qualitative</p> <p>Team Member Reflections Interviews/Input from Community Members Observations Post-Workshop Evaluation</p>

* Indicators adapted from Yawo Brown's article, "The subtle linguistics of polite white supremacy."

KING COUNTY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM

King County's Community Engagement Continuum				
<i>Taken From the Community Engagement Guide: A tool to advance Equity & Social Justice in King County</i>				
County INFORMS	County CONSULTS	County Engages in DIALOGUE	County & Community Work Together COLLABORATE	COMMUNITY DIRECTS ACTION
Levels of Community Engagement				
<i>King County initiates an effort, coordinates with departments and uses a variety of channels to inform community to take action</i>	<i>King County gathers information from the community to inform county-led interventions</i>	<i>King County engages community members to shape county priorities and plans</i>	<i>Community and King County share in decision-making to co-create solutions together</i>	<i>Community initiates and directs strategy and action with participation and technical assistance from King County</i>
Characteristics of Engagement				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily one-way channel of communication One interaction Term-limited to events Address immediate need of county and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily one-way channel of communication One to multiple interactions Short to medium-term Shapes and informs county programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-way channel of communication Multiple interactions Medium to long-term Advancement of solutions to complex problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-way channel of communication Multiple interactions Medium to long-term Advancement of solutions to complex problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-way channel of communication Multiple interactions Medium to long-term Advancement of solutions to complex problems
Strategies				
Media releases, brochures, pamphlets, outreach to vulnerable populations, ethnic media contacts, translated information, staff outreach to residents, new and social media	Focus groups, interviews, community surveys	Forums, advisory boards, stakeholder involvement, coalitions, policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony, workshops, and community-wide events	Co-led community meetings, advisory boards, coalitions, and partnerships, policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony	Community-led planning efforts, community-hosted forums, collaborative partnerships, coalitions, policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony

PLANNING PROCESS RACIAL EQUITY EVALUATION STATEMENTS FOR PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS

- Comfort:** During the planning process, there were overt discussions about the role of structural and institutional racism, White Supremacy, etc.; multiple languages used during the meetings.
- Control:** During the planning process, people of color in Rainier Beach and the Chinatown/International District set (wrote) meeting agendas, led meeting, and controlled scheduling; were final decision makers over processes and resource distribution; research and best practices used were rooted in communities of color (people of color, preferably local people of color).
- Transparency:** During the planning process, there was complete transparency in the process, how decisions were made, and budget and resource distribution. The budget and decision making process was especially transparent for any people of color from Rainier Beach or Chinatown/International District who participated in planning.

RACIAL EQUITY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK RESOURCES

People of Color Identified Authors

- Brown, Y. “The subtle linguistics of polite white supremacy”
- Equity Matters, Racial Equity Institutional Assessment
- Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, “Making Progress: Movement Toward Racial Justice” Webinar (2011)

White Identified Authors (or Primarily White-Led Organizations)

- Carlson, D. and Wakeman Rouse, A., “City of Seattle’s Community Cornerstone Program: A Case Study”
- Center for Urban Education, “An overview of the Equity Scorecard Process”
- Everyday Democracy, “Communities Creating Racial Equity Lessons”
- Kivel, P., “Assessing the Culture of Power”
- Portland’s Partnership for Racial Equity, Racial Equity Strategy Guide
- Potapchuk, M. al et., Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building (Chapter Nine: Doing Evaluation Differently – Leiderman, S.)
- Potapchuk, M., “Communities of Practice: A Process for Evaluating Racial Justice Work?”
- Racial Equity Tools, Getting Ready for Evaluation
- Western States Center, Racial Justice Tool