SERVING SEATTLE:
GET ENGAGED

CITY HALL

Seattle

Contents

A Message from Mayor Ed Murray

Seattle is among the most generous and civically-minded cities in the United States. According to the 2014 Civic Health Index developed by Seattle City Club in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship, our region ranks 3rd for volunteerism among the nation's 51 largest metropolitan areas and 4th for neighborhood engagement. Additionally, some of the country's most generous philanthropic organizations, foundations, businesses, and individuals are located and give here.

Our city is also changing rapidly. Between 2010 and 2015, Seattle grew more than three times as fast (12.5%) as the nation as a whole (4.1%). This growth has brought great benefits to our city, but also new challenges. Our population is increasingly mobile and transitory, which can test social cohesion. Additionally, as we have welcomed new residents and jobs, housing supply has not met demand, resulting in our worst housing crisis in decades. Opportunities to participate in our growing economy are not equitably distributed and barriers to engagement often disproportionately impact our least advantaged residents.

I've been working hard to address many of these issues by creating additional low-barrier shelter capacity for people living unsheltered on Seattle streets, championing and implementing the $15 minimum wage, and ensuring this city remains affordable for those who live and work here. But government can't solve these problems and meet all the needs of our growing city alone. Volunteers willing to share their time, energy, and expertise are critical and without whom success would be even more difficult to attain.

Seattle residents' high level of commitment to improving and investing in their communities is one of our city's greatest strengths. During this time of tremendous growth and change across the Puget Sound region, we have an incredible opportunity to utilize the energies and talents of our population to help address some of our most pressing local challenges. Time and time again we witness firsthand how service to community brings powerful impacts and results.

This service plan provides a framework for bringing together and leveraging the collective generosity and strengths of all our residents to help make Seattle a more equitable, vibrant,

Seattle

and interconnected city. Seattle already benefits from strong local traditions of community service and innovation; our challenge is to nurture and channel those resources in ways that will provide maximal benefits to our residents and neighborhoods.

As you read this plan, I hope it inspires you to volunteer and engage on local issues that are meaningful to you. Seattle works best when we all work together.

Sincerely,

Edward B. Murray
Mayor of Seattle

Seattle

Executive Summary

Since his first day in office, Mayor Ed Murray has talked about the need to create opportunities. Whether by increasing the minimum wage or expanding mandatory Pre-K education, the Mayor believes improving the lives of some can help elevate the quality of life for all. Creating opportunities has been at the heart of every initiative he has embraced and is also at the core of this service plan – **service** being the operative word.

In his February 2013 inaugural address, Mayor Murray shared his vision for Seattle: a city that is safe, affordable, vibrant, interconnected, and innovative. To realize this vision, Mayor Murray understands that we work better together than we do apart, and so volunteerism has become an integral part of how the city operates. Mayor Murray often refers to the value of service and what an honor it is to serve as a public official. These words and this sentiment have been a constant thread in every speech the Mayor has delivered and every initiative he has introduced. It is a running theme, in both word and in action.

"Partnership is not a posture but a process - a continuous process that grows stronger each year as we devote ourselves to common tasks."

President John F. Kennedy, June 25, 1963

Mayor Murray understands that government cannot do everything for everyone and neither can community groups, but together the possibilities are endless. Partnerships between public and private entities elevate the good work being done by all and help make cities like Seattle better and stronger. Partnerships can be a powerful combination, and that is where the challenge comes in. When more of us get involved, we create more opportunities to generate and elevate high-quality work that supports Seattle's advancement as a national leader in innovative service delivery.

We know Seattle residents are resourceful. We know we have volunteers throughout this city giving their time, talent, and treasures to make Seattle an even better place to call home. What we don't know are the specifics. How many volunteers? How many hours of service are contributed? How do people get involved? And, just as important, what impact are volunteers having on our city's most pressing challenges?

These might seem like simple questions, yet the answers are anything but. The answers are complicated, they are uneven, they are sensitive, and, in some cases, they are unknown. Additionally, while many of the answers may be revealing and indicative of our good nature, others expose our vulnerabilities. We have spent the last year listening and learning. We've look at our assumptions and drilled down, trying to gain a better understanding of our volunteer

Seattle

landscape. We've looked at our resources and how we allocate and distribute them, questioning our reasoning. We've attended meetings, hosted events, and initiated many conversations in hopes of learning more, specifically about what communities want and need.

Although their reasons may vary, people for the most, want safe, vibrant and interconnected communities. Mayor Murray realizes that different communities have different starting points. He understands that there is a difference between equal and equitable. The latter has served as this administration's North Star, a guiding principle that is represented in this roadmap. Acknowledging there are different needs and resources that need to be used accordingly, the Mayor has taken bold steps to address equity. This principle is at the root of the challenge to educate and empower neighborhoods and communities throughout the city. It is behind the spirit of service as we encourage participation, broaden access, and create opportunities.

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"Real people do real things. A collective of a whole bunch of people who do things in their own locale, in their own neighborhoods - the sum is bigger than the parts, and the parts will grow."

unknown

This citywide service plan is about informing and involving, educating and engaging. By strengthening communities through these actions, we strengthen Seattle. Our city becomes stronger, more resilient, and more equitable. This service plan is our roadmap describing innovative ways to engage community and to try new and different approaches to address our challenges.

The Connected Community:

A connected community is a strong community. Strong communities are empowered, cohesive, and better able to help each other in times of need – in a word, more resilient. This service plan, which will serve as our roadmap on engaging residents as a first step in establishing relationships, focuses on connections as the foundation on which to build more resilient communities.

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We have identified two priority focus areas and several high impact service initiatives and infrastructure investments to engage Seattle residents in addressing our community challenges: The two focus areas center on improving (1) City-Community connections and (2) Community-Community relations. The conduit between city government and communities are important and so is the network among communities. Thus, substantial parts of this plan and the anticipated deliverables are focused on nurturing and sustaining these relationships.

Improving City-Community connections means linking communities to City services and resources. These include our Find It Fix It Community Walks and CityScoop – Summer Parkways gatherings. Both address ongoing concerns about how we interface with communities and improve our information-sharing abilities and techniques. Infrastructure initiatives, including a digital engagement plan, are also being planned to engage Seattle's residents in addressing community challenges.

Improving Community-Community relations means creating connections among communities. Convening community and neighborhood groups to focus on building networks will be paramount in this effort as exemplified by our Community Project Grants. This program empowers neighbors to identify problems on their block and provides small grant awards to encourage community projects thereby making positive change possible.

Both approaches will require investments and an emphasis on infrastructure which will be key to ensuring success on all fronts.

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Equity is reflected as we promote service and is a core part of what it means to be a community member in one of the most compassionate, caring, and creative cities in the nation. This guiding principle is included throughout this plan and builds upon the long tradition of community involvement in Seattle, and helps to ensure our city will remain a leader in answering the call to service. Our commitment to equity will guide our efforts and strategies as we target community needs, respond to community wants, identify best practices, and set clear outcomes, all while we evaluate our progress and measure our impacts.

"I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catchers mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back."

Maya Angelou

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Introduction

WHAT IS SERVICE?

The literal definition is as follows:

service

noun | ser·vice | ˈsər-vəs

1: an act of helpful activity; help; aid: *to do someone a service.*

However, service is more than a definition; it is an experience. It can be described in multiple ways and it is something you recognize when you see it. Seattle is a city known for its neighborhoods, and within each neighborhood are unofficial stewards that devote countless hours to improving their communities. We have a long history of engagement through systems of recognition and support for community groups. This history is valuable and these systems should be expanded and supported, because community voices are important and their efforts are priceless.

In addition to broadening access points and increasing opportunities for public participation, we want to be more effective in how we engage. This is about increasing engagement but it is also about better understanding and improving the experience. The numbers are important but being mindful of the process leads to sustainability.

Cities across this country face serious challenges, and many mayors want to fully utilize every resource available to them — including the time and energy of public-spirited residents — to address them. While we recognize the good work of our community volunteers throughout Seattle, we acknowledge that we don't have a full grasp of the contributions they are making. Volunteerism is often an underutilized or inefficiently utilized strategy. With this in mind, we appreciate this collaborative effort with Cities of Service. Together we will strive to support and leverage community service strategies, address local needs and community wants, and make government more effective.

A national nonprofit organization, Cities of Service helps mayors and city leaders tap the knowledge, creativity, and service of citizens to solve public problems and create vibrant cities. We work with cities to build city-led, citizen-powered initiatives that target specific needs, achieve long-term and measurable outcomes, improve the quality of life for residents, and build stronger cities. Started in 2009 by New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the Cities of Service coalition is now comprised of over 225 cities in the US and UK, representing nearly 55 million people in 45 states, and more than 10 million people in the UK.

THE CITIES OF SERVICE MODEL

Citizen engagement is fundamental to the well-being of individuals, their communities, and the larger cities in which they live. Three activities are core to *citizen engagement*:

1. Deliberation – talking and listening to people who have different opinions about public issues

2. Collaboration – citizens and city officials working together to move the needle on local challenges

3. Connection – diverse stakeholders building authentic relationships to address shared concerns

This model requires metrics that show concrete, practical results. City leaders choose outcome goals and objectives and collect data that allows them to track their success and refine their plans. The use of data informs their deliberations, guides their collaborations, and makes their relationships more transparent and accountable. In the Cities of Service model, city halls convene the opportunities for deliberation, they collaborate with citizens and organizations, and they form civic relationships that cross the government/public divide. These civic relationships generate power, build communities, reflect values and principles, and are intrinsically rewarding.

In 2015, the City of Seattle was one of seven cities to receive the Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTA program grant. Love Your Block is a Cities of Service high impact service strategy that brings mayors' offices together with community residents to revitalize their own neighborhoods – one block at a time.

Drawing on this strategy, the Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTA program deploys two AmeriCorps VISTA members to each participating city to support the mayor in engaging low-

9 | Page

Seattle

income community members to revitalize their neighborhoods. Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTA is a three-year program. The first class of AmeriCorps VISTAs began their service in June of 2015 when Cities of Service, with support from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and Bloomberg Philanthropies, awarded seven cities with two AmeriCorps VISTA members and $30,000 each to plan and implement Love Your Block in their low-income neighborhoods.

WHAT IS A SERVICE PLAN?

This service plan is our roadmap for the effective use of volunteers, expanding citizen engagement, and helping residents feel like they are partners and collaborators with the City and that City projects and programs are done for and with them rather than to them.

This plan is an essential, living document that establishes goals and means, evolves over time with city priorities, and is key to the successful implementation of Impact Volunteering initiatives.

Our Impact Volunteering initiatives are City-led, community-powered programs that target specific needs and produce measurable results. Pillars of Impact Volunteering include: leadership by the Mayor, engagement of residents and community partners, planning for strategies and goals, and accountability through measurements and reporting. The Mayor's Find It Fix It Community Walk and Community Grant program is an Impact Volunteering initiative that is already underway.

Background: Get Engaged

ABOUT SEATTLE

Seattle is a city known for its neighborhoods. We also have a long history of community engagement through various methods and systems, some which were created nearly 30 years ago. This history is valuable, and City support of community organizations and public involvement should continue, because these voices are important. But to stay relevant, even the best ideas must evolve.

Seattle is growing, and its population is changing. The City needs to continually revisit and expand its public engagement efforts in order to ensure growing demographic groups are represented in City decision-making processes, and barriers that discourage or prevent people from participating are eliminated.

Successfully engaging the community in the process increases the likelihood of public support and better outcomes.

On July 13, 2016, Mayor Murray signed Executive Order 2016-06 reaffirming his commitment to advance the effective deployment of equitable and inclusive community engagement strategies across all City departments. Equity has been a running theme within his administration, and a focus on equity is essential to any community involvement process to build relationships and improve outcomes, especially for under-represented and under-served communities.

Seattle

And that is what this service plan focuses on – **people**. Our roadmap is ultimately about relationships – forging them, nurturing them and, most importantly, sustaining them.

We focus on identifying equitable outreach and engagement practices that reaffirm the City's commitment to inclusive participation. This is a directive we take seriously as we work to **strengthen Seattle by engaging all communities.** We do this by fostering partnerships, cultivating emerging leadership, and facilitating community inclusiveness. These values are reflected in each of our Impact Volunteer initiatives.

Outreach and engagement is at the core of many City initiatives, and equity and transparency are our guiding principles. Since the Executive Order was issued, we have participated in 35 community events and surveyed more than 3,500 community members to collect information about how they prefer to engage on local issues. What works for some does not work for all, and the results of these outreach efforts are informing the development of a suite of initiatives and tools designed to make it easier for individuals and community groups to participate in civic life.

We have a lot of work ahead of us and are committed to helping people build community block by block and making things easier step by step.

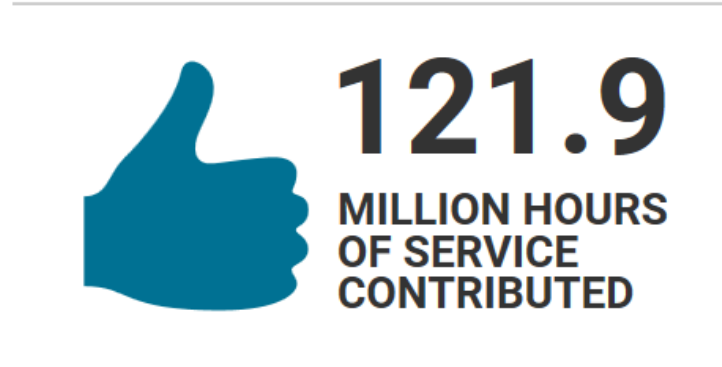*"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."*

Mohammed Ali

Seattle

VOLUNTEERING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN SEATTLE

The statistics for this area were collected within the Seattle Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Major cities in this MSA include Seattle, WA; Tacoma, WA; and Bellevue, WA in 2014:

25.7

VOLUNTEER HOURS PER CAPITA

837,200 VOLUNTEERS

$1.7 BILLION OF SERVICE CONTRIBUTED

— 32.5% OF RESIDENTS —
VOLUNTEER,

RANKING THEM

» **7th** «

AMONG THE 51 LARGEST MSAs

60.7%

60.7% OF RESIDENTS DONATE $25 OR MORE TO CHARITY

121.9 MILLION HOURS OF SERVICE CONTRIBUTED
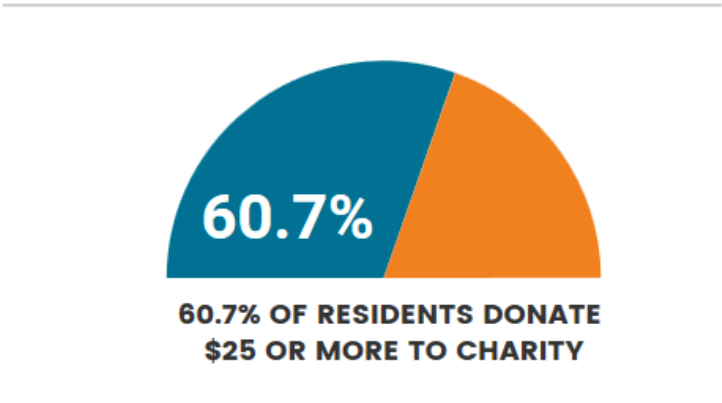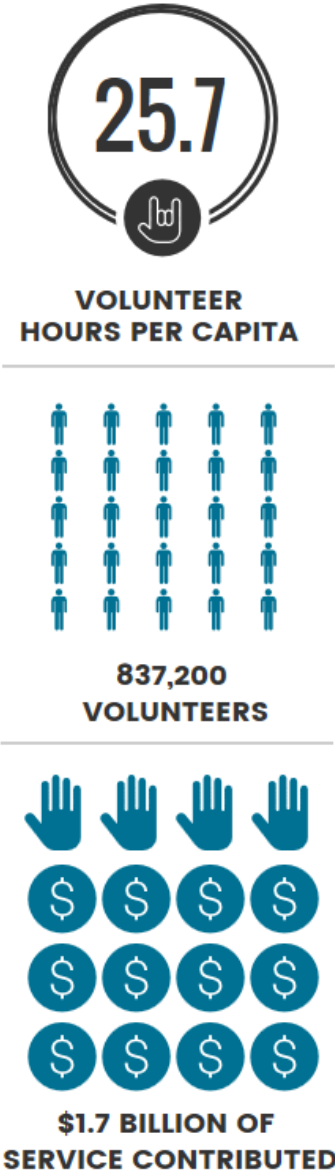
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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Before we could develop this service plan, we needed a better understanding of our community involvement landscape. This analysis – Engage Seattle – included gathering and reviewing data on how the City currently deploys its resources and who is utilizing them, which also lets us know who is not. It was an interesting exercise with illuminating results regarding which community members were engaged, which were not, and the many reasons why that was the case.

METHODOLOGY

Our findings, which were instrumental in crafting this service plan, were the product of a nine-month process, including the issuance by Mayor Murray's Executive Order on advancing equity in outreach and engagement. More than 53 meetings were conducted, 27 with current community leaders who are actively plugged into the system. Thirty-five events were hosted, and we received over 3,500 completed surveys. The surveys were translated into six languages, including Spanish, Amharic, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Somali.
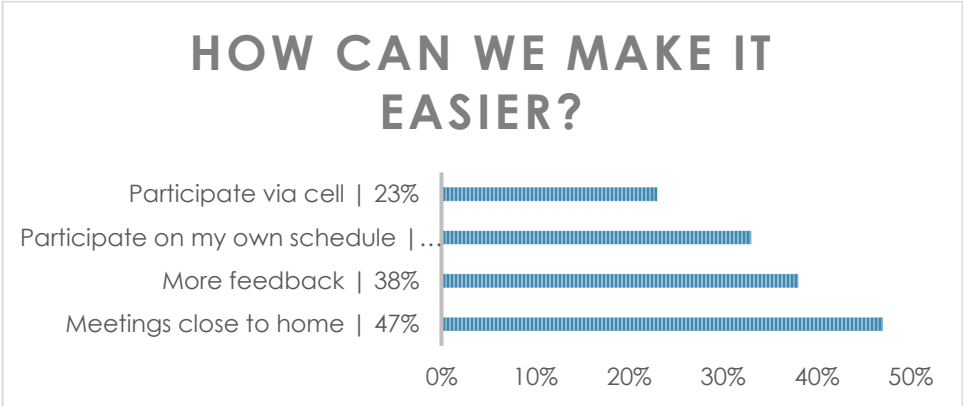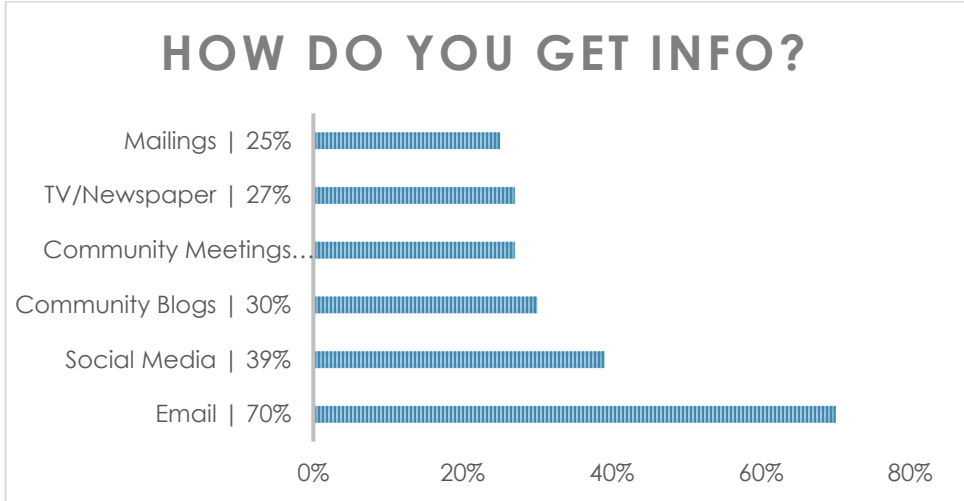
FINDINGS

The responses identified the challenges to interacting with the City and obstacles that prevented participation. Participants observed numerous existing programs that provide opportunities for some, but do not necessarily work for everyone. We also heard about the volumes of information being generated by the City. Such information wasn't always accessible, informative, or easy to understand. These responses helped identify key challenges of how to link existing programs together in a meaningful way and share resources to the greatest effect.

As a result of the nine-month exercise, we identified several cross-cutting challenges affecting Seattle's volunteer service sector in three broad categories: capacity issues, partnership issues, and prospective volunteer issues. As a result, we developed a unique set of initiatives to address the specific challenges identified. Several emerged as priority needs including infrastructure improvements. Frequent issues cited were overall needs for financial resources, condensed or consolidated information, coordination across City departments, and partnerships across and between community organizations.

HOW DO YOU GET INFO?

Mailings | 25%
TV/Newspaper | 27%
Community Meetings...
Community Blogs | 30%
Social Media | 39%
Email | 70%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%

HOW CAN WE MAKE IT EASIER?

Participate via cell | 23%
Participate on my own schedule |...
More feedback | 38%
Meetings close to home | 47%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%

WHAT WE HEARD:

- Add links to project/issue websites
- Better use of technology
- Engage residents early; openly and honestly
- More interactive maps with project details
- I need to be heard and believed
- Be clever. Be innovative. Try things. Evaluate them. Try again.

SERVICE GOALS AND STRATEGIES

1. **Promote public participation:** Provide a wide range of opportunities for obtaining information and involvement in decision-making processes. Promote public participation in decision-making processes so that government is more responsive to local needs and requests.

2. **Create more opportunities:** Improve and expand inclusive outreach and engagement. Create more equitable representative systems that are more reflective of, and accessible to, communities throughout the city. Create more opportunities to build partnerships to address local needs and wants.

3. **Facilitate communication and collaboration:** Build community capacity for meaningful participation and authentic outreach and engagement. Facilitate communication, collaboration, and interaction among all communities regarding their common and disparate concerns.

4. **Improve customer service:** Create well-designed, responsive, and culturally-relevant public involvement plans. Effectively and efficiently manage the use of all resources, including community members' time. Foster a sense of community for all people to express ideas and opinions about their neighborhoods, communities, and their government.

5. **One Size Does Not Fit All:** Achieve greater equity with meaningful involvement, especially of under-served and underrepresented communities.

Seattle

INITIATIVES, IDEAS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Find It, Fix It – Community Walk and Project Grant Program

In 2014, Mayor Ed Murray initiated Find It, Fix It Community Walks, a series of Mayor-led walks that help improve neighborhoods one block at a time. During these walks, neighbors, police, and City officials walk together to identify physical elements in the neighborhood that make it feel unsafe or poorly maintained. Examples include overgrown trees, graffiti, street light outages, and litter. Once the elements are identified, the City and community work together to fix the problems. To date, 22 Community Walks have been held throughout the city, resulting in hundreds of infrastructure improvements – from new trash and recycle bins to upgraded street lights.
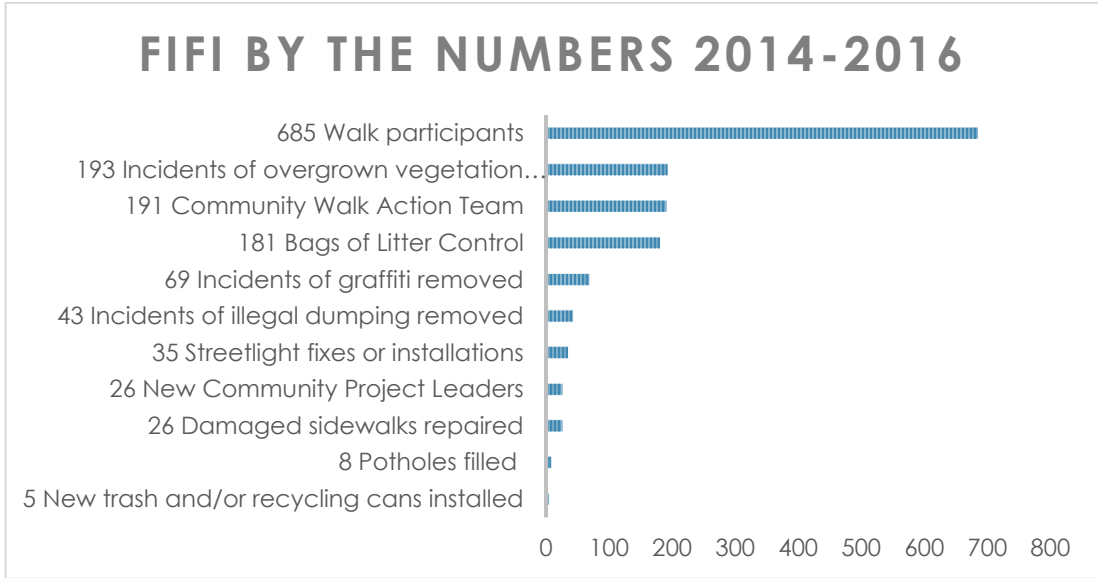
In 2015, in partnership with Cities of Service, Mayor Murray created the Community Project Grants program. Residents in each Find It, Fix It Community Walk neighborhood can apply for up to $5,000 to lead volunteer projects that improve the safety and/or appearance of the community. In 2016, an additional $35,000 in Community Project Grants was awarded for community projects.

Community partnerships are key to the success of the Find It, Fix It Community Walks. In 2016, we continued our efforts to partner with local businesses that allowed us to build the program and leverage available resources. These partnerships not only show the support local businesses can provide to the communities they operate in, but also are a resource for in-kind donations (e.g. tools, gift cards) to strengthen the work residents achieve through Community Project Grants. We also incorporated in-kind donations in gift bags that were given to participants to promote local businesses and foster community support and patronage.

Seattle

In addition, the gift bags were filled with resource materials from City departments, such as information about the Find It Fix It Phone App, Adopt-a-Street, customer service numbers, and Community Project Grants.

FIFI BY THE NUMBERS 2014-2016

Category	Value
685 Walk participants	685
193 Incidents of overgrown vegetation...	193
191 Community Walk Action Team	191
181 Bags of Litter Control	181
69 Incidents of graffiti removed	69
43 Incidents of illegal dumping removed	43
35 Streetlight fixes or installations	35
26 New Community Project Leaders	26
26 Damaged sidewalks repaired	26
8 Potholes filled	8
5 New trash and/or recycling cans installed	5

(Horizontal axis: 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800)

Improving Customer Service – Infrastructure Investments

While numerous City departments engage volunteers extremely effectively, there has been little consistency or formal coordination across departments. The City has also lacked a clear mechanism for connecting community members with City-led or community-based volunteer opportunities.

As previously mentioned, our community volunteers are one of our most valued assets. We know there are volunteer efforts occurring throughout this city that make Seattle an even better place, but what we don't know are the specifics. One of our initiatives will focus on developing our online infrastructure by launching an interactive web portal with GIS maps and overlays making participation easier for communities. By investing in an online platform, we will enable City government to efficiently and effectively raise the profile of communities, highlight the value of service, and address local needs – all while creating responsive, transparent and culturally-relevant public involvement.

We need to communicate better. To build authentic partnerships, we need to be accessible and responsive to communities.

This is about making things more predictable, more consistent, and more convenient. Our processes need to be clear, open, and documented. They should be transparent and accountable. With our new approach to outreach and engagement, the City will make it clear to the community who is responsible for making decisions and how community input is considered. Through these processes, a diverse range of community interests are heard and

Seattle

balanced. Through our approach to equitable outreach and engagement, we foster a sense of community for people to express their ideas and opinions and create an environment where people listen, learn and feel heard.

Creating Convenience – One-Stop Shop:

Create a series of webpages offering access to services, resources, and interactive features that combine to become our One Stop Shop.

- Make information clear, relevant, and easily accessible.
- Make providing input convenient, accessible and tailored to communities.
- Coordinate processes to simplify community interaction.
- Clearly identify how public input will be used in decision-making.
- Report back to the community on how feedback was used or why it wasn't.

- Create a series of GIS mapping:
  ‣ Existing community groups (external)
  ‣ Existing venues (external)
  ‣ Existing fiscal sponsors (external)
- Create a series of Resource HUBS:
  ‣ Engagement Hub – Add Your Voice: House all active citywide department surveys/feedback forms.
  ‣ Grants Hub: Cyber portal where all citywide grants/funding opportunities as well as application forms are housed including the ability to submit forms online.
  ‣ Resource Hub: Cyber portal where resources to educate and empower communities are housed including information on graffiti paint-out, adopt-a-street, block watch, Night Out, Find It Fix It Walks and community grants, reporting electrical outages or missed garbage collection, etc.
  ‣ Volunteer Hub: Webpage dedicated to connecting volunteers with City service opportunities efficiently and easily for resident volunteers and City workers (Connecting Volunteers).
  ‣ New Resident Resource Page: Webpage[1] that provides information and links that all new residents need to know.

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[1]Washington DC's new resident page – providing information and links all new residents need to know. (http://dc.gov/page/new-resident-resources)

Seattle

Pay It Forward – "Love Your Block" flash mobs

Who doesn't love a flash mob? Who doesn't love to pay it forward?

We all know the areas in town that are experiencing blight or are the recipients of some unfavorable activity (illegal dumping, high graffiti, etc.). The all-volunteer "Love Your Block" flash mob will be a pod of volunteers who go out and just clean-up (spontaneously and under the radar).

LYB Mobsters would leave behind signage and postcards proclaiming "we loved your block". The postcards would direct them to our volunteer website and encourage neighbors to "pay it forward" by joining in on our next LYB Flash Mob or volunteering on another project.

Connecting Volunteers – CloudServe Volunteer Web Portal

Making city service opportunities easier to find and connect with is an ongoing challenge. Investing in our online volunteer portal is a needed first step in leveraging resources and maximizing Seattle's volunteer potential. We'll be teaming up with CloudRed to launch a powerful online platform that matches volunteers' passions and interests with city volunteer opportunities. More than an online database, this web platform will enable Seattle to promote and elevate service strategies that address pressing local challenges and City initiatives.
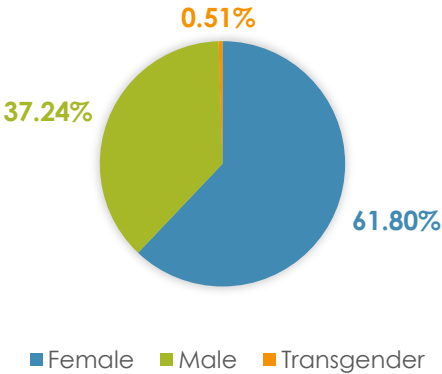
Convening/Assemblies

With all the focus and emphasis on digital strategies and engagement, it's easy to forget that nothing is as powerful as face-to-face interaction between neighbors. In-person meetings are critical to building relationships and better understanding others point of view. It's this cross-community, multi-organizational communication that Quarterly Convenings are meant to nurture. These interactive convenings will be organized by region or district and will highlight critical issues raised by community members or focus in on a hot topic neighbors are interested in discussing. Only by bringing citywide voices together can we learn about each other's concerns, find areas of agreement, and make resolution of differences more possible.
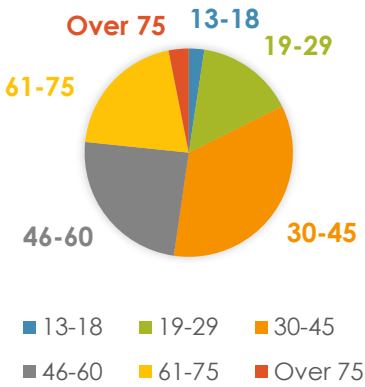
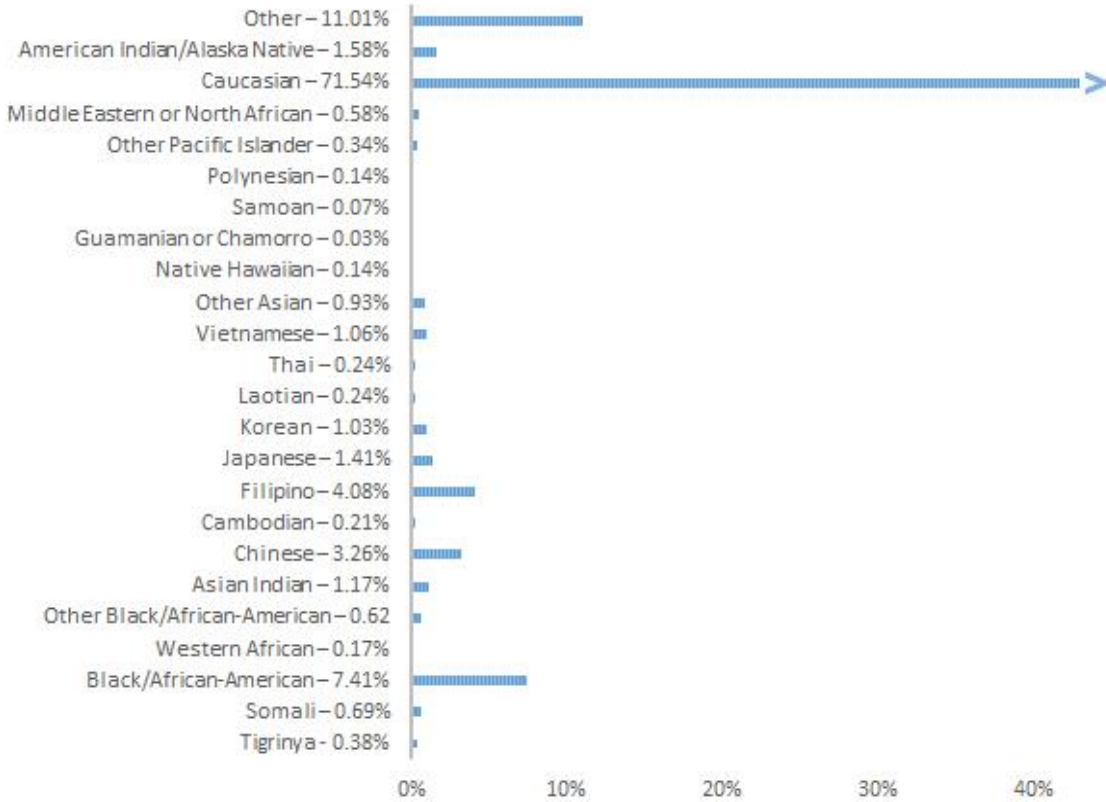Seattle

APPENDICES — ENGAGE SEATTLE DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER

- Female — 61.80%
- Male — 37.24%
- Transgender — 0.51%

AGE

- 13-18
- 19-29
- 30-45
- 46-60
- 61-75
- Over 75

ETHNICITY

- Other – 11.01%
- American Indian/Alaska Native – 1.58%
- Caucasian – 71.54%
- Middle Eastern or North African – 0.58%
- Other Pacific Islander – 0.34%
- Polynesian – 0.14%
- Samoan – 0.07%
- Guamanian or Chamorro – 0.03%
- Native Hawaiian – 0.14%
- Other Asian – 0.93%
- Vietnamese – 1.06%
- Thai – 0.24%
- Laotian – 0.24%
- Korean – 1.03%
- Japanese – 1.41%
- Filipino – 4.08%
- Cambodian – 0.21%
- Chinese – 3.26%
- Asian Indian – 1.17%
- Other Black/African-American – 0.62
- Western African – 0.17%
- Black/African-American – 7.41%
- Somali – 0.69%
- Tigrinya - 0.38%

Seattle