LEADING ON INNOVATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS THAT FOSTER EQUITY, VIBRANT COMMUNITIES, & SHARED PROSPERITY

Seattle enjoys a well-earned reputation for being a leader on the environment. For years now we have been powered by clean, carbon neutral electricity, enjoyed bountiful clean drinking water from mountain watersheds, and benefited from a robust urban forest. More recently Seattle has taken bold steps to electrify our transportation system, bolster access to local food, and aggressively increase our housing supply to ensure more Seattleites can live close to where they work and play.

These steps are critical to preserving our quality of life and as we continue to grow, we will continue to advance innovative environmental solutions that create healthy outcomes for Seattle’s residents. At the same time, we need to take steps to ensure that people of color, immigrants, refugees, and people with low incomes benefit equitably from our progress.

Our lowest-income neighborhoods are also the neighborhoods where residents often deal with higher levels of pollution and related health problems, and have less access to healthy foods, open space, and affordable, quality housing. This is particularly true for communities of color and it is unacceptable.

We can and will do better.

Last year—in partnership with the community—we launched the Equity & Environment Agenda, a strategy to address these disparities and ensure that everyone benefits from our progress. It is the underpinning of Seattle’s commitment to racial equity and environmental justice.

As we continue to build on our environmental leadership, I call on all our partners—policy makers, community and environmental leaders, businesses and residents—to continue to be creative and unrelenting in creating a prosperous, just, and equitable future for our city.
The City of Seattle prioritizes actions and initiatives that foster healthy people, healthy communities, and a healthy and flourishing natural environment. Partnerships and collaboration among City departments, community organizations, and residents and businesses have been instrumental in advancing Seattle’s environmental goals. This report provides a high-level overview of our accomplishments to date as well as highlights opportunities for improvement.

OUR COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

While Seattle has long been a pioneer for environmental progress, this success comes with a caveat. People of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes and limited-English proficiency individuals bear a disproportionate burden of environmental health impacts, benefit less directly from our environmental progress, and environmental concerns of these communities often go unaddressed due to systemic racism and lack of data that includes a racial or economic analysis.

OSE’s Equity & Environment Initiative is shifting the City’s approach so those most affected by environmental challenges and racial-socio economic conditions will lead on designing solutions and directly benefit from our programs and policies.

Because of Seattle’s history of land use and segregation, we can utilize a geographic approach to begin to understand racial inequity in Seattle. However, geographic considerations should not substitute for race as many of the concerns of communities would persist even if communities moved to a new location. Collecting data with a racial lens is a key way for the City to lead by example and understand our residents’ experiences. Having this type of data is an important step in advancing racial and environmental justice in our work ahead.

TOWARD A HEALTHY, EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE SEATTLE

EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE (EEI) FOCUS AREAS

These are the geographic areas where communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes and limited-English proficiency individuals tend to live. These areas are highly impacted by socio-economic and environmental challenges.

In this report, we analyze, where possible, data as it relates to EEI focus areas or racial demographics of program users.

DATA CITATIONS ARE AVAILABLE

All data sources used to calculate progress metrics in this report are cited and available at:

CREATING A CARBON NEUTRAL AND CLIMATE FRIENDLY SEATTLE

Seattle continues to be a leader in climate action and we remain committed to becoming a climate-friendly and sustainable city. We’re proud that we reached “peak emissions” in 2008, and emissions have been on a downward trend since. However, emissions are not declining as quickly as we need to meet our carbon neutral goal.

We know we must scale up the pace of our emissions reductions. We are aggressively implementing strategies such as leveraging our clean and carbon-neutral electricity to power an electric and shared transportation system, improving efficiencies in our buildings, supporting equitable access to healthy, local foods, and building complete neighborhoods with increased walkability, rich green spaces, frequent transit service, and affordable housing.

Reducing our climate impacts also creates opportunities to advance a range of community goals like improving health, creating shared prosperity, and strengthening racial equity. Environmental justice is a core value guiding our climate work because communities of color and residents with low incomes have not equitably shared in our environmental progress and will be disproportionately impacted by climate change.

OUR APPROACH
Seattle’s climate strategies focus on core GHG emissions sources where local government has the greatest influence.

ROAD TRANSPORTATION
This includes cars, trucks, and buses.

BUILDING ENERGY
This includes the energy used to heat and cool buildings as well as the energy to power the devices and equipment inside those buildings.

WASTE MANAGEMENT
This includes the GHG emissions that result from landfilling Seattle’s waste.

Nearly two-thirds of Seattle’s climate pollution comes from Road Transportation. Emissions from Building Energy and Waste Management make up the remaining third.
CLIMATE ACTION
OUR PATH TO SUCCESS

Reduce total core greenhouse gas emissions 58% by 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2050

SINCE 2008
TOTAL GHG EMISSIONS DECLINED
6%
CITY WIDE

SINCE 2008
PER PERSON GHG EMISSIONS DECLINED
17%
CITY WIDE

SINCE 2008
TOTAL TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS DECLINED
2%
CITY WIDE

SINCE 2008
TOTAL BUILDING ENERGY EMISSIONS DECLINED
13%
CITY WIDE

SINCE 2008
TOTAL WASTE EMISSIONS DECLINED
14%
CITY WIDE

13% POPULATION GROWTH occurred at the same time, making this a significant accomplishment.

At 5.1 TONS
Seattle’s per person emissions are among the lowest in the country!

12% PER PERSON reduction occurred as a result of more fuel efficient vehicles and driving fewer miles.

However, as Seattle’s population and jobs continues to grow, we’ll need to continue improving.

23% PER PERSON reduction occurred as a result of energy efficiency measures, increased multifamily living, and warmer weather that reduced heating needs.

23% PER PERSON reduction occurred as a result of Seattle residents recycling and composting more and sending less waste to the landfill.
Seattle prioritizes clean energy because the environmental and health costs of fossil fuels are too great. The cost of dirty energy reveals itself as asthma, cancer, air and water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. Due to a history of systemic racism, those impacts disproportionately affect communities of color.

Most of Seattle’s electricity comes from clean, carbon-neutral hydroelectric power. Since 2005, Seattle City Light has met all of our electricity needs through conservation or renewables—a strategy that is key to keeping Seattle healthy and electricity costs low.

It is critical that we continue the transition away from fossil fuels for heating our buildings. Making sure that our electricity is affordable for our residents is key to creating a sustainable energy system. National data shows low-income households spend 12% of their income on utilities compared to the average household that spends 3%. Seattle’s Utility Discount Program helps qualified households reduce their electricity bills by as much as 60% to keep energy costs affordable.
CLEAN & EFFICIENT ENERGY USE
OUR PATH TO SUCCESS

Reduce energy use in homes by 20% and commercial buildings by 10% by 2030

Reduce number of oil heated homes

Grow Seattle’s solar capacity

Acquire 15% of electricity from new renewable sources by 2020

Since 2008, we’ve saved

- 8% in homes
- 1% in commercial buildings

Since 2012, we converted

- O680 homes previously using dirty oil to clean Seattle City Light energy.

Our solar capacity is now

- 16 MW

In 2016, we acquired

- 9% of our electricity from renewable sources

This is a combination of renewable energy credits and new renewable sources including wind power, landfill gas capture, and waste to heat cogeneration.

Seattle recently passed a commercial building “Tune-Ups” program that is expected to improve energy efficiency in individual buildings by 10-15%.

With approximately 19,000 oil heated homes still in Seattle, we still have much work to do!

Over 2,700 residents and businesses have installed solar panels in Seattle and over 1,300 residents have joined community solar programs through Seattle City Light.

SEATTLE CITY LIGHT’S DIRECT INSTALL PROGRAM SAVES RESIDENTS ENERGY & MONEY

Since 2010, City Light has contracted to install free LED light bulbs, showerheads, and faucet aerators in customers’ homes. Efficient showerheads, aerators, and advanced powerstrips with sensors and automatic shut-off are also available for residents who request them. 26,729 households were served through this program during 2015 and 2016. Elderly and low-income residents made up at least 23% of total number served. More information about this program and other conservation incentives can be found at: www.seattle.gov/light/conserve.

Photo provided by EnviroIssues
Transportation is the largest single source of climate and air pollution in Seattle and presents the greatest opportunity for individuals to make an impact. The good news is that Seattleites are riding transit more, driving cleaner cars, and putting less miles on them. This is a trend we expect to continue. Our challenge lies in the fact that we must continue to reduce our transportation pollution even as our population grows.

If Seattle is to become a carbon neutral city we must make transit, bicycling, and walking the easiest ways for residents to meet their daily needs. Puget Sound Sage and Got Green’s 2016 community based participatory research project “Our People, Our Planet, Our Power” noted that people in lower-income households who live near transit drive significantly less than people in higher income households who live the same distance from transit. This underscores that those most burdened by climate change impacts contribute the least to the problem.

As we continue to build our transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure, we not only increase the community’s access to opportunity, we create a healthier and more just Seattle.
CONVENIENT & ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION
OUR PATH TO SUCCESS

Increase transit ridership

Reduce drive alone rate to downtown Seattle

Increase electric vehicle ownership to 30% by 2030

Increase bicycle and pedestrian volumes

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP HAS GROWN

DRIVE ALONE RATE IS NOW

IN 2016, SEATTLE RESIDENTS OWN

WE’VE INCREASED BY

Seattle passengers used the bus, Link Light Rail, and Seattle streetcar for 95M trips in 2016.

From 2010 to 2016, downtown Seattle added 45,000 jobs. During this time, 95% of the gain in net commute trips was absorbed by non-drive alone modes.

4,784 electric vehicles, representing 1.2% of total vehicle ownership.

The number of people who walk and bike to get around continues to grow.

SEATTLE STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY ADVOCATE FOR BETTER TRANSIT OPTIONS

In 2015, students from Rainier Beach High School marched and held a town hall to raise awareness of the challenges they faced getting to school every day. In response, SDOT launched the Youth ORCA program in 2016 in partnership with Seattle Public Schools to distribute cards to income-eligible youth who did not already receive an ORCA card from the school district. The goal for the program is to provide 3,000 middle and high school students with youth ORCA cards throughout the school year.

Photo provided by Ty Celeste
How we grow, process, and transport our food is nearly as important as what we eat. A diet rich in local fruits and vegetables reduces greenhouse gas emissions, protects our natural resources, and helps create stronger cultural and community connections.

Access to healthy, culturally appropriate, and affordable food has consistently been identified as a top climate concern among people of color, immigrants, refugees, and people with low incomes. Overall food hardship for residents in the Seattle/King County area grew from 6% to 12% between 2010 and 2013, and Latino communities saw a significant increase in food hardship—from 27% to 41% in the same timeframe.

With Seattle’s rising cost of living, healthy food is out of reach for many in our community. Seattle’s food work is aimed at increasing food access—especially among communities of color—as well as strengthening our local farm and food economy. Seattle has made a healthy, local, and accessible food system a priority, because a strong local food system improves the health and well-being of Seattle’s residents, promotes equity, and strengthens our economy.

Support Seattle’s food access network

In 2016

SEATTLE GARDENERS DONATED

47,711 POUNDS
= 95,000 SERVINGS

of organically grown fruits and vegetables to Seattle residents suffering from food insecurity.

Protect and preserve local farmland

1,174 ACRES OF FARMLAND
preserved through Seattle-King County Transfer Development Rights (TDR) program since 2013.

The TDR program is an innovative and voluntary program that preserves rural and resource land and steers development into urban areas.
HEALTHY, LOCAL, & SUSTAINABLE FOOD
OUR PATH TO SUCCESS

Grow local food economy

Increase access to healthy food for children and seniors

Increase access to healthy food for people with low incomes

Increase participation of people of color in food access programs

FARMERS MARKET SALES GREW

49.6%
BETWEEN 2010 & 2016

IN 2016, THERE ARE

86
CITY-SUPPORTED CHILDCARE
AND SENIOR SITES
purchasing produce from local farmers. Up from 42 in 2013.

4,484
CHILDREN AND SENIORS
were served healthy, local, and organic produce along with nutritional education and training.

FRESH BUCKS USAGE INCREASED

223%
BETWEEN 2012 & 2016
at Seattle Farmers Markets.

PARTICIPATION INCREASED

39%
IN THE FRESH BUCKS PROGRAM
between 2013 & 2016 for people of color.

GROWING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITY & FOOD

Seattle Parks and Recreation is building a foodshed-based youth leadership and career development program with impacted communities located in food desert areas. The program provides culturally responsive activities and skill-building associated with food systems while promoting civic engagement, education, health, and wellness. In fall 2016, a pilot crew of 30 youth based out of South Park Community Center attended over 120 hours of training which included garden bed renovation, food handling licensing, job shadowing, and race and social justice analysis.

Photo provided by Kristie McLean
Trees and green spaces have significant environmental, economic, and social benefits including improving air and water quality, natural stormwater management and soil protection, and attracting people to local business districts and community spaces. The collective impact is significant: Seattle’s urban forest removes 725 metric tons of pollution from the environment and sequesters carbon at a level valued at $11.7 million annually.

Seattle’s reputation for being the “Emerald City” is well known, but residents do not experience those benefits consistently throughout the city. Large parts of Seattle—notably where our communities of color, immigrants, refugees, and residents with low incomes tend to live, learn, work and play—have less tree canopy cover than neighborhoods that are home to a majority of white, upper income residents. Seattle is working to address this disparity to bring the benefits of trees and green spaces to all our communities.

As our city continues to grow, protecting and enhancing our urban forest and green space remains a key priority in order to ensure the benefits of our natural assets are enjoyed by all Seattle residents.
In 2016, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) launched the Street Tree Management Plan—a 9-year targeted approach to improve the condition of Seattle’s street trees. To do this, they organized the city into 27 management units, and will prioritize 3 per year for tree planting, maintaining, and inventorying. Tree maintenance crews worked in South Park/Highland Park neighborhood during 2016, where they inventoried over 6,000 trees, planted 144 trees, and maintained 700 trees. Collectively, these trees provide benefits worth over $375,000 annually through energy savings, carbon sequestration, air quality, and aesthetics.

Photo provided by SDOT
To create a truly sustainable city, Seattle’s neighborhoods must include the community anchors, goods, services, and amenities people need to lead healthy lives and flourish. This includes access to housing, frequent and affordable transit service, public amenities such as schools, job opportunities, and community-serving organizations that provide services, social cohesion, and cultural programs. As Seattle experiences this surge of economic and population growth, we will pursue policies and programs that ensure we grow with prosperity, stability, and equity.

In the past two years, Seattle has underscored our commitment to race and social justice by elevating Race & Social Equity as a core value of the Comprehensive Plan, launching the Equitable Development Initiative, and publicly proclaiming Seattle’s status as a welcoming city. We are intentionally charting a path forward that ensures communities of color, immigrants, refugees, and people with low incomes can live and thrive in Seattle.
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national movement to make it easier and safer for students to walk and bike to school. Since 2015, SDOT has completed 19 Safe Routes to Schools engineering projects, 12 of which are in Equity & Environment Initiative Focus Areas. Engineering projects can include crossing treatments, traffic calming, sidewalk improvements, and improved signage. Prioritization is based on data-driven criteria that ranks schools on collision data, race and ethnicity data, and pedestrian master plan scores that include equity considerations.

Photo provided by SDOT
Seattle is committed to protecting the quality of our air and water and reducing waste so future generations will continue to enjoy a healthy, safe, and clean city. However, the level to which Seattle residents experience these outcomes varies widely by race. Seattle has the 3rd highest level of measured nitrogen dioxide—air pollution produced as a result of road traffic—in the country. Due to our historical land use patterns, the majority of residents who live closest to our city’s heavily trafficked roadways are people of color and people with low incomes. These residents experience poorer air quality compared to the rest of Seattle.

The quality of our drinking water is excellent thanks to our well-managed watersheds. However, our major bodies of water—the Puget Sound and Seattle’s only river, the Duwamish River—are unacceptably polluted from stormwater runoff and historical industrial pollution. Through regional partnerships, Seattle is advancing solutions to reduce pollution in both waterways. Their health is critical to supporting and protecting the cultural traditions and economic livelihood of many Seattle residents, especially indigenous communities in our region.

**Track air quality and mitigate air pollutants**

**IN 2016 SEATTLE ONLY EXPERIENCED**

Days that did not meet PSCAA Quality Health Goals (measured fine particles).

- Fine particles cause asthma attacks, cancer, strokes, heart attacks, and premature death.

**Provide clean, safe drinking water**

**OUR WATER QUALITY LABORATORY ANALYZES**

- more than 50 SAMPLES A DAY
- to ensure we are 100% IN COMPLIANCE

365 days per year, totaling over 20,000 microbiological tests.
FRESH AIR, CLEAN WATER & ZERO WASTE
OUR PATH TO SUCCESS

CONNECTING COMMUNITY TO OUR WATER SOURCE
Seattle Public Utilities’ Environmental Justice & Service Equity Division (EJSE) partners with community-based organizations to increase trust between government and people of color, low-income, immigrant, and refugee communities. Through educational tours of the Cedar River Watershed and Water Quality Lab, community members connect with their water source, learn the steps that keep Seattle’s drinking water safe and develop a greater appreciation for Seattle’s water.

Photo provided by SPU
ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN SEATTLE

Across the US, people of color, immigrants, refugees, and people with low incomes experience greater health impacts from environmental hazards than white, upper income individuals due to the cumulative impacts of stress, racism, pollutant exposure, proximity to hazardous sites, disparate health care, and lack of affordable healthy food. Seattle’s Equity & Environment Initiative focuses on those most-affected—communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and limited English proficiency individuals—to lead on solutions and directly benefit from environmental programs and policies. The cornerstone of this Initiative is the Equity & Environment Agenda, jointly owned by the City and community.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

No single organization can reverse environmental injustices or singlehandedly ensure equitable environmental benefit. Community based organizations embedded in communities of color have long been charting the path forward on environmental justice. These organizations are transforming our communities by increasing community cohesion, developing leaders, and bringing community-led solutions into government. We can only achieve environmental justice through a strong ecosystem of environmental justice leadership and multi-racial collaboration.

EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT AGENDA:

A blueprint for advancing race and social justice in the environmental movement.

A multi-ethnic Community Partners Steering Committee (CPSC) partnered with OSE to engage over 1000 residents to develop the Agenda. The Agenda broadens the analysis of environment beyond natural and built environments to incorporate a greater complexity of issues of where and how people live, learn, work and play. Starting with civic leadership allows us to proactively advance environmental, economic, community, and cultural benefits while addressing environmental justice issues historically ignored by government.

EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT AGENDA OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

- Healthy environments for all: Air, water, green space, food, safety & quality of life
- Jobs, local economies & youth pathways: Opportunities for local green careers
- Equity in city environmental programs: Increasing community access and decision-making
- Environmental narrative & community leadership: Celebrating Stories and investing in community

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The Environmental Justice Committee is a new opportunity for those most-affected by environmental inequities to have ownership of Equity & Environment Agenda implementation.

IN 2017-2018 THE COMMITTEE WILL

- Advise City staff on integrating the goals of the Equity & Environment Agenda into environmentally-focused policies/programs
- Develop and implement a pilot project in partnership with OSE to demonstrate environmental justice in action
- Engage deeply with each other to increase environmental justice community cohesion and grow individual environmental leadership capacity
# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
**OUR PATH TO SUCCESS**

Amplify and support community based environmental justice solutions for people of color, immigrants, refugees, youth, people with limited English proficiency and people with low incomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PUGET SAGE</strong></th>
<th><strong>GOT GREEN</strong></th>
<th><strong>CHINESE INFORMATION SERVICE CENTER (CISC)</strong></th>
<th><strong>DUWAMISH RIVER CLEANUP COALITION/TAG</strong></th>
<th><strong>LATINO COMMUNITY FUND</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Leadership Institute (CLI)</td>
<td>Green Pathways out of Poverty</td>
<td>Go Green</td>
<td>Youth Corp</td>
<td>Healthy Latino Families Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLI educates, resources and places emerging leaders of color and people with low-incomes on municipal boards and commissions. Fellows learn the details of government processes, such as municipal budgeting, parliamentary procedures, and lawmaking as well as advocacy, storytelling, and communication skills. CLI curriculum covers a variety of subject areas such as transit, housing, economic and climate justice.</td>
<td>Green Pathways Out of Poverty is making sure there are living wage green opportunities for all in Seattle. After releasing the community-based research project “Breaking the Green Ceiling” in 2013, the Young Leaders Committee began advocating for a City of Seattle Resolution – which passed in 2016 – to encourage the City to lead by example and recruit, retain, and support low income young adults of color in green jobs.</td>
<td>Through their Go Green campaign, in 2014, CISC began a new focus on environmental stewardship. Since then CISC has worked with their community to have culturally connected conversations on the environment, empowered residents to ask questions, and supported advocacy and engagement in the City’s environmental work. In 2016, CISC stepped into several leadership roles in environmental stewardship, water quality education, the work of Seattle Public Utilities, and shaping the Equity &amp; Environment Agenda. CISC has engaged</td>
<td>The Youth Corp was established in 2014 in partnership with the City of Seattle to support restoration and revitalization of the Duwamish Valley neighborhoods of South Park, Georgetown and surrounding areas. The program is a paid environmentally-based job skills training program for youth ages thirteen-nineteen. Youth Corps members are leading the way in transforming these neighborhoods through trees, green walls and rain gardens.</td>
<td>The Healthy Latino Families Initiative has worked for the past five years to engage community members about health issues and environmental conditions that impact Latino communities. LCF has done this through building strong trust and relationships with a diverse range of Latino community members. In 2016, LCF collaborated with OSE’s Fresh Bucks program to reach over 200 people from Latino communities and have distributed</td>
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<td><strong>FELLOWS</strong></td>
<td><strong>NEW INTERNSHIPS</strong></td>
<td><strong>TREES &amp; SHRUBS PLANTED</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAMILIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>LARGE RAIN GARDENS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>and over 50% of graduates currently serve on boards and commissions in Seattle and King County.</td>
<td>across public and private sector organizations.</td>
<td></td>
<td>in these efforts and others through this environmental Go Green campaign.</td>
<td>to ensure community members most affected by food insecurity have access to fresh, healthy food.</td>
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MOVING THE NEEDLE

PREPARED BY SEATTLE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT

www.seattle.gov/environment

DATA PROVIDED BY:
• Office of the Mayor
• Office of Economic Development
• Office of Housing
• Office of Planning and Community Development
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• Department of Finance and Administrative Services
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• Department of Neighborhoods
• Department of Parks and Recreation
• Department of Transportation
• Seattle City Light
• Seattle Public Utilities