



Summary of 2021 RSJ Accomplishments

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is dedicated to delivering essential utility services in a way that dismantles institutional racism and achieves more equitable outcomes for everyone, especially for those in communities impacted by systemic racism. In 2021, SPU implemented 49 Racial Equity Action Plans focused on evaluating business practices, improving community engagement, and fostering a learning culture.

SPU's RSJ values are embedded in our Strategic Business Plan. We're committed to equity and empowerment through building trusting relationships, prioritizing equity in our work, and creating opportunities for all. We apply this RSJ lens to how we deliver projects, programs, and initiatives, and how we set policies and make decisions.

We strive to build a workplace culture where *everyone* understands their role and responsibility to advance racial justice. Environmental Justice and Service Equity (EJSE) team, Equity Bridge, and RSJ workgroups partner with SPU employees to share best practices, take collective action, and advance institutional change.

Based on SPU's commitment to multi-year efforts to ensure equitable programs and services, we continue to make strides towards achieving a truly equitable, community-centered organization rooted in RSJ principles.

The following is an overview of SPU's RSJ accomplishments in 2021 by work group:

Equity Bridge

SPU's Equity Bridge is a space where leaders and organizers come together to build equitable policies, procedures, and practices to advance SPU's culture. In March, the utility held the first Equity Bridge meeting bringing together a representative team of staff from SPU's RSJ workgroups and organizational teams.

Members collectively established a shared vision, goals, and desired outcomes for SPU's RSJ work, and developed a process to support shared decision making to achieve collective impact, which includes developing a shared measurement system, continuous sharing of information, and a common agenda.

Environmental Justice and Service Equity (EJSE) Team

EJSE continued to support three main programs in 2021, while also stewarding the application of Racial Equity Toolkits (RETs) throughout the department. EJSE staff supported SPU project managers to host six

successful WMBE virtual outreach events throughout the year with over 150 participants. The team also created and distributed a comprehensive list of upcoming consultant contracts. As a result of these and many other efforts, SPU was able to realize 23% of WMBE utilization in purchasing and 27% in prime and subconsultant contracts, exceeding 2021 goals.

EJSE also continued management and support of Branch Equity Teams (BET), including developing a BET Logic Model and development and administration of the BET and Change Team member satisfaction survey. EJSE also partnered with People, Culture, and Community Branch leadership to launch the 21-person People, Culture, and Community BET. The utility now has six BETs with over 120 staff participating. EJSE hosted a Utility-wide AAPI healing event as a response to the mass shooting in Atlanta, Georgia and facilitated numerous branch-specific RSJ training sessions and all staff meetings throughout the year.

EJSE continued community outreach with Community Connections partners and the Community Liaisons Program in the Department of Neighborhoods. Partners were able to assist on projects and programs across the utility and share information with community about SPU services, including its Utility Discount Program for low-income ratepayers.

RSJ Change Team

In 2021, the Change Team held virtual meetings to further RSJ work with a focus on building relational culture within the team and the Utility. Accomplishments include reversing an SDHR ruling that did not recognize field experience for the Civil Engineering Specialist class job qualifications; sponsoring training to increase the Utility's internal capacity to facilitate RSJ conversations and workshops; and providing recommendations to make Personnel Rule 3.5 Out-of-Class Policy more equitable. The Change Team also developed RSJ job interview questions and benchmarks in coordination with EJSE, and piloted use of the Racial Healing Handbook as an educational and team building tool.

Branch Equity Teams (BETs)

Drainage and Wastewater (DWW) BET

The DWW BET in 2021 organized work around three key areas:

1. Supporting Frontline Staff
 - In System Maintenance, we started meeting on a semi-regular basis to establish goals and workgroups based on the equity issues crews wanted to prioritize.
 - We formalized three distinct workgroups: 1) staff training and development; 2) improved peer and manager performance evaluation; and 3) fostering a culture of collaboration and respect amongst crews, between crews and other SPU staff, and between crews and the public.
 - Thanks in part to advocacy from staff in the Staff Training and Development workgroup, 2021 saw a successful push to change the minimum qualifications for the civil

engineering specialist classification, which prevented otherwise qualified frontline staff from applying to certain higher paying positions, many of them office based.

2. Equitable Hiring

- Held workshops with managers and supervisors to brainstorm around making the hiring process more equitable.
- Incorporated feedback into a comprehensive equitable hiring guide, which is being integrated with Water Line of Business and Shared Services BET equitable hiring tools to create a single guiding document, tool, and process for use with any hiring opportunity at SPU.

3. Indigenous People and Tribal Relations

- Built a workbook to support team learning and compile resources shared with and from the Project Delivery and Engineering Branch BET Tribal Relations Subcommittee.
- Started team and individual member learning processes through joint activities, discussions, and shared resources.
- Held quarterly meetings with Project Delivery and Engineering Branch's BET Subcommittee, and jointly developed a series of all staff for Indigenous People's Day and Native American Heritage Month.

Finance and Risk Services (FARS) BET

2021 saw the start of the second year for the newly established FARS BET. The team onboarded five members, continued work across four subcommittees, and continued its focus on learning and development. This included:

- Continued participation in one-on-ones, to foster relationships between team members and create an environment for deeper, more meaningful connectivity.
- Learning about and practicing facilitation to develop and hone member skillsets to support broader equity conversations and activation.
- Holding space for EJSE facilitator-led discussions, to draw on in-house expertise and knowledge.
- Holding two branch-wide equity events to cultivate conversation and connection related to:
 - Racial identity and racial identity development, focused on developing a positive racial identity through cultivation of nonjudgmental curiosity.
 - Seeing and understanding racism, including exploring the four types of racism and raising one's race consciousness by learning ways to expand awareness of how racism works as a system.

Additionally, the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) Subcommittee applied the racial equity toolkit to communication of consultant contracting opportunities, with an emphasis on supporting WMBE firms. The team identified six prioritized next steps, three upstream recommendations, and eight lessons learned.

Project Delivery and Engineering (PDEB) BET

In 2021, the PDEB BET:

- Prepared and worked on 2021 goals for small groups focused on tribal relations and responsibilities; resources for leaders; how staff shows up in communities; and branch learning and connection to RSJ.
- Developed a PDEB BET SharePoint site, branch engagement program, tribal needs survey, cross-training program, recruitment strategies, and gathered and evaluated data on how SPU engages communities during project delivery.
- Partnered with DWW BET, EJSE, and others on Lunch and Learns, resource sharing, and helping raise awareness and foster collaboration on RSJ and equity.

Solid Waste (SW) BET

The SW BET made great strides in 2021, including facilitating four equity Lunch and Learns that provided insight on topics such as the aftermath of national protests, cultural appropriation, canners in New York City, and violence against AAPI Communities. These sessions were offered to staff outside of Solid Waste and across divisions within SPU. In addition, BET members contributed to Racial Equity Toolkits that allowed the branch to use data to eliminate racial disparities in outreach, enforcement planning, and operations. The SW BET also established a presence at leadership team meetings to provide opportunities to request upper management support and share progress and goals.

Water Line of Business and Shared Services (WLOB and SS) BET

The WLOB and SS BET branch also supported implementation of the Water LOB's Racial Equity Action Plans. Accomplishments of the WLOB and SS BET include all staff members of the branch completing "Cracking the Codes" training; developing a branch hiring form to embed RSJ principles in hiring processes; responding to community requests by including a public park as part of the Bitter Lake Reservoir floating cover replacement; and providing free water quality lead testing for Utility Discount Program customers. The BET also worked with staff to review equity in service delivery and planning. Additionally, Racial Equity Toolkits were also used to select water main replacement and rehabilitation projects, and the branch continues to promote WMBE firms and vendors for utility contracts.

Anti-Racist White Caucus (ARWC)

The ARWC met monthly in 2021. The group's purpose is three-fold:

1. To support white-identified SPU colleagues in building the embodied awareness, emotional stamina, humility, community, and action orientation needed to sustain effective engagement in anti-racist work, in strategy with our BIPOC colleagues and RSJ thought leaders.
2. To take responsibility for educating ourselves about history and government laws, policies, and practices that uphold systemic and institutional racism, and to grow our ability to apply anti-

racist concepts, ways of being (e.g. relational culture), and practices in SPU's and other spheres of influence.

3. To take individual and/or collective action to shift power and resources to bring about equitable outcomes with respect to race at SPU, City government, and in our communities.

Parts of each monthly meeting covered a range of educational topics including inter-racial solidarity, confronting internalized superiority, standing up to anti-Asian hate, embodied anti-racism practices, internalized anti-Blackness and the Tulsa Centennial, and the intersection of patriarchy and white supremacy.

The ARWC also worked with the City of Seattle Silence Breakers to support the call for a citywide RSJ ordinance, participated in Equity Bridge, and maintained connection with EJSE, SPU Affinity groups, BETs, Change Team, and other City of Seattle department-wide white caucuses, supported by SOCR.

2021 Racial Action Plan Accomplishments

90% Women- & Minority-Owned Public Utilities Vendors

Attained 61% WMBE vendor utilization on purchasing transactions. While the branch did not reach its WMBE vendor utilization goal, consultant WMBE utilization increased from 29% in 2020 to 49% in 2021.

Accessible City Surplus Process

The Surplus Accessibility Process is still in development. The team continues to work to make the program more accessible to BIPOC communities and advise on process improvements.

Branch Equity Team (BET) Member Survey

The 2021 BET Member Survey was administered in October, with an overall response rate of 81%. Survey results were disseminated to all BETs in February 2022.

Claims Program Dashboard Review

The team applied a racial equity toolkit to review rates of claims filed and the results. The team updated the utility's claims distribution heat map to help identify potential inequitable service delivery and they simplified SPU's emergency housing response plan and procedure to improve response time on housing needs on storm-related claims.

Co-Creation to Reduce Sewer Overflows & Improve Quality

Drainage and Wastewater completed three internal stakeholder equity workshops, and drafted an equity memo that includes the process, decisions, and recommendations for incorporating equity into project management planning and the next phase of options analysis.

Communication Processes for Consulting Review

The team applied the Racial Equity Toolkit to SPU's consultant contracting notices, with an emphasis on supporting WMBE firms and completed guidance identifying six prioritized next steps, three upstream recommendations, and eight lessons learned.

Community Connections

SPU continued to work with Community Connections partners Horn of Africa Services, Chinese Information Service Center, and ECOSS to educate and empower their constituents with SPU messaging that resonates in community. SPU also extended the original Community Connections contracts to allow for a full RFQ process in 2022.

COVID Customer Emergency Assistance & Recovery

Seattle City Light and SPU secured council approval of ordinances improving access to ratepayer financial assistance in response to COVID and expanding funding for qualifying households. This resulted in 2,243 low-income households receiving more than accessing emergency assistance in 2021,

collectively receiving over \$1.5 million from the Utility toward their outstanding bills. In concert with HSD and SCL, we also streamlined access to the Utility Discount Program through a self-certified "fast-track" enrollment form to lower barriers and improve service equity, which resulted in 9,521 new enrollments into the discount program in 2021.

Customer Review Panel (CRP) Engagement

SPU completed a two-part orientation for new members which included Race and Social Justice training, a first for the CRP and incorporated community organizations for the first time into panel meetings.

Customer Review Panel Recruitment

In 2021 the utility completed recruitment for the panel and expanded its make-up to include a majority Black and People of Color. New members represent a range of interests and experience that was previously lacking on the panel.

Develop Staff Equity Learning

In June, we held a branch-wide equity event on racial identity and racial identity development, focused on developing a positive racial identity through cultivation of nonjudgmental curiosity. In November, held another branch-wide event focused on seeing and understanding racism, including exploring the four types of racism and raising one's race consciousness by learning ways to expand awareness of how racism works as a system.

Donation Program for Utility Bills

The SPU Community Donation Fund launched in 2021 to allow customers and the public to donate to help customers unable to pay their utility bill with all monies going directly toward financial assistance to income eligible households. An online app allows anyone to donate using a debit or credit card. Customers can also donate closed account credit balances. Donations by check are also accepted. The Community Donation fund raised approximately \$5,000 in its first year.

Drinking Water Line of Business Hiring Form

The Water Line of Business and Shared Services branch developed a hiring form to add a deeper RSJ lens to the hiring process. The new process includes reviewing the hiring language with an RSJ lens, broadening hiring outreach to BIPOC professional groups and underrepresented communities, screening resumes in a way that removes biases, having diverse interview panels, and adding RSJ questions to each phase of the interviews.

Duwamish Valley Resilience District

SPU has a Racial Equity Evaluation RFP and Organizational Development RFP to choose consultants that will support the Resilience District. Sea Level Rise Adaptation Scenario Planning and Municipal Finance RFPs will follow in the first half of 2022, and the Resilience District development work will begin in mid-2022.

Duwamish Valley Youth Group Mentoring

SPU worked with approximately 60 youth during the year, including staff support and mentoring from five stormwater professionals. Other activities consisting of storm drain stenciling, a youth led booth about storm drain care, and distribution of free lawn and leaf bags in the South Park and Georgetown neighborhoods.

Emergency Assistance Program (EAP)

In 2021 the SPU Emergency Assistance Program doubled the assistance to eligible households by allowing assistance up to two times per year, for a total of \$922 in credits. We provided 2,243 customers with credits, totaling \$1.5 million in assistance.

Encampment Trash Program

The Encampment Trash Program (ETP) provides proactive and preventive weekly and on-call garbage service to Unsanctioned Homeless Encampments (UHE). The program focuses on providing equitable sanitation, and harm reduction services to unsheltered communities. This service reduces health and safety risk associated with high volumes of garbage. Our action item per the 2021 Racial Equity Plan was to increase ETP services and outreach to an additional 12 UHEs. In 2021, 39 ETP sites received service weekly, an increase of 22 sites from 2019. A total of 1,302,932 pounds of garbage was collected.

Encroachment Program Review

SPU applied a Racial Equity Toolkit to the preparation and payment of Temporary Construction Easements to property owners for the use of their property in the construction of SPU projects. We completed two stakeholder workshops, identified four short-term actions, a long-term action, and team lessons learned.

Equitable Access to Public Utilities Development Services Office

Analysis shows no definitive link between Water Availability Certificate/Plan Review turnaround times and income or racial composition. Instead, delays in processing time are most often due to applicant missing requirements or providing incomplete information.

Equity Filters in Waste Prevention Strategic Planning

Split the contracting process into four contracts to increase WMBE opportunities. All four primes are WMBE, and 12 of the 13 subs are also WMBE. This includes one consultant team that will provide RSJ guidance and oversight throughout the project. Contract negotiations are in progress. 2022 will be primarily focused on planning, with implementation of public engagement in 2023.

Food Service Compliance using Targeted Universalism

From 2019-2021, we reviewed the Racial Equity Toolkit and approach for targeted universalism, which enables the program to meet broader goals by developing targeted strategies that better achieve racial

equity in service delivery and resource allocation. In 2022, we will do baseline data gathering and analysis as well as offer technical assistance to customers.

[Free Lead Testing for Utility Discount Program Customers](#)

While SPU's water does not contain lead, it can leach into drinking water from plumbing fixtures. Lead is very harmful to human health and national studies show unsafe drinking water disproportionately impacts BIPOC and low-income communities. The Drinking Water Quality division rolled out free water quality lead testing for Utility Discount Program Customers, and in 2022 the team will promote this free service and report out on participation.

[Hazardous Waste Program Update](#)

The Hazardous Waste Management Plan was developed in 2021 and focused on a shared vision where race is not a determinant of hazardous materials exposure. The updated plan, which is under review by the Department of Ecology, reflects community feedback and includes new policies, programs, and practices designed to better serve people of color. A charter for a Collections and Facilities Study is being developed in early 2022, and results-based accountability metrics will be developed by the end of 2022.

[Improve Distribution of Woman & Minority Business Utilization in Public Utilities Contracts](#)

Each SPU division/branch was contacted to provide information on all upcoming projects on a newly developed easy to use Microsoft Forms site. A list of all upcoming events was compiled and routinely distributed through the following mediums: online posting to SPU WMBE site, email distribution of SPU WMBE Newsletter, and distribution to outside organizations.

[In Language Recycling Assistance](#)

In 2021, we added additional zip codes and we are planning to add outbound email communications to our outreach tools. We're continuing to measure success and to monitor recontamination rates. This program is continuing in 2022.

[In-Language Survey for Commercial Customer Feedback](#)

Completed and analyzed survey results and identified opportunities to increase equity for commercial garbage customers.

[Neighborhood Construction Safety Initiative](#)

Developed a website with multilingual content about construction safety; safety awareness notices, which are available in eight languages; and construction safety activity worksheets for youth. To further promote construction safety, the multilingual notices will be distributed to communities located near SPU construction projects.

North Thornton Natural Drainage Systems (NDS) Project Review

The North Thornton NDS project team completed three workshops and is finalizing their Racial Equity Toolkit. The toolkit will inform Options Analysis approaches to NDS site selection and other opportunities to engage community in project delivery with an eye towards inclusive engagement practices. The team developed the RET in partnership with the Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs and six community liaisons from the Department of Neighborhoods.

Open Space at Underground/Covered Drinking Water Reservoirs

In 2021, the Bitter Lake Reservoir planning and design team completed a study of options for replacing the aging reservoir's floating cover. The analysis considered interests and needs of residents in Bitter Lake, which is a diverse neighborhood with the highest Racial and Social Equity Index level for disadvantage and priority. In reviewing options for the reservoir replacement, the project team selected the option that includes installation of a park in this Bitter Lake community that lacks open space compared to surrounding neighborhoods. SPU and Seattle Parks and Recreation are working together to engage the community and other key stakeholders as the project design begins.

PCC Branch Equity Team (BET) Launch

In 2021, we established a BET for the People, Culture, and Community Branch in SPU. The PCC BET held its first meeting in December 2021, with 20 members on the team. 2022 monthly membership meetings have been scheduled.

Pearl Street Drainage Improvement Project

A Racial Equity Toolkit was created, and the project team has had ongoing, successful communication and outreach with the local community throughout the duration of the project, including providing customized translation services in Vietnamese and Spanish for neighbors in the community.

Preserve Mature Trees & Repair Sewers

SPU is committed to preserving the city's tree canopy, which helps to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat events that can have devastating impacts on communities of color. In 2021, SPU project teams worked collaboratively with City departments, including SDOT and Parks, as well as communities to review and assess trees in the right-of-way that might be impacted or removed due to construction and sought opportunities to promote tree preservation.

Public Utilities Talent Acquisition "ReTooled"

Human Resources committed to form a Hiring Advisory Committee and to expand recruitment outreach in BIPOC communities. The team is successful with both objectives. The Advisory Committee received executive leadership approval to launch a pilot for a promising hiring process enhancement anticipated to make employment more accessible for BIPOC communities. In 2021, recruiters conducted

employment outreach at both the Black Health & Wealth and API Community Fair. Finally, we significantly expanded our job posting distribution list to nearly 25 agencies.

[Race & Social Justice Employee Training](#)

In 2021, all members of the Water Line of Business and Shared Service Branch completed Cracking the Codes training.

[RainCity Partnership Program](#)

In 2021, we established RSJ goals including prioritizing green stormwater retrofit projects in the top two priority tiers of the City's Racial and Social Equity Index map or the citywide Duwamish Valley Program. This includes a WMBE inclusion target, delivering at least 10 projects led by community-based organizations serving BIPOC communities, and delivering a mentorship program focused on GSI and riparian area restoration. In collaboration with People's Economy Lab, the program also helped develop an RSJ evaluation strategy and scope.

[Recycling & Disposal Access for Low-Income Customers](#)

Identified enhancements in customer service and internal processes to allow Utility Discount Program customers to request up to two free Special Items (Beyond the Cart) collections/year.

[Review RainWise Program](#)

RainWise made immediate programmatic changes to the program such as collecting demographic data for customers and contractors, revising rebate processing time. The programs will be seeking approval for more funding to achieve additional RET recommendations.

[RV Wastewater Pumpout Pilot Program](#)

The program provided 1546 wastewater collections to people living in RVs in Seattle; evaluated alternative modes of service delivery including testing different service rates to 'right size' the program and piloted temporary dump events, which were less successful than service in place.

[Shape Our Water Drainage & Wastewater Plan](#)

SPU in 2021 continued to develop the Shape Our Water Plan, which will include six-year and 50-year actions and investments. We completed the Shape Our Water Community Vision and Equity Framework, funded BIPOC community-based organizations to share stories of resilience and their connections to our local water bodies, collaborated with and resourced 6 local community leaders to co-design online events and materials, and completed a statement of intent for Shape Our Water that centers environmental justice and equity.

[Side Sewer Assistance Pilot Program](#)

RET for the program was completed, and the results were integrated into the Implementation Plan and Outreach. Partnerships were established with three community-based organizations for program

delivery targeting BIPOC homeowners. This includes Environmental Coalition of South Seattle, Chinese Information Service Center, and Horn of Africa Services. Outreach materials for the program were developed in eight languages. Phase I was launched in partnership with the Office of Housing in late 2021.

Side Sewer Investigation Program Review

Worked with the Law section on a strategy to develop in-language enforcement notices and determined an approach for Law to verify accuracy of translated materials. In 2021, the Side Sewer Program did not have any instances where language barriers necessitated translation services. Therefore, no meaningful metrics were collected. The program also updated other materials, including an updated “Know your Side Sewer” card, and identified strategies for engaging with BIPOC customers and connecting them to community resources.

Solid Waste Branch Equity Training & Conversations

The Solid Waste BET developed plan to host five events in 2022 including Lunch and Learns to continue opportunities for sharing learning, support 2 or more Ops/Frontline staff trainings and/or caucus, and share training offerings from other SPU departments.

Solid Waste Staff Advancement Support

Of 11 employee promotions in Solid Waste Operations in 2021, nine involved 9 BIPOC employees and of 20 Out of Class (OOC) assignments, 18 involved BIPOC staff and 1 female supervisor. This year, Solid Waste Operations is on track to fill nine vacancies and multiple OOC opportunities.

South Transfer Station Phase 2 Community Engagement

SPU is redeveloping an area near the South Transfer Station in the South Park neighborhood. The project team is working to incorporate multiple community benefits in the project design in this highly diverse community, including the installation of a walking trail along 5th Ave S to improve walkability and public safety. The project team is preparing to reengage with community via multi-lingual outreach to build awareness about the project and get feedback on the visioning for future uses of the old South Transfer Station campus.

Teach Green Stormwater Infrastructure Skills to Youth

In 2021, this effort identified Seattle Jobs Initiative as the partner organization to provide hiring and payroll, soft skills training, and support services for the pilot Seattle Opportunity Workcorps (SOWcorps). A MOA was initiated to solidify the partnership, and efforts to find funding beyond SPU maintenance funding were initiated. Internal staff worked with O&M staff to identify bodies of work and potential sites.

[Water Main Leak Response Review](#)

In 2021, the Water Line of Business and Shared Services branch generated a map of where water main leaks occur to look for areas that might have a disproportionate number of leaks especially in underserved areas of the city. We did not find any disproportionately affected areas based on a broad overview. In 2022, we plan to look at this data more closely.

[Water Main Replacement Review](#)

In 2021, the Water Planning and Program Management division continued to use Racial Equity Toolkits for selecting water main replacement and rehabilitation projects. A new project to upgrade water main infrastructure took place in South Seattle where we were able to partner with the Seattle Department of Transportation to make neighborhood street improvements, as well.

[Water Service Customer Call Review](#)

In 2021, the Water Line of Business and Shared Services branch generated a map of where high priority water customer calls occurred and our response time to those calls. We looked for areas where we did not meet our response goal of 60 minutes or less to identify if there were disparities in the level of service in communities with a higher percentage of people of color. A broad overview of the data did not demonstrate any problem areas. Therefore, we plan to further assess the data for service equity in 2022.

[Water Service Renewal Review](#)

In 2021, the Water Operations and System Maintenance team continued to replace old water service lines. Our analysis showed that these older service lines might contain short lead connector pieces and are more heavily located in wealthier neighborhoods in the city. Because Seattle's water is treated to minimize the tendency for lead to enter the water, our water quality test results for lead continue to be very good and the lead connector piece has not shown to present a lead risk to customers.



Racial Equity Toolkit Summary Sheet

Department: Seattle Public Utilities

Issue Area Analyzed: Bitter Lake Reservoir Recovering Project

RET Lead: Andrew Karch

Date of RET process: 2021

1. What issues area did you apply the RET on? (project, program, policy, or budgetary decision)

This RET was applied to the project issues area. It was applied to the Bitter Lake Reservoir Recovering Project.

2. What was your north star? What racial equity outcomes guided your thinking (Step 1)? How did you design and facilitate a process that was rooted in relational culture? (See the RSJI document, [Building a Relational Culture.](#))

The north star guiding us is the engagement of the diverse community where the project will be constructed. The Bitter Lake Neighborhood has 12% of its population speaking English less than “very well”, 22% of its population below the poverty level, and 47% of its population are people of color. It is a very diverse community and has the highest “Racial and Social Equity Index” level for disadvantage and priority.

The racial equity outcomes that guided our thinking were the impacts the project would have on the community during construction and once the project is complete. The construction period would be about 3 years. We wanted community outreach and engagement with the community to guide us in mitigating community impacts during construction. The project site already has an existing water reservoir. In reviewing options for the reservoir replacement, we were guided by how the selected options could provide additional open space for a new park that would benefit this very diverse community that has a lack of open space compared to other surrounding neighborhoods.

The process was facilitated based on SPU’s established Racial Equity Toolkit. The Stakeholder Analysis, Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Plan Development, and Service Project or Program Development toolkits were all utilized over a series of four meetings. The equity team was developed including those with key roles on the project, others outside the project to give additional perspective, and staff within our Environment Justice and Service Equity group. The kick-off meeting started with an equity primer to start us off thinking with an equity lens; we also discussed and recognized our own biases that we bring to the table. Starting off with the Stakeholder Analysis toolkit we took a deep dive on the demographics of the impacted community.

3. What data, stories, and communities did you engage with? What relationships did you develop, sustain, or deepen during this process? How did these relationships contextualize your institutional objective? (Step 2)

Data we engaged with included demographic data for the Bitter Lake Community and review of the Racial and Social Equity Index Map. This data is presented in the response to question 1. Stories we



Racial Equity Toolkit Summary Sheet

shared included impacts to other communities when new reservoirs and tanks were constructed, mitigation measures that were applied during construction, and the differences between those communities and the Bitter Lake community. Engagement with the community involved strategizing how the project team will engage with the community during the development of the project. There were discussions regarding community liaisons, community groups, community center contacts, and staff that live and work in the neighborhood that could be a resource/connection to the neighborhood. There was a detailed search of what businesses and types of residential development are adjacent to the project site.

Relationships within the project equity team were further deepened. Further developing, sustaining, and deepening our relationship with the community is our next steps as we start to develop the project. The deepening of our project equity team relationship helped focus the project's equity lens, which will be beneficial to the way we outreach and engage the community as the project is developed.

4. How did these relationships help you to identify the burdens and benefits of your proposed work? What are the burdens? What are the benefits? (Step 3)

The deepening of the team's relationship helped us open up and become more engaged with the process. Thinking with an equity lens helped us identify the burdens of construction disruptions, construction anxiety and fatigue, and gentrification. It also helped us identify the need for engagement with the community to determine what construction mitigation measures may be needed for this community as they may likely be very different than the needs of other communities that we have worked with in the past.

The outcomes of the project include being able to continue to provide a high level of service to our water customers with safe, reliable, high quality potable water. Other benefits include opening more of the site for open space where Seattle Parks and Recreation can develop a new park. The project will include 1% for Art which will be beneficial to the community.

5. Please identify the way in which the four types of racism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural) animated your RET process and what you learned. (Step 3)

Internalized racism was discussed among the team as manifesting through the biases that we brought to the table. In discussing these biases, we attempted to focus our equity lens and look beyond them.

Interpersonal racism can occur in the way we engage with the community with outreach and during construction. A public involvement plan will be developed to ensure we are utilizing the right techniques to reach out to the community members in this demographic. This plan may involve community liaisons.

Institutional racism has occurred on past projects where affluent communities are given a louder voice and more diverse communities are not heard. On this project we will be reaching out to the community



Racial Equity Toolkit Summary Sheet

to determine what mitigation will be required for construction instead of waiting for the community to come to us.

Structural racism is occurring throughout the city where gentrification is occurring. Unfortunately, the improvements resulting from SPU projects may aid the negative impacts by increasing property values. Discussions are happening at the department level, but real solutions may be at the City and State policy level.

6. As a result of the above analysis, how will you increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for the impacted community? (Step 4)

Once design of the project starts and the public outreach consultant is under contract a public involvement plan will be developed. Inputs from the completed RET will be used to guide the development of this plan. Engagement with the community will start early in the design process and continue throughout design and construction. Community Liaisons may be utilized in outreach efforts. Outreach methods will be developed and utilized to get input from marginalized and less vocal stakeholders and community members.

Construction mitigation measures will be developed specifically for the needs of this community, which will be determined through community engagement.

7. What steps will the RET team take to ensure that department leadership will implement the recommendations from the RET?

As part of SPU process after the completion of the RET a memo is sent to SPU management. Additional conversations have already started regarding the concerns of gentrification and the need to provide mitigation measures during construction that are applicable to this community.

8. How will you become/remain accountable to the relationships developed during the RET process? How will you report back to your stakeholders?

We will become/remain accountable to the relationship developed during the RET by continuing equity conversations throughout the project. The RET will be revised throughout the project as needed.

Stakeholders range from community members to other agencies to the Mayor Office. Reporting back to stakeholders will be through meetings, briefings, public notices, public outreach events, website, social media, and other methods that may be developed in the public involvement plan.

9. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation, including [building a relational culture](#) (i.e., working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity).



Racial Equity Toolkit Summary Sheet

The racial equity toolkit did reveal concerns with gentrification. In building a new reservoir additional open space is created where Seattle Parks and Recreation plans to build a park. Though this diverse community needs additional open space, providing additional amenities within a neighborhood can bring along with it the negative consequences, such as gentrification. The discussion of this issue revealed that other branches within SPU are also concerned with SPU projects impacting gentrification. Further discussions are occurring, and a study is being conducted by the Drainage and Wastewater Line of Business Branch. However, this issue is greater than just SPU and real change may require policy changes at the City or State level.



Racial Equity Toolkit Summary Sheet

Department: Seattle Public Utilities

Issue Area Analyzed: Customer Service Quality Assurance (QA) Program

RET Leads: Monica Lewis and Gregory Smith

Date of RET process: 2021

1. What issues area did you apply the RET on? (project, program, policy, or budgetary decision)

The RET was applied to our contact center's Quality Assurance (QA) program. The current QA program was redesigned four years ago by a group of Customer Response analysts, supervisors, agents, and external consultants. It was implemented to address the division's needs in two areas: to evaluate the quality of our Utility Account Representatives' (UAR) calls with SCL and SPU customers, and to provide UARs with valid feedback and coaching for continuous improvement.

While QA programs are common and stable in many contact center environments, the QA program was evolving in Customer Response. Early on, we discovered there was an opportunity to bring more consistency in how evaluators scored. In addition, Quality Assurance was not a common practice in other divisions of SPU. Because of these factors, some UARs developed a negative perception of the QA program – it was thought to be an unfair practice that was intended to be a mechanism for driving disciplinary action.

We are fortunate to have a diverse group of UARs supporting our customers. It was critical that we complete the RET process on our QA program, to ensure the call evaluation process was fair and equitable for UARs of all backgrounds.

2. What was your north star? What racial equity outcomes guided your thinking (Step 1)? How did you design and facilitate a process that was rooted in relational culture? (See the RSJI document, [Building a Relational Culture.](#))

Our north star was to walk away with a review of the QA program guidelines and to provide recommendations that would eliminate any biased language, eliminate opportunities for rater bias, and identify improvements to the overall evaluation process.

The RET project team was racially diverse, included UARs and QA Analysts, and was facilitated by SPU's Racial Equity Strategic Advisors. We purposefully began each meeting by checking in with each other, developing our relationships, and building trust in each other. Building trust was a critical step, because the project participants were from different sides of the QA program – the QA staff that created and applied the QA guidelines, and the UARs that were measured by the QA guidelines.

We initially spent time grounding ourselves in the RET process, getting a better understanding of racial equity. After thoughtful discussion, we concluded our process would be guided by the following five questions from SPU's Racial Equity Toolkit:



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1. Does one stakeholder group carry more influence than another in regard to your planned effort? If so, please explain why.
2. How might your team's position, socio-economic composition, perspective, or implicit bias influence the direction or intent of this effort?
3. What are the historical or current racial or socio-economic disparities (one group benefitting or negatively affected more than another group) related to the QA Scorecard? How might we address them?
4. What are the specific evaluation measures or outcomes that might inform whether racial or other related inequity was occurring? How can we build these measures into our overall evaluation plan?
5. How will the results to these questions be communicated to our staff?

3. What data, stories, and communities did you engage with? What relationships did you develop, sustain, or deepen during this process? How did these relationships contextualize your institutional objective? (Step 2)

As noted above, we created a RET project team consisting of two Racial Equity Strategic Advisors, two UARs, two Sr QA Analysts, and the QA Program Manager. The team represented a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. The involvement of two EJSE advisors helped provide an 'outsider' perspective. They were able to routinely ask questions in a way that provided space for all voices to be heard while also keeping the discussion focused. The team reviewed QA program feedback from a variety of sources, including Local 17 union survey results, UAR comments provided to the Ombudsperson, and data from the QA system.

Over the course of ten one-hour meetings, the team dynamic evolved from being cautious and uncertain to being open, honest, and having trust in each other and faith in the process. This open collaboration is what allowed the team to reach a successful outcome.

4. How did these relationships help you to identify the burdens and benefits of your proposed work? What are the burdens? What are the benefits? (Step 3)

In the beginning of the project, the UARs stated they felt they had no voice, so they were hesitant to make suggestions or provide feedback on the proposed work. Once the purpose and expectations of the QA Program was explained to the team and trust was established the communication between the team was free flowing.

Developing trust amongst the project team allowed for a safe environment, where personal opinions, examples, and perspectives could be shared – knowing team members would listen with an open mind. We came to a common understanding that our challenge would be creating QA guidelines that were flexible enough to be fair to everyone in our diverse workforce, while still ensuring an excellent customer experience. We also understood that by accomplishing that goal, we would gain vastly improved acceptance and understanding of the QA program, improve the job satisfaction for the UARs, and achieve an even better experience for our customers.



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5. Please identify the way in which the four types of racism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural) animated your RET process and what you learned. (Step 3)

Prior to delving into the specifics of the QA program, the RET project team spent several sessions gaining knowledge about, and having discussions on, the different layers of racism. With this foundation, it helped us understand that we needed to look at the QA program from several different angles to fully identify areas of bias – the individual evaluators, the QA program managers & business leadership, and everyone’s perception of what constitutes a positive customer experience. Most notably, opportunities to address interpersonal and institutional racism were highlighted in this process.

6. As a result of the above analysis, how will you increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for the impacted community? (Step 4)

Through project team discussions, it became clear that the most benefit would come from focusing on the existing QA scorecard criteria. Our goal was to identify any areas that were overly subjective or repetitive, having the potential to lead to biased evaluations. That analysis revealed that much of our QA criteria was confusing or ambiguous. We determined that our top recommendation to upstream management was to create a simplified version of the QA scorecard using more objective criteria, resulting in consistent, fair, and equitable evaluations of employee performance.

We will solicit feedback from UARs on proposed changes in a timely manner to keep them engaged in the QA scorecard revision process. Feedback will be obtained through team meetings, focus groups, surveys, etc. We will also provide ongoing education on the QA Program processes to the contact center.

Because UARs are represented, our SPU HR Labor and Union stakeholders will also be involved in the final scorecard approval process.

7. What steps will the RET team take to ensure that department leadership will implement the recommendations from the RET?

A summary memo of our findings was presented to SPU leadership on June 16th, 2021, and each of our next-step recommendations received approval. In addition, the project team made formal presentations to members of SPU Human Resources, the Office of Employee Ombud, Protec17, as well as to every UAR measured by the QA program. We are invested and committed to making the recommended improvements.

8. How will you become/remain accountable to the relationships developed during the RET process? How will you report back to your stakeholders?

Establishing a closer connection with the members of our project team was one of the positive outcomes of this process. The UARs that were part of the RET project team were incredibly helpful, and they will continue to participate in the implementation of our recommendations.



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It is important we follow through on all recommendations submitted to upstream management via the summary memo, and adjust our timeline as needed and report updates to all stakeholders.

Upon completion of our UAR/Supervisor focus groups regarding recommended scorecard changes, we will provide next steps to our UARs and SPU HR Labor and Union stakeholders.

To help with visibility into the team's progress, we're developing content in SharePoint that will display QA performance metrics as well as the current status of our RET recommendations.

9 What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation, including [building a relational culture](#) (i.e., working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity).

The RET process resulted in 10 different recommendations to improve the QA program. One of those recommendations is to provide cultural communication awareness training to all Customer Response staff each year. Seattle is an incredibly diverse community, and by becoming more aware and knowledgeable about different cultures, we can provide a better experience to the customers we serve. Internally, this training can help us become more understanding and accepting of everyone we work with each day.

A few of the lessons learned by the two UARs who participated in the RET process were:

- "Made me more aware of the cultural needs of my customers, so I learned to be respectful of cultural practices, attitudes, and beliefs of others."
- "Updated and continuous training needed by UARs to assist a customer and meet QA requirements."
- "Opened my eyes to the inequities through our QA system, which could impact UARs negatively."
- "The voice of the UAR counts, and we can make changes."



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Department: Seattle Public Utilities

Issue Area Analyzed: Residential Natural Yard Care Program

Team that led this RET process: Kate Kurtz, Vicky Raya, Jana Dilley, Sylvia Cavazos, Laura Matter, Reingard Rieger, Selena Ligrano, Stuart Vasquez, Cynthia Andrews

Date of RET process: 2021

1. What issues area did you apply the RET on? (project, program, policy, or budgetary decision)

The RET was applied to the Residential Natural Yard Care Outreach and Engagement Program.

2. What was your north star? What racial equity outcomes guided your thinking (Step 1)? How did you design and facilitate a process that was rooted in relational culture? (See the RSJI document, [Building a Relational Culture.](#))

The residential natural yard care education and engagement program is a decades long program for SPU. Since the 1980s, the program has been administered by SPU with contractual assistance from the community-based organization, Tilth Alliance (formerly called Seattle Tilth). Former program managers recognized that previous participants were predominately white, middle to upper class, and disproportionately living north of the ship canal. As a result, strategic efforts were made to improve equity in the program. In 2021, we engaged in the RET process to examine who is participating, if the needs of community are being met, who has power in the decision-making process of this program, and where we can do better. The racial equity outcomes we aspire to achieve in this program include racial and geographic equity across the City for who is engaging and leading in this topic. In addition we aim to grow subject matter expertise in this topic amongst diverse residents and community based organizations. We recognize that with focused efforts to improve access to this programming, particularly for low-income and communities of color, everyone improves.

In this RET process we sought to center the voices and experiences of the contractors and subcontracted community liaisons who are conducting this work on behalf of SPU and Haz Waste. We wanted to hear from the individuals delivering this programming what is working well, so that we may preserve those elements, and what their barriers are, so that we can make targeted improvements.

3. What data, stories, and communities did you engage with? What relationships did you develop, sustain, or deepen during this process? How did these relationships contextualize your institutional objective? (Step 2)

We collected many stories from our contractors regarding their work in the community. They were able to share examples of when things go very well, and examples of when they encounter barriers. We also discussed ways in which our contractor, a community-based organization, is partnering with other CBOs to help promote a program that is responding to the needs and interests of community. To the extent possible, our prime contractor, Tilth, aims to let other CBOs take the lead on determining what they need on this subject, and how to support these organizations deliver their goals. For example, Tilth



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Alliance has been working alongside and supporting Black Farmers Collective and Labateyah House, two BIPOC CBOs, by providing them with information and gardening materials as needed, but letting these organization take the lead by delivering the programming to their own communities. By listening to these organizations, and allowing them to lead, it is forcing us to change our programming to be more inclusive and adaptive to the needs of community in a way in which they are centered and given the primary voice. They are growing in their capacity to serve community, and we as staff and contractors are growing in our knowledge in how to be culturally responsive.

4. How did these relationships help you to identify the burdens and benefits of your proposed work? What are the burdens? What are the benefits? (Step 3)

We identified multiple burdens and benefits associated with this work for community, the contractors, and to SPU. Primarily we need to ensure that those who are most impacted by a degraded environment or exposure to harmful yard chemicals are benefiting from this program.

Through the RET process, we learned that when our contractor, Tilth Alliance, centers the voices and needs of community, including other Community Based Organizations, everyone benefits. By centering community and sharing the power of who is crafting and delivering the messaging in this program, we are building the skills, experience, and subject matter expertise in this sector amongst more players, while SPU staff and our prime contractors are growing in awareness and knowledge to be more culturally responsive. Simultaneously, however, we identified that through decades of partnering with our prime contract, Tilth Alliance, who is primarily a white, native-English speaking organization, and asking them to subcontract a portion of that work to WMBE firms, we have built a power structure in which we have unintentionally created a power hierarchy that disproportionately burdens subcontractors of color.

5. Please identify the way in which the four types of racism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural) animated your RET process and what you learned. (Step 3)

SPU has supported Tilth Alliance with a large, consistent contract over the years, but we recognize that we want to empower other organizations and individuals to stand on their own, and lead in their own communities. We at SPU control the budget, and who benefits financially. If we position communities of color to hold the power, it not only builds them up, but also holds SPU accountable as an institution.

6. As a result of the above analysis, how will you increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for the impacted community? (Step 4)

In this process we centered our conversations around the needs of community, and thinking about ways that we can let community organizations be true partners and leaders in this programming. We brainstormed ways in which we can let community organizations identify their needs and we can support them whether through information, materials, or teaching assistance. We want to make sure



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the community is able to lead the process to the extent possible, and we as an organization can lift and center their voices. We will continue to engage and listen to community members regarding their needs and interests, and tailor our programming based on what we learn. In addition, during the RET process we discussed that many of our educational materials and teaching aides are inadequate and inappropriate for many audiences, particularly for non-English speakers and those who have low literacy in any language. We committed to recreating our educational materials with translation and cultural relevancy at front of mind, and in a highly visual way to accommodate those with low literacy skills in any language. Our contractors will continue to tailor the engagement strategies and programming to meet the needs and interests of specific communities, and let them lead to the extent possible.

7. What steps will the RET team take to ensure that department leadership will implement the recommendations from the RET?

The RET team presented the process findings, follow-up tasks, and future focused recommendations to senior leadership at SPU.

On August 20th, 2021 Natural Yard Care Program manager, Kate Kurtz, presented the RET process and findings to Solid Waste and Drainage and Wastewater Division Managers, Susan Fife-Ferris and Ellen Stewart, along with managers and RET team members, Sylvia Cavazos and Jana Dilley. In her presentation Kate highlighted insights gleaned from the current program including 3 strengths, 3 barriers, and 3 neutral insights to be mindful of. Kate then discussed 4 follow-up tasks to be completed by Q4 2022, which she will be responsible for implementing, 4 future-focused recommendations, which she does not have the authority to implement in the near-term or within her work plan. The response of management was overwhelmingly positive, supportive, and thought provoking. The agreed upon follow-up tasks to be completed in 2022 are 1) ensure we are deliberately partnering with diverse CBOs in the delivery of our programming 2) create new educational materials that are more image-based, with fewer words, keeping in mind groups that have limited literacy skills, 3) investigate conducting program evaluation surveys in additional languages to English and additional formats to web-based software, and 4) work with a GIS analyst to help spatially visualize who is accessing the program services and compare that with existing population data.

8 How will you become/remain accountable to the relationships developed during the RET process? How will you report back to your stakeholders?

We are working with the contractors involved in this process to implement the recommendations of the RET. Building upon the RET process, we are actively reimagining ways to restructure our contracts to promote more partnerships between contractors and enable a larger diversity of firms to bid on and participate in this work.

I provide updates to SW and DWW and Haz Waste Management on this program. Haz Waste is a major funder of this program.



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- 9. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation, including [building a relational culture](#) (i.e., working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity).**

The Natural Yard Care Program has been conducted in partnership between SPU and Tilth Alliance since the 1980s. Tilth Alliance is a very white, north Seattle-based organization, and much of their experience and subject matter expertise has been built by administering this contract. Moreover, the contract has been constructed and written in ways in which few, if any, other contractors would qualify to perform the work; indeed, in many contract cycles, no other firms bid on this work besides Tilth Alliance. After the RET process the project manager spent more time considering how to improve equity within this program, particularly related to how to build subject matter expertise and contracting capability from a greater diversity of firms. Initial thoughts include breaking this large contract into multiple smaller contracts. This has the potential to allow more firms to be qualified to bid on and perform this work, to grow more leadership capacity within the community, and to shift the prime-subcontractor relationship from a single white-dominated organization to a more diverse prime contractor pool. In addition to serving equity goals, this restructuring also has the potential to improve our resilience within this workspace. While breaking the large contract into multiple smaller contracts might provide equity and business resilience benefits, it should be expected that it will increase administrative costs and workload to SPU.

It should be noted, that by including our contractors in the RET process we were able to obtain detailed stories and on the ground accounts of how this program is being delivered in community, which was very helpful. At the same time, however, a lesson learned is that by including a contracted organization in the process, they were only willing to highlight where they are doing well and not discuss where they could be doing better. This lesson learned then leads us to ask who we turn to for valid information.



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Department: Seattle Public Utilities

Issue Area Analyzed: Access to Consultant Contracting Opportunities

Team that led this RET process: Amy Bonfrisco, Jana Duran, Katia Garcia, Steve Hamai, Linda Johnson, Tadesse Minas, Karl Stickel, and Julie Vorhes

Date of RET process: 2021

1. What issues area did you apply the RET on? (project, program, policy, or budgetary decision)

Consultant contracting opportunities are advertised publicly. Consultants can ask and receive responses to questions prior to submittal deadlines, through a public portal, and by attending and engaging in a pre-submittal meeting. Based on feedback from the WMBE consultant community, often insufficient or unclear information is communicated, in addition to inadequate time afforded to develop and submit a competitive proposal. This RET is focused on eliminating barriers and developing tools and resources to improve the communication of consultant contracting opportunities to WMBE consultants.

2. What was your north star? What racial equity outcomes guided your thinking (Step 1)? How did you design and facilitate a process that was rooted in relational culture? (See the RSJI document, [Building a Relational Culture.](#))

The north star for this RET was the improvement of communication of consultant contracting opportunities to WMBE consultants. Expected outcomes included recognizing, naming, and eliminating barriers, as well as developing and implementing tools and resources focused on access, equity, and inclusion. The RET Team consists of:

- SPU FARS branch equity team, racial equity toolkit subcommittee members
 - Steve Hamai, senior racial equity advisor, and
 - Katia Garcia, WMBE program manager
- RET Stakeholders consist of:
- SPU FARS contracts and procurement workgroup
 - SPU contract managers, and
 - The WMBE consultant community

Development and inclusion of the RET and Stakeholder teams was based on the value of ensuring inclusive voice from impacted parties, subject matter experts, and advocates. RET meetings were held, providing space for these voices, learning and growth opportunities for members, and the ability for all to see their input and ideas reflected in proposed outcomes.

Initial meetings focused on learning the city's racial equity toolkit process and gaining the context necessary to apply the toolkit. Additionally, the RET team explored policies and processes where potential equity barriers and opportunities for improvements existed, and collectively selected Communication of Consultant Contracting Opportunities, to apply the RET. The Team then began to:

- Explore and define the selected problem statement,
- Learn about consultant contracting processes, both upstream and downstream, and
- Identifying stakeholders and their power dynamics



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These meetings culminated in the identification and documentation of six proposed outcomes, to improve communication of consultant contracting opportunities to WMBEs, an additional three downstream recommendations, and eight lessons learned.

3. What data, stories, and communities did you engage with? What relationships did you develop, sustain, or deepen during this process? How did these relationships contextualize your institutional objective? (Step 2)

For this RET, the FARS BET Subcommittee connected with:

- The WMBE community
- SPU contract managers
- SPU contracts and procurement team
- EJSE senior racial equity advisor, and
- WMBE program manager

The team looked at:

- Anecdotal feedback from the WMBE community, contract managers, and contracts and procurement team, and
- Contract dollars paid to contracts primed by WMBE and non-WME firms

In contracting there is an existing connection between SPU contracts and procurement and the WMBE program manager. Through this process that connection and relationship has deepened, becoming more collaborative, including the proposal of a shared 2022 workplan to implement proposed outcomes, further development of downstream recommendations, and joint metrics reporting.

4. How did these relationships help you to identify the burdens and benefits of your proposed work? What are the burdens? What are the benefits? (Step 3)

While the WMBE program manager brought a high level of community knowledge and advocacy to the process, the contracts and procurement team provided technical expertise related to state and local statutory requirements.

Barriers to WMBE consultants developing and submitting a competitive proposal included:

- insufficient or unclear information
- inequitable access to information
- not enough time

Anticipated benefits of proposed work:

- WMBE consultants having timely, sufficient, and clear information to develop and submit competitive proposals
- WMBE consultants having equitable and inclusive access to information



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5. Please identify the way in which the four types of racism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural) animated your RET process and what you learned. (Step 3)

Systemic racism is imbedded in the communication of contracting information to consultants. There are many consultant firms, predominately white-owned, that have developed relationships with project managers, taking advantage of white privilege.

The limited time afforded to consultants to respond to contracting opportunities reflects embedded and institutional racism.

6. As a result of the above analysis, how will you increase opportunity and/or minimize harm for the impacted community? (Step 4)

As a result of the above analysis, six proposed outcomes were identified to increase opportunities and reduce harm to WMBE consultants. These are:

- Generating a public facing website / document
- Partnering and building relationships with WMBE and small business professional affiliations to increase WMBE firms on City of Seattle's Business Directory
- Researching and increasing SPU social media presence in WMBE-related user groups
- Increasing SPU presence on WMBE-affiliated publications and journals
- Growing participation in SPU's Meet and Greet program
- Working with contract managers to author right-sized, clear scopes of work and qualifications

7. What steps will the RET team take to ensure that department leadership will implement the recommendations from the RET?

The Team drafted and submitted a RET Summary memo to SPU leadership. Additionally, the contracts and procurement manager and WMBE program manager have proposed a joint 2022 workplan to include:

- Development and implementation of proposed outcomes, and
- Collection and reporting of metrics reflecting outcome of proposed improvements

8. How will you become/remain accountable to the relationships developed during the RET process? How will you report back to your stakeholders?

Stakeholders are integral to the success of these efforts. As part of development and implementation of proposed outcomes, we are exploring the implementation of an intra-departmental equity in contracting team, comprised of:

- Contract and procurement staff
- SPU contract managers
- Communication staff
- EJSE staff, and



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- SPU leadership

Additionally, plan to report accomplishments and metrics at yearend, as part of Telling Our Story.

- 9. What additional racial equity issues did this RET reveal? Consider how these unresolved issues present opportunities for structural transformation, including [building a relational culture](#) (i.e., working across departments, and with other institutions and sectors to achieve racial equity).**

The RET revealed the following downstream opportunities:

- Create a menu of outreach strategies to be accomplished during the contracting planning phase
- Create communication “best practices” between project / program managers and consultants in advance of advertising
- Create standard checklists, behavioral expectations, and training for contract managers for the period before consultant intake form completion to mitigate unintended barriers or advantages