Community Conversations Report

Priorities for COVID-19 Response & Recovery

Published December 2020

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the research and development of this report was conducted on Duwamish and Coast Salish lands and is currently home to the Duwamish, Suquamish, Snoqualmie, Tulalip, Muckleshoot, and Puyallup Nations. We are committed to uplifting community members from these and all Native nations who reside among us. Indigenous people have stewarded these lands and waterways for thousands of years, playing critical roles in our urban community as well as informing our ways of life as sovereign Nations.

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Executive Summary

Along with ushering a shift to digital platforms and a deeper appreciation for the more valuable gifts in life, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to sharpen our collective image on environmental disparities.

These inequities have existed since the arrival of settler-colonialism and inception of the United States' extractive, capitalistic, and fossil-fuel based economy. Solutions and demands from Black, Indigenous, Communities of Color (or BIPOC); low-income communities; those experiencing houselessness; refugee and immigrant communities; and the disAbled community should prioritize reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships.

We learned, through research and conversation with community members, that these major investments and policy recommendations should be made to begin creating a more just and vibrant Seattle in the aftermath of COVID-19 and racial uprisings:

✓ **Our communities are most concerned with food access, housing payments, social services, and assistance with public utilities.** All attempts to address these needs must include community members throughout the processes of planning, outreach, implementation, distribution, etc. Food assistance programs need to include culturally relevant produce and products from local food systems, aside from large retail grocers like Safeway.

✓ **Directly invest capital and resources with Black, Indigenous, and other Communities of Color.** Divest from punitive and carceral systems, such as the Seattle Police Department, and increase funding support to direct social service providers and well-respected and vetted community organizations and programs.

✓ **Consult directly and invest in relationships with Tribal Nations, and BIPOC to define and re-allocate direct service needs.** Acknowledge and respect community members time, labor, and expertise with sustainable efforts. Staff in City programs and designing policies should reflect BIPOC.

✓ **Redefine all application and eligibility requirements so that basic minimum reporting information is collected.** Current and historic application and eligibility requirements to access basic human rights such as food, public utilities, and housing create undue and exclusionary burdens for people who are undocumented, families with low-income, and other frontline communities.

✓ **Streamline communications and collaboration efforts across City departments that result in reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships with communities.** Disrupt top-down policy making. Directly connect with communities early, and stay in consistent communication. Develop accountability measures and metrics for follow-through to foster greater trust with communities.

About Us

The City of Seattle's Environmental Justice Committee (EJC) deepens the influence of communities of color throughout Seattle's environmental programs and is guided by the Equity and Environment Agenda (EEA). The EJC ensures that the stories, experiences, and policy priorities of BIPOC shape the City of Seattle's environmental work. More information about the EJC can be found on the Environmental Justice Committee City webpage.[1]

We envision a healthy and equitable environment for all people and living beings, which includes living wage and economically viable opportunities within the green sector. This vision centers frontline communities by increasing access to leadership spaces, inclusion in decision-making procedures, community leadership, and investments throughout various communities.

The following leaders currently serve on the EJC:

Abdullahi Jama	Jaimée Marsh	Nancy Huizar * *Co-chair*
Dana Wu/吳 淑 如 *	Jose Chi *	
Debolina Banerjee *	Joshua Jenkins *	Pah-tu Pitt * *Co-chair*
Dennis Comer	Karia Wong *	Ruby Stacey * *Co-chair*
Edwin Wanji	Kimela Vigil	

The findings of this report were compiled and formulated by EJC Members above denoted with an *

Staffed By City of Seattle representative: Ximena Fonseca-Morales

Introduction

We are living through a tremendously challenging period of time, as we enter fall 2020. The City of Seattle has been an epicenter of demonstrations and protests against the rampant anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, and racism at the core of police departments and other carceral systems. Simultaneously, the public health crisis caused by COVID-19 is disproportionately harming BIPOC, low-income families, those living unsheltered, immigrant and refugee communities, the disAbled community, youth and elders, and other intersectional identities. In this report, we will be using the term "frontline communities" to collectively address these groups who are hit hardest and most intensely by COVID-19 and environmental health disparities.

COVID-19 exposes and magnifies many of the inequities that exist within the dominant culture's social fabric. These inequities were seeded in the violent and extractive invasion and founding of this country by white European settlers, and overlooked by many for far too long. From healthcare to food access, housing to air quality, economic job security to systemic racism's existence in the criminal justice system, the sheer scale of COVID-19's disproportionately harmful impacts made it impossible to ignore these inequities any longer, especially on frontline communities.

Because of this, we shifted the EJC 2020 Work Plan priorities to focus more intentionally on how frontline communities are experiencing and responding to COVID-19 impacts. We wanted to learn more about and amplify any needs or requests for support as it relates to an environmentally just recovery from this pandemic. Motivated by the glaring exposure of these historic and systemic inequities, we recognized the need for frontline communities to share their priorities and interests with decision-makers; for both themselves, their families, and fellow community members.

This report outlines the EJC's research process and documents recovery priorities as defined by various community members.

We elevate the lived experiences, needs, priorities, and expertise held by the frontline community, as we believe those most impacted possess the knowledge and solutions to the problems they experience most intimately.[2] COVID-19 and climate change are linked to environmental justice, with polluted and historically marginalized communities experiencing more loss and more COVID-19 cases.

We know that frontline communities are disproportionately impacted by poor air quality. In Seattle, 13 of the 14 heaviest industrial polluters are located within a half-mile of the places where these communities live, learn, work, worship, and play. We also know that in King County and across the nation, these same communities are experiencing higher mortality rates.[3,4] The health and well-being of frontline communities continue to be impacted as a result of staying at home indoors given that frontline communities do not have healthy indoor air quality as a result of mold, poor insulation, gas cooking without vents, lack of bathroom vents, and windows requiring upgrades.

As COVID-19 continues to exacerbate existing health, economic, and social disparities that frontline communities face, it is critical to center their needs and experiences in immediate and long-term recovery efforts. We encourage people working in these spaces to consider this report a beginning and commitment to address root causes of inequity following the leadership of frontline communities.

With the production of this report, the EJC aims to encourage bottom-up policy creation as an advocacy tool for much needed systemic transformation.

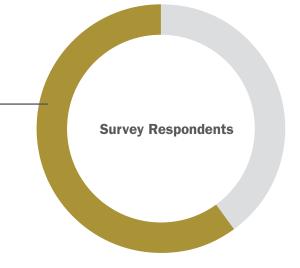"Black Lives Matter" *by Duncan Shaffer on Unsplash*

Methods

Engaging directly with frontline communities to elevate their lived experiences, needs, priorities, and expertise, we developed a three-part approach meant to gather quantitative and qualitative data to inform policy and program decisions throughout the City of Seattle.

The first part of our approach was a ten question survey, followed by a focus group conversation meant to ground truth and expand on the survey results. The third and final part of our approach culminates with this report. More specifics on our methodology can be found in Appendix A.

Nearly 60% of our respondents self-identified as a person of color, 38% as Black, and 17% as Indigenous (Figure 1 in Appendix B) invited from CBOs representative of City of Seattle Equity and Environment Agenda communities. There was great overlap in identities with the vast majority of respondents choosing multiple identities. For example, 6.3% of Black respondents identified as Indigenous, 18.8% identified as an immigrant, and 31.3% identified as a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Nearly 60% of respondents identified as a person of color

38% as Black
17% as Indigenous

Survey Respondents

Findings and Recommendations

From food access to air quality, healthcare access, economic job security and the difficulty of navigating various levels of the criminal justice system, the following findings and recommendations highlight the inequities frontline communities face. Frontline communities identified their most immediate needs are access to home and land ownership, access to economic jobs and career support, access to green space, improved air quality inside homes, and access to higher education (Figure 1). Of the listed priority options, more than 50% of respondents believed 11 of 14 (or over 78% of) priorities were "high" for them and their communities. At the same time, top ranked priorities do not tell the whole story. This is further evidence that there are many competing needs and they are of critical importance. For example, survivor and gender-based violence support advocacy needs were flagged as increasingly severe and complicated by COVID-19. Participants referred to the social isolation and sheltering in place that restricted movement, cut ties with community and social service supports, in addition to adding more stress to volatile situations.

Most immediate needs of frontline communities

Access to home and land ownership

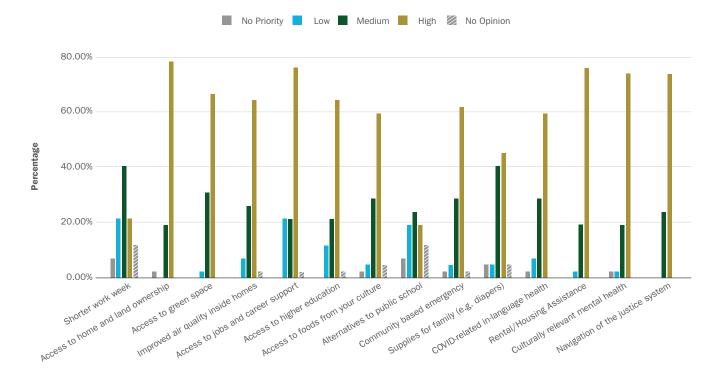**Access to economic jobs and career support**

Access to green space

Improved air quality inside homes

Access to higher education

Immediate and Basic Needs

Figure 1: What are immediate needs from you and your community/constituents? Rank in priority.

Legend: No Priority | Low | Medium | High | No Opinion

> " We have one family - they have 11 kids in the family - and they all got sick because they all live under one roof. There's no air ventilation and there's no quality of air so they all got sick. So people of color have this challenge - they're not gonna die from COVID only, they're gonna die from the worse indoor air pollution.
>
> – Focus group participant

Food Access

Access to culturally relevant food was identified as a priority among community members. While participants expressed overall satisfaction with the existing Fresh Bucks and Emergency Grocery Voucher programs, many also shared concerns and anxiety living monthly with uncertainty and at the brink of affording quality food. With children staying home from school, continued support with food access is especially critical for low-income families, immigrants and refugees, and the disAbled community. Communities of color especially need culturally relevant foods in order to be healthy. To meet this immediate need, the City must expand food access programs to reach more community members and include non-white ethnic grocery stores and local farms since large grocery retailers often do not carry products that are culturally relevant to our communities.

> " ... I really like the **food voucher**. I think it is a very good system because we don't have to receive the money to give to others. The families who need it, get it. I would like to see it expanded beyond Safeway. Maybe expand it to other stores [...] to allocate money in each house in a way that families can go to the store and just purchase food.
>
> – Focus group participant

Small Business Support

Small, BIPOC-owned businesses have been intensely impacted by the pandemic and the need for financial assistance has been great. Participants representing small businesses and restaurants described their transition to re-open as a difficult one as business owners began making more deliveries due to physical distancing requirements. This is compounded by parking changes/shortages and construction throughout the city which has made it more difficult to navigate streets and in turn negatively impacts their ability to stay in operation. As construction

continues across the city, it is critical that City departments like the Office of Economic Development, continue to engage with and support small, BIPOC-owned businesses to limit unintended consequences of ongoing construction efforts, especially when these businesses and their employees have already been impacted by COVID-19.

Given the need to practice social distancing, participants:

· Stressed the need to re-evaluate community support strategies. For example, cooling centers that might provide people relief during summer months are no longer viable and do not directly work for people living outside.

· Emphasized the need for reliable, accessible, as well as affordable technological hardware, internet connection, and skills training with the major shift to virtual meetings and gatherings.

· Shared that their access to technology and high internet bandwidth was a barrier in accessing all services.

· Acknowledged that social distancing is a luxury and frontline workers, such as farm workers who provide our

communities with food, often bear the brunt of health risks and COVID-19 exposure, such as paying out-of-pocket for testing.
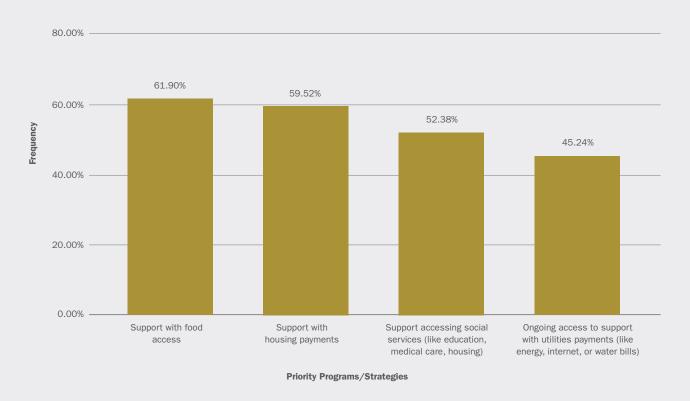
Support from the City and the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE)

Frontline communities are most concerned about food access, housing payments, accessing social services and support for public utility payments (Figure 2), which is consistent with many similar reports on environmental and climate justice for community benefits.[5] As planning for long-term recovery from COVID-19 continues, it is critical that investments be made that respond to these needs.

Invest capital and resources with Black, Indigenous, and other Communities of Color

We heard the need to and recommend investing in BIPOC communities by divesting from punitive and carceral systems to increase funding support to direct social service providers and well-respected community organizations.

Figure 2: If Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment and other entities were able to invest in programs or strategies, which would you want them to prioritize?*

Participants stressed that application and referral processes were a significant barrier in being able to respond to gender based violence situations. The lack of follow through and accountability from police departments left first responders from CBOs on their own to resolve extremely serious issues for their community members, thus elevating this issue to an area where the community needs immediate support. CBOs also mentioned it's difficult to guide the community through

the amount of information coming from municipalities, whether resources or information.

We recommend defunding Seattle Police Department and re-allocating resources to social service providers and to support the coordination of a multi-agency approach. Individuals are currently being referred to multiple different agencies or groups, in a circular manner, with little to no support actually being delivered.

A specific example related by a participant:

> In terms of being able to serve Native citizens from Tribal Nations that are not local, CBOs approached governmental agencies to suggest they work with tribal nations and re-consider the ways in which funding is defined and allocated to support Native citizens and their direct service needs. There is an increased gap in who local Tribes are able to serve, which leaves non-local Native citizens more likely to fall between the cracks or experiencing delayed response times.

"Men sit on top of graffiti-covered fountain in Capitol Hill" *by Jake Schumacher on Unsplash*

Streamline communications and collaboration efforts among various City departments that result in reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships.

In reference to working with governmental agencies and partners, participants strongly believe efforts between different agencies must be integrated to develop a unified approach. Survey respondents and focus group participants noted that community members who are often asked to represent their communities in City, County and other community planning efforts are burnt out and spread too thin. This recommendation would then better support community members and providers who sustain the intense fight for justice and equity.

Frontline communities' funding is out of sync with need. Opportunities for communities are more likely to be missed when "burn out", disillusionment, or lack in capacity occurs. Burdens placed on communities and CBOs contribute to the vicious cycle of historical injustices of resource divestments from frontline communities and can be applicable to exploiting and "burning out" city staff too. Additionally, City departments must adopt accountability measures and metrics for follow-through, which fosters trust with frontline communities.

It is necessary to disrupt top down policy making, directly connect with frontline communities early, and stay in frequent communication. Adequate input from frontline communities must be sought given that they bear the brunt of COVID-19 impacts. For instance, participants shared that Stay Healthy Streets was developed without adequate engagement and input from frontline communities even though community members have previously expressed concern over lack of green space,[2] which has become even more important amid the pandemic. While Stay Healthy Streets were placed close to BIPOC neighborhoods, there was a lack of focused and culturally relevant outreach. The lack of consultation, only reaching out to the community when needed, and minimal reciprocity for providing input, accountability, or transparency are patterns of interaction with City departments that must be addressed and reimagined.

We recommend that policymakers, decisionmakers, and service providers work to build trusting relationships that include BIPOC communities from planning, to implementation, to resourcing, and evaluation of environmental initiatives that impact them. This applies to Stay Healthy Streets and beyond.

Digital equity

Digital equity was brought up with regards to making the internet more accessible now that public libraries and in-person spaces are closed. The idea that certain areas could be made into internet hotspots was noted, including public transit.

The public library could be a potential sponsor to do outdoor readings with tents.

Senior citizens will need special consideration as it relates to digital equity.

Participants emphasized the need for reliable, accessible, as well as affordable technological hardware, internet connection, and skills training with the major shift to virtual meetings and gatherings. Technology availability and bandwidth often exceed a household's current access.

Redefine all application and eligibility requirements so that basic minimum reporting information is collected.

Varying eligibility requirements for basic human rights such as food, public utilities, and housing creates undue and exclusionary burdens for people who are undocumented, families with low-

> " *I think it is about trusting people that ask for help. If I don't need it, I won't ask for it. I want us to trust that if I'm asking for support, I'm not trying to take advantage of the system.*
> – Focus group participant

> " *It's important to explicitly state that the rationale of these thresholds is that people are taking advantage of the system and that logic is built on racism … the idea of excluding people that we don't think […] need help is problematic. The actual incidents of fraud are minuscule.*
> – Focus group participant

income, formerly incarcerated, and other frontline communities. This was evident as participants repeatedly shared that application processes for individuals creates multiple barriers and should be reassessed. The different eligibility requirements create unnecessary confusion which are compounded by additional barriers including: lack of internet access, individuals not knowing where to go to apply or how to apply, requiring "valid stable" addresses. Additionally, frontline communities are more likely to be living with mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and adds to the complexity of application processes.
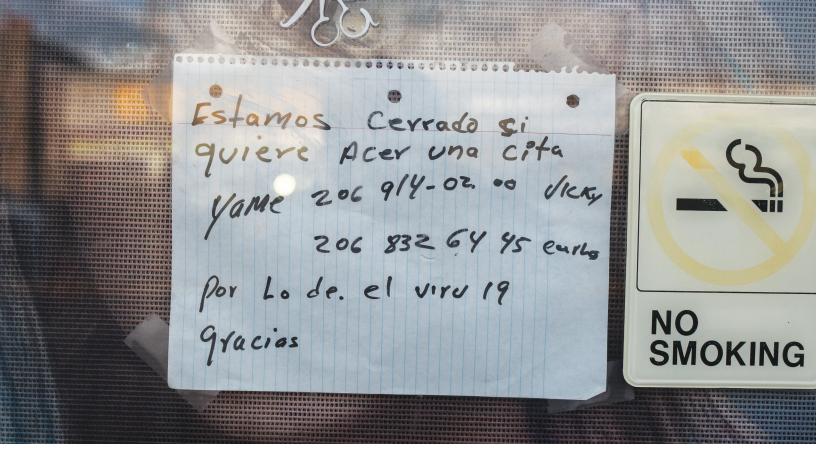
Income eligibility was raised as a barrier to access resources and assistance programs.

Participants noted that Area Median Income (AMI) does not take into account other expenses that people have. When income goes elsewhere, then you might not be considered. AMI is not an accurate representation of whether or not people have resources. Many people do not use bank accounts which needs to be a serious consideration when designing applications to access assistance programs and resources. Generally, proof of income is a challenge when applying for programs, and perpetuates more systematic marginalization.

Participants noted that the City has tended to give significant amounts of funding to large organizations, in turn large organizations can become gatekeepers when they do not recognize the barriers that exist within their own structures. For example, if community members are encouraged to access resources via the internet and online forms, but internet access is a significant issue, a service gap develops.

Subsidies for individual households include a history of stigmatizing those in need, can be punitive and confusing, and big business and subsidies that

> " *People need to recognize that CBOs come in different sizes and have different access needs and opportunities.*
> – Focus group participant

> " *I think it's just about redefining the application process and redefining… what is the minimum level of reporting and demographics [needed for] funding sources and how [to] streamline that as much as possible so that [we] don't exclude anybody.*
> – Focus group participant

benefit typically middle class do not share the same scrutiny. To that end, **City departments should look closely at who they provide funds to, and prioritize connecting with and investing in community based organizations with direct connections to community.** This could serve the dual purpose of eliminating steps in the bureaucratic process, thus decreasing the barrier to serving their communities.

Participants believe that serving and continued relationship building with displaced populations and applying an

equity lens to solutions are important for ceasing the legacy of historical harm. Opportunities within CBOs should support frontline staff and not be extractive, compensating employees a living wage.

Making Materials culturally relevant and more accessible

Participants raised frustrations with materials not being made available in languages other than English nor distributed in a manner relevant to how communities access information. We recommend making all communications materials available in more languages than English and distributing them in a manner that is relevant to how communities access information.

Mitigating the impacts of COVID-19

Participants suggested the City should consider ways, such as gap insurance, to provide families extra funding to mitigate the gaps where federal funding falls short.

Participants asked, could the City provide support until a vaccine is established for COVID-19 or 6 months after vaccines are established? Can

the City waive certain requirements to create more accessibility in this time of need? Strategies like these must consider city residents' documentation status, many people living here undocumented fail to qualify for support, such as the COVID-19 recovery stipends from the federal government.

Strengthening Community Resilience: Opportunities and Obstacles

Participants noted that when catastrophe happens, BIPOC are the most impacted, knowing that the City should be working with frontline communities to develop support strategies. An example could be the development of an emergency fund that is built year after year.

Based on what we heard from community members, we recommend that OSE could help facilitate more conversations at the City level to co-develop anti-displacement strategies, making sure to engage more governmental agencies and all other stakeholders throughout the process. Community members noted that rents have been rising alongside rising prices in land and home ownership during the pandemic. Greater representation of frontline community members within policy-making and programs is critical.

We as a collective community need to consider the ongoing impacts that BIPOC experience as a result of centuries of systemic marginalization and the violence inherent in that legacy. With regards to mental health and the

> " *What kind of systems of **accountability** can be placed between two parties that result in reciprocal benefits? Would kind of be similar systems to sweat equity that can be created for families. They get a loan but they also have opportunities to volunteer in their communities (mutual aid)?*
> *– Focus group participant*

> " *A large part of it is that we need to have resources redistributed differently. Communities who are made the most vulnerable need to be driving how the resources are distributed. And how are we including people who are displaced? Who are houseless?*
> *– Focus group participant*

current stressors in the community, one participant noted that their son was afraid to leave his house recently because he has been brutalized by the police.

We recommend **all governmental agencies develop deeper understandings of the connections between police violence, climate change and racism** that threaten community health and well-being as they relate to environmental justice and climate change.[5] When communities are telling us that they "can't breathe" it is our collective duty to listen, to understand why, and to co-develop solutions and create just futures for all.

"Georgetown During Stay Home, Stay Safe Order" *by SDOT Photo is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0*

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic exposes and magnifies the numerous long-standing inequities oppressing frontline communities. In addition to systemic racism, our extractive economy, and climate, it is another catalytic disruptor that has rocked our entire country and the world at large, and demanding us to consider alternative visions for a brighter future.

All people can thrive when collective visions are centered around caring for our most impacted populations: youth and elders, BIPOC, low-income families, people experiencing houselessness and other frontline intersectional communities.

We acknowledge that our community conversations engagement effort is one small step in the journey and process for the City of Seattle. Our approach was expedited and reactive to the COVID-19 pandemic impacting our communities, some more intensely than others. Continued and intentional engagement must be sustained directly with frontline communities, especially with those who come from communities that experience high rates of incarceration.

The intersection of climate change and COVID-19 are evidenced as we conclude this report: **Western land management practices imposed on tribal homelands are burning across the West Coast, hazardous air quality and dangerous wildfires continue to threaten lives and produce more climate refugees.**

Community members living unsheltered and without adequate information or climate resilient infrastructure are exposed to a greater degree and may have pre-existing health issues related to lack of access to safe culturally relevant and localized food systems.

Many of these recommendations have been demanded by frontline communities prior to the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, violence is so normalized against us, our experiences and needs are not treated with the weight and respect they truly deserve. Despite forecasts of economic recovery and the development of a vaccine, our community's needs and priorities will intensify as equity gaps increase and further divide our City if real policy recommendations are not implemented now.
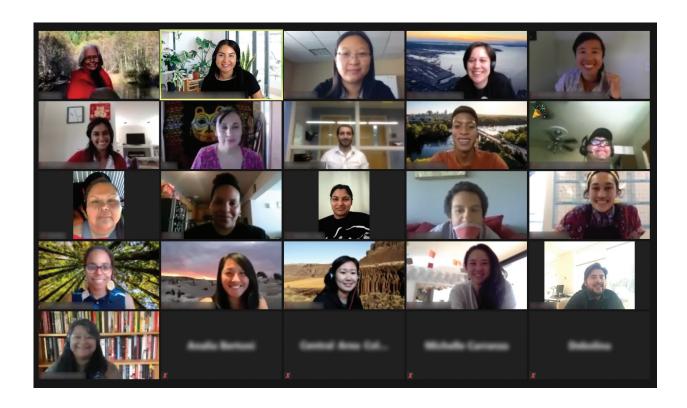
Sustainable access to basic human needs, such as affordable and ethically sourced, culturally relevant foods, direct investments for reciprocal and trusting relationships between frontline communities and policy makers, and being safely rooted in place are long overdue and need to be included in any plans for a just COVID-19 recovery.

The EJC is a voluntary body of members who serve defined terms in addition to holding full-time jobs, caring for our families, and personally identify with some of these named frontline communities. We continue to stand firmly with these collective community priorities from local organizations and community groups, as we understand all our struggles are interwoven. The Environmental Justice Fund is one step in the right direction and we strongly feel Seattle only thrives when it perpetuates healing, restoration, and anti-displacement. Future endeavors, such as those connected to the Green New Deal, need to reflect and directly benefit our communities.

Dedications

The EJC acknowledges and sends deep gratitude to the community members who generously shared their hopes, dreams, visions, and energy with us in these community conversations. We stand in solidarity with their individual and collective struggles for justice and will continue to make sure the voices of those most impacted by environmental racism and injustice are centered in the work we do. While we would like to name each contributor, we recognize our communities are at the frontline of many issues concurrent with systems that do not ensure our wellbeing. We are continuously inspired and awed by our community's brilliance and efforts towards building the kinds of futures they would like to see.

To get in touch with the Environmental Justice Committee, please email: equityenviro@seattle.gov

Appendices

Appendix A: Methodology

Our research process began June 29, 2020 and we conducted descriptive data assessments using Google Sheets and Google Docs.

Survey Data Collection - July 27- August 9, 2020

The philosophical foundation and themes for the ten survey questions stemmed from a May 2020 EJC meeting where we participated in a brainstorm session for COVID-19 recovery and future community resiliency. The survey design was a mix of multiple choice, Likert-type scale (used to assess/rank opinions), and open ended questions. We also asked for some demographic information. The full questionnaire is in Appendix F.

We used a random selection method to invite grassroots and non-profit organizations to complete our survey. We believed there was sufficient knowledge within the EJC to include groups who truly have a pulse of the communities they serve and therefore can effectively speak on behalf of their constituents. Past Environmental Justice Fund grantees were also asked to participate. EJC members sent instructions and the survey via email to community leaders, constituents, and employees of these organizations. Our goal was to receive at least 50 respondents within two weeks; we received 42 or a response rate of 84%. As a gift of gratitude, we emailed $50 electronic gift cards to all who completed our survey.

We recommend that future efforts consider the following adaptations in similar research approaches:

- We did not ask about gender identity.
- We did not define "low income" in the survey.
- We did not ask about ethnicity on an individual basis.
- Discussions were limited to only 40 minutes, so only a few individuals were able to speak. More robust training of our facilitators and "round robin" style of discussion could allow for more participants to voice their thoughts.

- We did intentionally seek feedback and participation from community leaders and representatives of community-based organizations (CBOs). We expect potentially different anecdotes and priorities if individual community members were surveyed directly.

Survey Method of Analysis

When a respondent completed the survey in SurveyMonkey, their responses were automatically exported to a spreadsheet. We moved the responses to a Google Sheet file for the purposes of virtual collaboration. In this Google Sheet file, we had one sheet (main) where all of the survey responses were held and separate sheets for each survey question (question sheets). Having separate sheets for each survey question allowed us to focus on one question at a time for our analysis. We added filters to the main sheet so we could focus on the responses collectively and by identity (BIPOC, Refugee, Immigrant, LGBTQI, people with low-income, english language learners, youth, elders, and people with disabilities). Where possible, we used formulas to reduce the amount of manual counting we needed to do.

For the multiple choice and Likert-type scale questions (questions 1-6) we created tables in the question sheets where we tabulated how many responses each choice within a specific question received. This tabulation was done for all responses collectively and as a function of personal identity. After creating the tables, we then created bar charts to better visually represent the data.

For the open-ended question (question 7) we first separated the "Yes" responses from the "No" responses. We then read through the "Yes" responses to determine common themes. After reading through the responses, we created four codes to better categorize and analyze the responses. We then coded each "Yes" response and represented the data in a table.

Focus Group - August 27, 2020

All survey respondents were asked if they would like to participate in a focus group discussion that sought to dig deeper into the survey results. From the survey invitee list that we recruited our 18 focus group participants. The data was collected in the focus group conversations using verbatim note taking, themes, and recordings and notetaker and facilitator cell phones.

The focus group questions were informed by the results and themes identified during the analysis of the responses to questions 5, 6, and 7 on the survey. We used these three questions from the survey because we felt they captured the essence of the question we are trying to answer, "How are our communities envisioning recovery and continuing stabilizing efforts?"

Questions 1-5 provided important information, but they addressed personal identity, identity of communities served, and places of work and we determined it would be redundant to ask these questions again during the focus group. After analyzing the survey results, the Environmental Narratives subcommittee settled on a list of six questions for the focus group. The focus group conversation was conducted on August 27th over Zoom. We shared a presentation on how we arrived at themes via the survey and methods, a deeper understanding of climate justice, and resiliency, and community conversations intended outcomes. We divided the 18 participants into three groups of four people for 45-minute small group discussions using Zoom's breakout room feature. It was in these small group discussions. These

separate small group discussions were bookended by larger group discussions that totaled an hour and fifteen minutes. For facilitation of the focus groups, we connected with three external individuals to facilitate and compensate them for their time. Additionally, we compensated all of the focus group participants.

Focus Group Questions

1. Does this graphic feel accurate(graphic displayed)? Do you think anything is missing?

2. What are your ideas for how OSE (and other City departments) could address your or your community's immediate needs?

3. What would make it easier for community members to access existing resources?

4. What do you think is a good threshold to qualify for support programs?

5. How could we provide COVID-19 health related information to the folks who are most impacted by it? What are the best ways to get information about incentives, rebates, assistance & grants to people who need it most?

6. Where are opportunities or obstacles to strengthen community resilience moving forward?
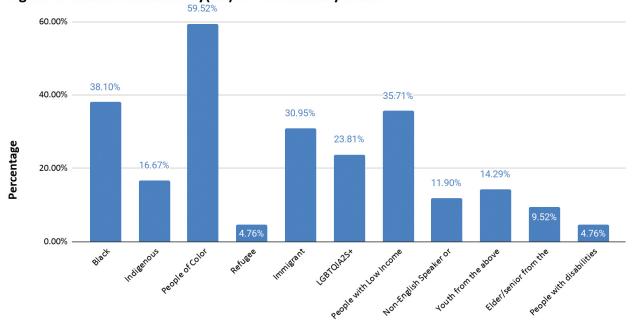
Appendix B: Survey Results

Survey Data Analysis for Focus Group Conversations

In this section, we will not address all survey questions but a select few that provide key insight.

Community Identity of Survey Respondents

Nearly 60% of our respondents self-identified as a person of color, and a majority of whom specified their race/ethnicity (Figure 1). Additionally, there was great overlap in identities as respond with the vast majority of respondents choosing multiple identities. Respondents to our survey could choose multiple identities so the percentages will not total to 100%.

Affiliation of Communities Served by Survey Respondents

The organizations our respondents worked with served all communities listed relatively equally. The POC community broadly is the most served with 86% of respondents saying they or their organizations serve communities of color (Figure 2).

Based on the results of the questions regarding identity and community affiliation we believe that, even though we only had 42 survey respondents and 18 focus group participants, the multitude of identities represented amongst our survey respondents and the multitude of communities our respondents serve creates an adequate representation of frontline communities through our data collection methods.

Figure 1: Which Commmunity(ies) Do You Identify With?

Figure 2: Which Communities Do You Serve?

Immediate Needs in Seattle's Community during COVID-19

High priority immediate needs for frontline communities are: access to home and land ownership, access to jobs and career support, access to green space, and improved air quality inside homes/access to higher education. Again, the top priorities do not tell the whole story. OAs you can see in the figure below, of the 14 priority options from this survey question, more than 50% of respondents said that 11 of 14 priorities were "high" for them and their community. This is further evidence that the needs are many and they are of near equal importance.

Shifting Priorities & Climate Change Given COVID-19

The eighth question was an open response question that asked, "Given COVID-19, have your priorities around how to address climate change shifted?" The table below shows how the responses were coded. An explanation of each code can be found in Appendix E. Note that some responses received multiple codes. In total, 36 respondents answered "Yes" to this question and 6 answered "No." Most responses fit into the "Basic Needs/Well-Being" and "Exposure of Inequities" codes. An interesting aspect of these responses is that the "shift" people felt in how to address climate change wasn't much of a deviation from efforts we will need to build climate resilient communities. Indeed, a focus on basic needs, community well-being, and an addressing of existing inequities will be central to the fight against climate change, the mitigation of its effects, and our adaptation to those effects as well.

Code	Number of Responses
Focus on Basic Needs/Well-Being (BN)	17
Community Solidarity (CS)	6
Exposure of Inequities (EI)	15
General Shift of Priorities (GS)	4

Appendix C: Endnotes

1. City of Seattle Environmental Justice Committee. https://www.seattle.gov/environment/equity-and-environment/environmental-justice-committee.

2. City of Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment. "Equity & Environment Agenda." 2016. https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OSE/SeattleEquityAgenda.pdf.

3. Cabrera, Yvette. "Coronavirus is not just a health crisis — it's an environmental justice crisis." Grist, April 24, 2020. https://grist.org/justice/coronavirus-is-not-just-a-health-crisis-its-an-environmental-justice-crisis.

4. Public Health - Seattle & King County. "Race and Ethnicity COVID-19 Dashboard." King County, June 22, 2020. https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/race-ethnicity.aspx.

5. Puget Sound Sage. "Powering the Transition." Puget Sound Sage, June 2020. https://www.pugetsoundsage.org/research/clean-healthy-environment/community-energy.

Appendix D: Recommended Further Reading

1. A Racially Equitable & Resilient Recovery: https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SeattlePlanningCommission/RERRfinalSPC08032020.pdf

2. Strategic Climate Action Plan Section: Sustainable & Resilient Frontline Communities, A Community-Driven Plan for Climate Justice in King County: https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/climate/documents/2020-SCAP-Sustainable-Resilient-Frontline-Communities.pdf

3. How America's air pollution might be spiking COVID-19 deaths: https://www.deseret.com/u-s-world/2020/9/15/21436679/covid-19-coronavirus-death-rates-us-counties-haps-air-pollution-factories-plants-epa-data-studies

4. Our People Our Planet Our Power: https://gotgreenseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OurPeopleOurPlanetOurPower_GotGreen_Sage_Final1.pdf

5. Our Bodies, Our Stories series: UIHI.org

6. Treaty Rights at Risk: http://treatyrightsatrisk.org

7. Racism, Police Violence, and climate are not separate issues: https://www.newyorker.com/news/annals-of-a-warming-planet/racism-police-violence-and-the-climate-are-not-separate-issues

Appendix E: Explanation of Survey Codes

Basic needs/Well Being: Responses include a shifted focus on shelter, food, healthcare, and safety or general mentions of community health/well-being.

Community Solidarity: Responses include mentions of community-based organizing in the face of COVID, a greater sense of connection to one's community, and/or a feeling of increased care for one's community.

Exposure of Inequities: Responses mention the idea that COVID has exposed or amplified existing social inequities.

General Shift of Priorities: Responses mentioned general shifts in priorities instead of specific examples. These responses don't mention things like well-being, community solidarity, or exposure of inequities.

Appendix F: Questionnaire

1. **What communities do you identify with? (please check all that apply)**

   · Black
   · Indigenous
   · People of Color
   · Refugee
   · Immigrant
   · LGBTQIA2S+
   · People with Low Income

   · English Language Learner
   · Youth from the above communities
   · Elder/Senior from the above communities
   · People with disabilities
   · Other or if you answered People of Color, feel free to specify which community:

   _____

2. **What communities do you serve or work in solidarity with? Please select all.**

   · Black
   · Indigenous
   · People of Color
   · Refugee
   · Immigrant
   · LGBTQIA2S+
   · People with Low Income

   · English Language Learner
   · Youth from the above communities
   · Elder/Senior from the above communities
   · People with disabilities
   · Other or if you answered People of Color, feel free to specify which community:

   _____

3. **What organization do you work with? (Open Ended Response)**

4. **Which communities does your organization serve?**

- Black
- Indigenous
- People of Color
- Refugee
- Immigrant
- LGBTQIA2S+
- People with Low Income

- English Language Learner
- Youth from the above communities
- Elder/Senior from the above communities
- People with disabilities
- Other or if you answered People of Color, feel free to specify which community:
  _____

5. **If Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment and other entities were able to invest in programs or strategies, which would you want them to prioritize? Please pick your top four. Please choose only your top four priorities from the list below**

- Support with food access
- Support with housing payments
- Support accessing social services (like education, medical are, housing)
- Increased access to culturally relevant mental health support
- Safety from police violence
- Career and/or small business support, including earning opportunities

- Climate change preparedness (for example: better indoor air quality in the fact of wildfires, energy efficiency, etc.)
- Increased transportation opportunities (for example: bus service, biking trails)
- Arts and Cultural activities relevant to my community
- Other (please specify)

6. **What are immediate needs from you or your constituents? Please tell us how much of a priority the following are.**

- Shorter work week
- Access to home and land ownership
- Access to green space
- Improved air quality inside homes
- Access to jobs and career support
- Access to higher education
- Culturally relevant mental health resources and/or support
- Alternatives to public school

- Community based emergency planning and resources
- Supplies for my family (e.g. diapers,cleaning items,)
- COVID-related in-language health information/resources from local government authorities
- Rental/Housing Assistance
- Culturally relevant mental health resources and/or support
- Navigation of the justice system
- Other: _____

7. **Given COVID-19, have your priorities around how to address climate change and community well-being shifted at all? How so? (Open Ended Response)**

8. **I am interested in the following topics: [Multiple choice]**

    ☐ Food/land conservation   ☐ Youth

    ☐ Small Business   ☐ Green Economy

    ☐ Healthy Homes and Buildings   ☐ Transportation

9. **Are you able to participate in a virtual focus group led by the Environmental Justice Committee on August 27th?**
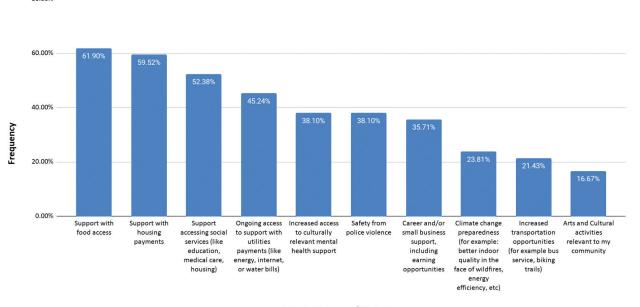
    · Sorry, I'm not available.

    · Yes! Tell me more.

10. **Please provide your email address and/or phone number and someone from the Environmental Justice Committee will reach out to you with more details.**

Appendix G: Figure 2

Figure 2: If Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment and other entities were able to invest in programs or strategies, which would you want them to prioritize? Please pick your top four.