



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 7a

BACKGROUND

Date of Meeting May 28, 2019

DATE: May 21, 2019

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Elizabeth Leavitt, Senior Director, Environment and Sustainability
Sandra Kilroy, Director, Maritime Environment and Sustainability
Sally del Fierro, Director, Community Engagement
Christina Billingsley, Sr. Program Manager, Environmental Engagement

SUBJECT: Duwamish Valley Community Equity Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing that some near-Port communities experience a higher proportion of environmental impacts and lack equitable access to the Port's benefits to the region, the Port of Seattle and the near-Port Duwamish Valley community launched a pilot project in 2017. Originally as part of a U.S. EPA Environmental Justice Pilot Project technical assistance grant, the pilot project focused on improving engagement with near-Port communities that experience environmental justice issues. Following two years of focused work, the pilot phase of the project is complete and the Port is prepared to transition the work into a long-standing program.

Port staff and community partners request Commission direction to establish an Interdepartmental Team (IDT) that will build an ongoing *Duwamish Valley Community Equity Program* (DVCE) that formalizes the collaboration with Duwamish Valley communities. The Program seeks to achieve three shared goals: 1) Community-Port Capacity Building, 2) Healthy Environment and Communities, and 3) Economic Prosperity in Place.

The Program will institutionalize the Port Community Action Team (PCAT) as a long-standing community advisory committee, develop a Community Benefits Commitment that will serve as a roadmap for "how" the Port will take action on shared priorities, leverage resources from local agencies and external partners to maximize impact in the Duwamish Valley, and establish an annual program evaluation process that is accountable and transparent.

BACKGROUND AND GOALS

In 2011, the Port's Century Agenda called for the Port of Seattle to create opportunity for all, steward our environment responsibly, partner with surrounding communities, and conduct ourselves with accountability and transparency. To support these values, External Relations and the Center of Expertise for Environment and Sustainability (COE) sought to build stronger relationships between the Port, the environmental community, and our near-Port communities.

Meeting Date: May 28, 2019

A key strategy to improve these relationships is to establish an open dialogue about the environmental impact that port-related operations have on near-Port communities. In fall 2016, the Port and community jointly applied for an EPA technical assistance grant to begin this process with a primary focus on environmental issues in the Duwamish Valley. The Port of Seattle was one of only three ports in the nation selected to receive the technical assistance grant.

Over the course of the pilot project, Port staff and community members identified that the challenges facing the community were not only environmental impacts. Due to historic discriminatory policies and institutional racism practiced by local governments, industries, and other institutions, Duwamish Valley community members were excluded from generations of economic mobility and civic processes. As a result, the launch of the new program must serve multiple inequities affecting the community. After extensive strategic planning with community partners, Port staff has identified three goals that are actionable within the Port's RCW authority:

Duwamish Valley Community Equity Program Goals

1. **Community and Port Capacity Building for Ongoing Collaboration** – Provide training for Port staff to inclusively engage near-Port neighbors and build community capacity that empowers their meaningful participation in Port decision-making processes that affect the Duwamish Valley. Provide training for community members to better understand the Port's mission, operations, and programs and support for their ongoing consultation on community engagement best practices.

2. **Healthy Environment and Communities** – Reduce environmental harms that impact the health and livability of near-Port Duwamish Valley communities.

3. **Economic Prosperity in Place** – Innovate and convene Port-related industries to support anti-displacement solutions through targeted access to living wage jobs, training, career pathways, and other support programs that enable near-Port Duwamish Valley neighbors to thrive in place.

PILOT PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

On April 10, 2018, Port Commissioners authorized staff to continue deep community engagement with the near-Port environmental justice communities of South Park and Georgetown in the Duwamish Valley. Since then, the collaboration with communities has resulted in significant and mutually beneficial gains:

- Port staff have gained knowledge and tools to more appropriately engage with low income communities of color who experience environmental justice issues;
- Port processes have benefited from an equity lens provided by community partners;
- Community members have been able to meaningfully engage in Port benefits to the region.

The below examples of accomplishments so far in the pilot project reflect each of these gains.

Meeting Date: May 28, 2019

- **Establishment of the Port Community Action Team (PCAT):** The formation of the PCAT is an equitable engagement best-practice at the Port. In 2017, the PCAT was established to ensure that community representatives from South Park and Georgetown communities would be able to advise Port staff on the EPA Environmental Justice Pilot Project. This practice is important for equity, since low income communities of color often do not have capacity (ie: time, financial resources, familiarity with government structures, etc.) to participate in standard Port processes. The Port is compensating these community members for their involvement. The PCAT has so far provided training and coaching to Port staff on inclusive engagement practices and cultural competency that directly impact the effectiveness of achieving Century Agenda goals. PCAT members advised the Port on initiatives such as: SAMP community engagement, hiring and recruitment for Sr. Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; inclusive communications and marketing for multicultural audiences; and more.
- **Green Jobs for Youth Stewards at Port Parks:** In a landmark Port contract to promote environmental equity, Maritime Environment and Sustainability has contracted with DIRT Corps and Duwamish Valley Youth Corps to train local youth to as paid stewards of the Port’s habitat sites at Terminal 107 Park, Terminal 108 Park, and Gears Park located in South Park throughout 2019. DIRT Corps increases access to green jobs and fosters healthy communities by providing on-the-job training for adult workers, specifically encouraging women, people of color, LGBT, and veterans to enroll. The pilot project has informed the Port that “the environment” is an interconnected concept in communities– people have difficulty taking action to respond to the natural world and climate change unless their families have basic needs met. This contract demonstrates the Port’s ability to meet this intersectionality: the Port can enable communities to meet basic needs of income generation and capacity building while supporting the Port’s Century Agenda environmental and sustainability goals (specifically, to restore, create, and enhance an additional 40 acres of habitat in the Green/Duwamish Watershed and Elliott Bay).
- **Targeted Youth Internships to Prevent Displacement:** Since spring 2018, Human Resources staff have targeted youth in the Duwamish Valley with interactive resume workshops and career readiness activities to support low income youth of color to apply for Port internships. Each year, at least six youth are placed in positions across the Port such as the Commission Office, Maritime Environment and Sustainability, and External Relations departments. This access makes a significant impact to help prevent displacement of families due to economic pressures. The Port provides livable wage internships for youth to gain basic skills in public administration, engineering and construction, environment and sustainability, the maritime and aviation fields, and skilled trades. These experiences have helped alumni secure new jobs in partner organizations, at the Port, and help their families stay in place.

Meeting Date: May 28, 2019

- **“Our Shared Duwamish River” Multilingual Boat Tour:** In fall 2018, nearly 200 community members joined the Port for its first-ever multilingual boat tour of Elliott Bay and the Duwamish River. Each year, External Relations offers its public education series, “Port U” Tours to raise awareness about Port operations, impact, and involvement in the community; in past years, narration was only offered in English. Port staff presented information relevant to near-Port audiences such as the Port’s “Welcoming Port” immigrant and refugee-friendly policies at Sea-Tac Airport, small business initiatives, and the Port’s habitat restoration efforts along the river. Interpreters on board provided translation in Vietnamese, Cambodian, Spanish, and English for families to learn more about the Port’s mission and programs.
- **Air Quality Monitoring Community Science Training:** Northwest Seaport Alliance funded a community science training to teach community members about air quality monitoring. With technical support from Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, community members learned how to use the air quality monitors and gather data to inform clean air solutions. In this phase of the project, capacity building and understanding air quality issues took primary focus. In future phases, community members will be able to use the data to make recommendations on air quality actions such as placement of green walls, rain gardens, and other potential opportunities.
- **Mural Art and Educational Workshops:** This winter, the Port sponsored a series of educational workshops with over 40 participants in the Duwamish Valley Youth Corps to connect near-Port community members with a greater understanding of the ecological and cultural history of the river, local industries, and the Port. Renowned Native American artist, Roger Fernandes, community leaders, and Port staff participated in presentations to the youth. The educational sessions culminated in the creation of a beautiful mural in South Park that tells the story of the growth of the city, industry, and Port along the river, as well as the participants’ vision of a robust cleanup and a healthy river for all.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) Presentation slides
- (2) Motion

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

April 10, 2018 – Commission authorization to continue
EPA Pilot Project with DV community