Centering on Equity

The importance of making equity a core component of our work

SPU Customer Review Panel
December 5, 2018
WHY DO WE FOCUS ON RACE AND EQUITY?
Seattle Redlining Map (1936)

- "Best"
- "Still Desirable"
- "Definitely Declining"
- "Hazardous"
D-4 Area

This is the Negro area of Seattle.

D-7 Area:

This is an old residential area - hazardous as security for long term mortgage loans because of type of occupancy of district.

14. RACIAL RESTRICTIONS. No property in said addition shall at any time be sold, conveyed, rented or leased in whole or in part to any person or persons not of the White or Caucasian race. No person other than one of the White or Caucasian race shall be permitted to occupy any property in said addition or portion thereof or building thereon except a domestic servant actually employed by a person of the White or Caucasian race where the latter is an occupant of such property.

Innis Arden

A RESTRICTED RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY
Environmental Racism Is Nothing New

Race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil.

56% of the population near toxic waste sites are people of color.

People of color:
- Have 95% of their claims against polluters denied by the EPA.
- Have 38% higher nitrogen-dioxide exposure.

2x more likely to live without potable water and modern sanitation.
CENTERING RACIAL EQUITY IN SBP UPDATE
HOW WE ENSURE RACIAL EQUITY IS WEADED THROUGHOUT OUR PLAN
STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 1:
Embed race and social justice and service equity policies and practices across the utility.

STRATEGY 2:
Model and advocate for inclusive community engagement within the utility in partnership with communities.

STRATEGY 3:
Further align Environmental Justice & Service Equity division efforts within SPU, as well as city, county and community initiatives.
WHY DO WE CENTER RACE?

When we look across every type of achievement in this country, whether that be life expectancy, income, job status, wealth, health, education level, involvement with the criminal justice system, etc.

*Race is the single, strongest predictor of outcomes*

This tells us that race plays a huge role in achievement of every type.

That is not to say that race is the only factor, but it is the most prevalent and, more often than not, the strongest predictor.
“RACIAL EQUITY IS ABOUT APPLYING JUSTICE AND A LITTLE BIT OF COMMON SENSE TO A SYSTEM THAT’S BEEN OUT OF BALANCE. WHEN A SYSTEM IS OUT OF BALANCE, PEOPLE OF COLOR FEEL THE IMPACTS MOST ACUTELY, BUT, TO BE CLEAR, AN IMBALANCED SYSTEM MAKES ALL OF US PAY.”

CSI PRESIDENT GLENN HARRIS
I’m judged based on whether or not I meet my solid waste goal. Equity is not part of my goal.

TOM GANNON
SW PLANNER
RATE PAYER EQUITY
RACIAL EQUITY LENS

- A racial equity lens is a tool and practice to transform and improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation leading to more racially equitable policies and programs.

- Applying a racial equity lens to internal organizational development work helps to identify, talk about and manage inherent power dynamics that organizations grapple with every day, especially those that are white dominated, in culture and/or demographics.

- At its core, it is a set of principles, reflective questions, and processes that focuses at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels by:

  - Deconstructing what is not working around racial equity;
  - Reconstructing and supporting what is working;
  - Shifting the way we make decisions and think about this work; and
  - Healing and transforming our structures, our environments, and ourselves.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• What is your reaction to what was just shared?

• What can you/CRP do to help us achieve this goal as part of the Strategic Business Planning effort?
NEXT STEPS

• Provide an overview of the proposed key stakeholders and engagement strategy.

• Partner with you to do a racial equity analysis to increase our ability to fulfill our racial equity commitment and develop a plan that provides guidance to staff, and a plan that is informed by customer input and better meets their needs, particularly people of color, immigrant, refugee and low income customers.