CONNECTING TO THE FUTURE:

Inclusive outreach and engagement in the City of Tukwila

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Technical Assistance

Prepared for the City of Tukwila based on Technical Assistance provided by Forterra during 2012, funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program

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Photo Credit: City of Tukwila
In 2012, the City of Tukwila received technical assistance from Forterra, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program, to explore strategies for achieving its commitment to more inclusive outreach and engagement.

This report describes the need for inclusive outreach and engagement, presents background information on community liaison programs, and provides recommendations and materials for the City of Tukwila to incorporate a liaison approach into its existing outreach efforts.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Tukwila requested and received technical assistance from Forterra, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program, to conduct more inclusive outreach and engagement with its diverse residents.

In addition to meeting with City staff and community-based organizations to assess existing outreach and engagement efforts, Forterra was requested to research community liaison program models, based primarily on Seattle’s Public Outreach and Engagement Liaison program, and provide recommendations and materials for a similar program in Tukwila.

Based on this research, Forterra has provided background on the need for inclusive outreach and engagement, as well as background on multiple models of community liaison programs. Case studies throughout the report highlight similar efforts to engage diverse communities.

There have been many benefits to those communities investing in a community liaison program. By compensating liaisons and providing training and support, they are able to serve as long-term bridges to their community. There is also increased transparency in terms of who the City is engaging, and a greater ability to capture metrics and evaluate success. Formalization also establishes greater institutional knowledge that exists even if well-connected City staff move on. Particularly where there are a large number of languages and cultures, a liaison program provides a cost-effective means of connecting with multiple communities.

This report includes implementation considerations on program design, with a focus on the unique aspects of the community liaison model; program administration, including recruitment, contracting, and evaluation; building internal capacity necessary for the program to succeed; and pilot program development.

We recommend piloting a community liaison program in the next year by contracting with a community-based nonprofit to coordinate a small number of liaisons around a single topic. This will allow the City to evaluate the success of a liaison program as an additional outreach and engagement strategy. Full implementation will require additional investments in staff time and resources, but can support multiple departments using liaisons on a variety of issues.

Available upon request: a summary checklist for launching a pilot program, and a variety of sample forms and materials used in other liaison programs.

In planning for its future, the City of Tukwila is fortunate to have a diverse population of communities and residents as its foundation. This report serves as a basis for moving forward with piloting a community liaison program to strengthen engagement with all Tukwila residents.
BACKGROUND

The City of Tukwila received technical assistance from Forterra, formerly known as Cascade Land Conservancy. Forterra fills a unique and important niche as the largest conservation and community building organization dedicated to the Puget Sound and Olympic Peninsula regions. Forterra partners with thousands of leaders and residents across the region to create healthy, livable, and prosperous communities.

This technical assistance was provided by Forterra as part of the Environmental Protection Agency's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program, which provides targeted technical assistance to selected local and/or tribal governments using a variety of tools that have demonstrated results and widespread application. The purpose of delivering these tools is to stimulate a discussion about growth and development and strengthen local capacity to implement sustainable approaches.

The City of Tukwila applied to Forterra for assistance in conducting more inclusive outreach and engaging more meaningfully with its diverse communities. In particular, staff were interested in how the City of Seattle’s nationally-recognized Public Outreach and Engagement Liaison program might be appropriate for Tukwila. This assistance builds on the momentum of the City’s first-ever Strategic Plan, adopted in December 2012, which recommends strategies such as broadening participation in decision-making and increasing the City’s capacity to engage in more meaningful community dialogue.

This work also continues a history of successful collaboration between Forterra and the City of Tukwila. In 2011, Forterra and the City worked with the International Rescue Committee, St. Thomas Church and other partners to create a 65-plot community garden for refugees. In 2010, after nearly a decade of partnership between Forterra, the City, and local citizens, the 10.5 acre Duwamish Hill Preserve was opened as a public space, preserving its rich Native American cultural history, ecological importance, and community impact.

Need for inclusive outreach and engagement

According to a 2010 report, King County is diverse with regards to race and ethnicity and becoming more so. More than a quarter of the population is comprised of people of color, with one in five identifying as foreign-born and more than 150 languages spoken by children in public schools. Since 1984, King County has welcomed the fifth-largest number of refugees in the United States, with additional immigrants relocating to join family members and others from their ethnic group. The largest groups immigrating to King County are from Asia, with recent migration from countries such as Bhutan, Burma, and Iraq.

Based on analysis conducted for its Strategic Plan, Tukwila is a minority-majority city, with a majority of residents who are people of color. Nearly one in five are of Latino or Hispanic origin, and more than one third were born outside the United States (comparable to cities such as San Francisco and New York). The top fifteen languages spoken in Tukwila Schools, in addition to English, include Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Nepali, Bosnian, and Cambodian. For more demographic information, refer to the City of Tukwila Strategic Plan Demographic and Economic Profile.

1 King County. Changing demographics in King County. 2010. http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/DCHS/Services/Levy/~/media/operations/DCHS/Levy/Docs/Changing_Demographics_in_King_County_revFINALashx
Because of language, cultural, and other barriers, residents in Tukwila and throughout the country are often *excluded by traditional methods of outreach and engagement*. Information is often only presented in English, public processes can be overly complex, and meetings are often inconvenient to attend, especially for those with children or dependent family members. For those new to the country, there is an additional barrier of navigating an unfamiliar system of government, service provision, and decision-making.

The consequences of being excluded from planning can be significant. For example, as hundreds of millions of dollars in transit infrastructure investments take place across the region, many community members face the *threat of displacement*. A recent report by Puget Sound Sage uses Seattle’s Rainier Valley as a case study for how this type of investment can displace people of color and low-income residents, disrupting social networks and forcing them to live further from jobs and spend more time and money on transportation.²

**Seattle’s Public Outreach and Engagement Liaison (POEL) Program**

Hoping to learn from efforts to improve outreach and engagement already underway in the region, the City of Tukwila was interested in Seattle’s POEL program.

During neighborhood plan updates in 2009, Seattle piloted a *new engagement process* to ensure more residents, particularly those traditionally unlikely to participate, could get involved in the planning process and make decisions about the future of their communities. The need for a more inclusive approach came directly out of community feedback gathered in preparation for the neighborhood update process and was supported by the City’s *Race and Social Justice*.

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**Initiative** (RSJI).³ RSJI is a citywide effort to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities in City government and has continued to be instrumental in ensuring inclusive outreach and building trust with the diverse communities throughout the City of Seattle.

**CASE STUDY: TUKWILA VILLAGE**

In October 2012, the City found success in engaging a diverse cross-section of the community in the design for Tukwila Village, a planned development that will provide affordable and mixed-income housing as well as a much-needed public gathering space.

Although previous outreach attempts struggled to include community members, this design meeting was different. The meeting included interpreters for four language communities, who assisted with interactions between community members and developers.

This type of event is similar to the work that liaisons engage in on a regular basis, making planning accessible to a diversity of stakeholders.

The City of Seattle’s POEL program began as an innovative pilot that recruited and contracted with more than a dozen community liaisons through the nonprofit Seattle Neighborhood Group. These liaisons, skilled in simultaneous interpretation and meeting facilitation, were bridges to their communities and successfully hosted several dozen workshops attended by more than a thousand participants from traditionally underrepresented communities. These efforts complimented traditional outreach methods, such as public meetings and open houses, which liaisons also attended as interpreters and facilitators.

In a study of the program’s effectiveness, researchers made several observations that are relevant for implementing a similar program in Tukwila.⁴ For example, while the model was generally successful in increasing participation by some underrepresented groups, less centralized communities (including African Americans, Latinos, and youth) were more difficult to effectively engage, especially if community members did not identify with their particular liaison. Additionally, long-term neighborhood activists expressed frustration over a lack of transparency and communication about the liaison program, undermining the process goal of strengthening relationships between existing community networks and those newly engaged.

Based on the overall success of the program, however, the City of Seattle decided to expand in 2012 to include more than a dozen community liaisons contracting with multiple city departments, working on planning as well as other issues like fair housing, infrastructure, and neighborhood safety.


OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT IN TUKWILA

In considering a POEL approach for Tukwila, Forterra interviewed staff from City of Tukwila Departments as well as community-based organizations to discuss existing obstacles and opportunities for inclusive outreach and engagement. Refer to Attachment 1 for a list of individuals interviewed.

City Perspective

A wide range of perspectives were gathered during staff interviews. While several departments did not see a direct link to their work, overall, it was clear a new outreach program would significantly benefit the City of Tukwila and that there is an immediate need. Certain departments will be more ready to pilot a POEL type program, and all departments identified a variety of topics that would benefit from more inclusive outreach and engagement. These include outreach about the new Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan annual updates, and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Liaisons were also seen as potentially helpful in improving access to City services.

Key Findings

➢ **Success with inclusive events.** The City of Tukwila has already held several successful events including work around the strategic plan and recent Tukwila Village Design Meeting (see Case Study). These kinds of events include small groups, translation, and are brought out to the community, providing an opportunity for deeper, two-way engagement.

➢ **Connecting through the schools.** Staff mentioned that another proven method to reach out to a variety of communities has been at the schools’ family nights. In general the school district was mentioned repeatedly as a primary outreach partner, although staff also mentioned that the district has limited resources.

➢ **Need for more resources.** Seeing a need to improve their outreach efforts, several staff requested more resources including increased staffing and staff time, expertise, and funding to support additional outreach.

➢ **Traditional outreach and the “usual suspects.”** Staff observed that traditional outreach activities such as mailings and traditional community meetings are only effective at reaching “Old Tukwila,” described as long-time residents who are White, middle class homeowners and property owners. Current strategies miss the majority of residents who are people of color, live in multifamily homes, and/or have come to Tukwila more recently. Staff were interested in learning about additional strategies to reach more than the “usual suspects”.

➢ **Changing government-resident relationships.** Staff are well aware that many refugees are fearful of government after coming from refugee camps, and countries where interacting with the government can be intimidating, expensive and even dangerous. Staff expressed interest in helping to show new communities that civic engagement, as well as accessing city services, is safe and supported.
Community Perspective

Our conversations with community-based organizations focused on how they perceived the City’s current outreach efforts, as well as their thoughts on how a liaison program could be successful. Should the City implement a liaison program, we recommend following-up with these and other community organizations to coordinate outreach efforts as well as recruit potential liaisons. In general there was an acknowledgement that the City has made some effort to reach out to underrepresented communities, but all community organizations saw a need for increased outreach efforts.

Key findings

- **Support for a liaison program.** Community organizations were supportive of a POEL-type program. In particular, they discussed the importance of people who not only speak the same language but are members of the community as being most effective at building ongoing relationships with the City. Liaison programs were also appreciated as community capacity-building opportunities.

- **Interest in safety and services.** Liaison programs are well suited for outreach and engagement around planning, but interest was also expressed for liaisons to work on issues relating to safety and crime, as well as connecting communities to City services and basic information. Structuring the program to be flexible to community interests in addition to issues identified by the City will ensure long-term success.

- **Coordinate liaison programs.** With several similar liaison programs working in Tukwila it is important that these programs and their liaisons coordinate and collaborate. In practice this could take the form of a quarterly meeting of all liaisons to share project and outreach plans.

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CASE STUDY: CROSSROADS MINI CITY HALL

Bellevue’s Mini City Hall started 18 years ago as a satellite office to the main downtown location. Based in the diverse Crossroads neighborhood, Mini City Hall has since become a critical City outpost for both outreach and engagement to immigrants and refugees.

Staff at the Mini City Hall speak eight different languages, and volunteers can use a visitor-friendly, dual-receiver phone with access to more than 100 other languages and dialects. In addition to providing answers to basic questions, staff also emphasize that the Mini City Hall has become a way to develop meaningful relationships. According to manager Barb Tuininga, “We’re an ear-to-the-ground in terms of what’s really going on and what people really need. It’s become a conduit of information back to the city.”

For more information, contact Barb Tuininga at the City of Bellevue btuininga@bellevuewa.gov.

Photo credit: City of Bellevue
➢ **Build capacity within the City.** Although community members recognized the positive intentions of many City staff and departments to engage residents, they saw a need for greater education and training about being inclusive and how to effectively work with different communities. Many of those interviewed recognized that the City was making progress that it could continue to build on, such as recent engagement around the strategic plan and design meetings for Tukwila Village.

➢ **Engage all communities.** Those interviewed described the importance of directing resources to all communities, including those most recently arriving and with the greatest need, as well as more established refugee and immigrant populations, and other communities of color and low-income communities. Additionally, there is room to more proactively plan for outreach and engagement based on consideration of future demographic trends.

➢ **Identify community-specific strategies.** Outreach to different communities requires different strategies as well as individuals who understand these differences. For example, many of those interviewed described the importance of gender-specific outreach within the Somali community to ensure both men and women could be reached. In other cases, generational differences between communities are important to take into account, as well as differences between recently arrived immigrants and refugees and those who are more established. The community from Burma includes a number of distinct ethnic groups, and liaisons would need to have good relationships across these groups.

➢ **Reach the whole community.** Both for outreach and for potential liaison recruitment, it is important to recognize how gatekeepers in communities can limit the engagement of community members. Churches and schools were brought up as a way to reach a wide spectrum of community members that cut across age, class, and other characteristics.

➢ **Avoid community burnout.** Particularly for focus groups and surveys, community members described experiencing a certain amount of burnout. This can be mitigated by regularly communicating with communities how their input is influencing outcomes and also by engaging community members in shared decision-making. Beyond creating a mechanism for them to share information and gather feedback, community members expect a liaison program to lead to meaningful and tangible results.
IMPLEMENTING A COMMUNITY LIAISON PROGRAM IN TUKWILA

A successful liaison program requires location-specific design and implementation based on the specific communities, issues, and resources available. The following considerations are based primarily on the lessons learned from the City of Seattle (refer to the Background information) as well as the District Council Collaborative in St.Paul/Minneapolis (refer to Case Study). These include considerations on: program design, with a focus on the unique aspects of the community liaison model; program administration, including recruitment, contracting, and evaluation; building internal capacity necessary for the program to succeed; and pilot program development considerations on piloting a liaison program.

Program Design

Liaison programs are designed to improve outreach and engagement with historically underrepresented communities. They involve financially contracting with community members who are well-connected, able to communicate effectively, and facilitate discussion and engagement around specific initiatives. Refer to Attachment 2 for an example—a description of Seattle’s POEL program.

Who are the liaisons?

In this context, a liaison is a member of a historically underrepresented community who serves as a bridge between their community and the city. Liaisons may be community leaders, but are best understood as trusted “community connectors” with skills and experience in outreach, translation, and facilitation. They may be teachers, service providers, or community organizers, although the liaison role requires that they are trustworthy and neutral, facilitating engagement but not pushing an agenda, whether the City’s, their agency’s, or their own.5

Outside of the liaison contract, successful liaisons can work full- or part-time, be unemployed, or students. The City should be aware of potential schedule conflicts with liaisons, particularly those who work fulltime and may be unable to meet with staff during regular business hours.

KEY DEFINITIONS

**Outreach**: activities to contact individuals and/or groups in order to share information, provide education, or deliver services.

**Engagement**: activities that enable community members to participate and engage in discussion, planning and decision-making action on public issues and in the design and delivery of services.

**Historically underrepresented community**: a group that has been marginalized and excluded in outreach, engagement, and public representation. Examples include people of color, immigrants and refugees, renters, gays and lesbians, low-income groups, seniors, youth, and people with disabilities.

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5 In Seattle, for example, staff pointed out the need for liaisons to the Vietnamese community, in particular, to be able to bridge political differences. Because of sensitivity around Communism and political affiliation, it was essential not to alienate different segments of the community.
What are the roles of the liaisons?
The role of the liaison is to facilitate outreach and engagement. The types of activities involved include translating materials, providing interpretation, hosting events, and sharing information between community members and the city.

By virtue of their community connections and experience, liaisons will know the best way to reach and engage community members. Efforts typically involve bringing the issue to existing community meetings and working with the City to make planned events more accessible, as well as engaging in more intimate, one-on-one discussions.

Experience in other settings has found that individual and small group settings are often the most conducive to sharing information and gathering feedback. However, liaisons can effectively facilitate participation in larger events through translation and interpretation, as well as meeting design (choosing the right time and location, bringing culturally appropriate food, identifying childcare needs, etc.).

What issues are appropriate for a liaison?
Community liaison programs can be employed for outreach and engagement around a variety of issues. Although they have often been used in planning processes, whose complexity requires more intensive engagement, they can also be used to share information and receive community input. Neighborhood planning, transit planning, fair housing outreach, crime prevention, and workforce development are all examples where liaisons have been used.

Given this breadth of possible application, it is necessary to identify and prioritize potential projects for liaisons. Attachment 3 is a sample interdepartmental request form from Seattle that initiates this process. Necessary project information to consider in deciding whether the issue is appropriate for the liaison program includes the following:

- What is the timing of the project and of the outreach and engagement activities?
- What is the goal of engaging historically underserved groups?
- What are the priority groups for outreach, and why?
- How important is the issue to the identified communities?
- What kinds of written materials will need to be translated?

CASE STUDY: EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTHEAST SEATTLE

In 2011, the City of Seattle was awarded a $3 million federal grant to work on priorities identified during neighborhood planning updates in response to light rail investment. Activities will include land acquisition loans to ensure affordable housing, small business assistance, and planning for a multi-cultural center.

The City’s Public Outreach and Engagement Liaisons will be utilized to facilitate equitable public participation and to provide support to community-based organizations.

For more information, contact Ryan Curren at Ryan.Curren@seattle.gov.
What kinds of events or outreach activities are already planned?
What opportunities are there to leverage resources and outreach efforts with other departments?

**What are the benefits of a liaison program?**
Although many municipalities rely on informal and volunteer liaisons, a formal program that financially contracts with community liaisons can often be more effective. By compensating liaisons and providing training and support, they are better able to serve as **long-term bridges to their community**. There is also increased **transparency** in terms of who the city is engaging, and a greater ability to **capture metrics** and **evaluate success**. Formalization also establishes greater **institutional knowledge** that exists even if well-connected city staff move on. Because contracts with liaisons are flexible, community members can continue to pursue other career opportunities while serving as liaisons.

For staff, contracting with liaisons can save **both time and money**. City budgets and staff are stretched increasingly thin, with only a small number of staff able to spend time out in the communities they serve. Particularly where there are a large of number of languages and cultures, a liaison program provides a means of connecting with multiple communities. Rather than trying to become outreach experts, staff can rely on the expertise of the community liaisons.

**What are other examples of liaison programs?**
Seattle’s POEL program was based on nearby **White Center’s Trusted Advocates**, developed as a component of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s **Making Connections** initiative to improve outcomes for children by strengthening families and transforming communities. In this program, community members such as teachers, case managers, mothers, pastors, and organizers were recruited to serve as Trusted Advocates and paid to work up to ten hours to build relationships, gather data, and increase involvement in the

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**CASE STUDY: INCLUSIVE TRANSIT PLANNING IN THE TWIN CITIES**

Based on Seattle’s success, a similar program was piloted around a transit service study for new light rail in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Led by the District Councils Collaborative (DCC) of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, nine Trusted Advocates were selected and received training on the transit study, the planning process, and engagement methods.

Early results from an interim report indicate that nearly 50 engagement sessions were held between February and May of 2012, with over 900 community members participating and providing feedback that will be incorporated into a concept plan. Subsequent work included conducting outreach about the concept plan, gathering feedback, and explaining the public process.

For more information, contact Karyssa Jackson at karyssa@dcc-stpaul-mpls.org.
community planning process. Their activities evolved from outreach and interpretation to facilitation, organizing, and advocacy.

In Minnesota, a **Trusted Advocate** model based on Seattle’s was used in transit service planning (see Case Study on previous page). In this program, the nonprofit District Councils Collaborative (DCC) contracted with the liaisons and coordinated their work with Metro, the local transit agency. Based on the success of this model, DCC has now hired community members, as temporary employees, to connect communities to workforce resources in its **Corridors 2 Careers** project. More information is available at [http://dcc-stpaul-mpls.org/](http://dcc-stpaul-mpls.org/).

The *promotora* or *lay health worker* model is a well-established strategy to promote public health in Hispanic and Latino communities. As *promotores*, members of a community are recruited and trained by a public health organization to provide culturally relevant patient advocacy, education, outreach, and translation. As community members themselves, *promotores* typically have better connections to social networks and are often more accessible than government workers and upper class professionals. In South King County, the **Global to Local Initiative** employs five full-time health promoters who focus on diabetes and health education classes, as well as general community-building. More information is available at [http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/G2L.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/G2L.aspx).

**Program Administration**

Community liaison programs are typically administered by staff at a public organization, but may work through a separate fiscal agent to reduce administrative burden and preserve the liaison’s position of trust. Program administration includes recruiting and training liaisons, preparing contracts and negotiating work plans, and evaluating liaison performance.

**Who should administer the program?**

In Seattle, the liaison program is managed by staff within the Department of Neighborhoods (DON), with a **nonprofit fiscal agent**, Seattle Neighborhood Group, that contracts with the liaisons. Since expanding from neighborhood planning, DON also coordinates with other departments who are interested in contracting with a liaison. In Minnesota, the nonprofit District Councils Collaborative (DCC) managed the program for the local transit agency, including contracting with liaisons.

There are benefits to working with a separate fiscal agent, including reducing staff time spent on financial and contract administration. Additionally, this distance affirms that the liaison is not an employee of the city, which is important for many liaisons to **maintain trusted relationships** with community members and to receive honest feedback. The downside of not managing the contract directly is that the cost of the service is greater, requiring additional overall fees for the contract to cover the cost of the nonprofit.

It is important to note that, even with an intermediary agency, **liaison coordination and takes a significant amount of staff time**. In Minnesota, for example, DCC decided to hire a part-time staff member to coordinate the recently launched Corridors 2 Careers, which includes seven Connectors as temporary employees. In Seattle, one and a half FTE are responsible for managing the POEL program, in addition to contracting with a nonprofit fiscal agent. Staff remain responsible for coordinating liaison requests from other departments.
Whether using a fiscal agent or not, it is important for there to be a **single point person on City staff** for the liaison program. Without a coordinating department like the Department of Neighborhoods, it may make sense to establish an **interdepartmental advisory team**, including a **primary point of contact**. The team should include staff members from Departments that already engage in community outreach and engagement as a core function of their responsibilities.

**How much and what should be budgeted for a liaison program?**

Attachment 4 includes **budget scenarios** for contracting and scenarios for a pilot program with two liaisons, an annual program with five liaisons, and an annual program with ten liaisons. A sample stipend of $5,000 per liaison per issue is suggested, although rates offered to liaisons should be comparable to what the city would otherwise pay consultants for the same service. Departments can **estimate the cost of using a liaison** based on a service rate sheet, or use these rates to determine an overall stipend amount. For a sample rate sheet, refer to Attachment 8.

Additional items to budget for include **food and meeting space reservations**, as well as parking, mileage reimbursement, etc. Many of these expenses may be reduced by coordinating with the City on locations that are free or low-cost to use.

Translation expenses should be incorporated into specific project budgets, although liaisons can provide some translation assistance and review of materials. Preparing these materials in advance of the outreach activities can be important, although for many issues and communities, **oral interpretation** by the liaison is a more effective use of time and resources.

In terms of **administration costs**, these will include a contract expenses as well as the development of the forms, materials, and reporting protocols. Additional City expenses include **personnel costs**, mostly for the primary point of contact, and for necessary **training** on inclusion and equity. Such training should ideally be budgeted Citywide, with additional funding necessary for key staff involved in the project as needed.

**How are liaisons recruited and selected?**

**Targeted recruitment is the most successful method.** This includes outreach to community and service organizations that not only can share liaison requests with their community, but may be able to recommend specific individuals, including their own staff. Refer to Attachment 5 for a sample template for outreach recruitment.

Liaisons should be interviewed by City staff and selected based on their **community connections**, as well as demonstrable **experience in organizing and event facilitation** and the ability to **translate simultaneously** and **provide interpretation**. They should be selected primarily based on their connections to the historically underrepresented communities that were prioritized during project selection. In many cases, more than one liaison may be necessary to work with different segments of the community, such as male and female liaisons for groups that traditionally segregate men and women. Recruitment should begin early enough in the process to allow for interviewing several possible individuals from a particular community.

Based on experiences in St. Paul’s Trusted Advocate program, it may be helpful for applicants to submit work plans as part of the selection process. This emphasizes the role of the liaison as a contractor, but requires providing applicants with additional project information upfront.
Recruitment and selection of liaisons should also be **coordinated with other liaison programs**, including the Tukwila School District and Global to Local. Emphasis should be on a cooperative approach between programs to avoid duplication of efforts.

**How should contracts be structured?**

For an established program, liaisons should sign **annual contracts** and work under project-specific charters or memoranda of agreement. Although the City may not be able to guarantee a specific number of hours of work, they should seek to provide a **predictable amount of work** for each liaison depending on the project. Recruiting a small number of contractors ensures liaisons have adequate work by providing them with multiple projects. Because contracts are renewed annually, the City can decide whether to continue contracting with a particular liaison based on their past performance.

Liaisons can be effective as either contractors or temporary employees. In St. Paul/Minneapolis, for example, the DCC’s Trusted Advocates model set up contracts, but they switched to temporary employment for liaisons in their subsequent Corridors 2 Careers project, to provide greater flexibility. This decision can be made by the nonprofit fiscal agent based on their own processes, as well as considering potential impacts on the liaison. For example, as contractors, it may be a burden for liaisons to pay for food for meetings and have to wait for reimbursement.

For each project, a Memorandum of Agreement and work plan should specify the purpose, goals, timeline, and contacts for the outreach. This should be developed between the liaison and coordinating City staff, including the development of a proposed project budget. Refer to Attachment 6 for a sample liaisons work plan.

It is recommended for liaisons to submit a monthly or regular invoice to the City and/or fiscal agent. This invoice should include the quantity of services provided, such as the amount of time spent conducting outreach, facilitating events, translating materials, etc. Expenses for reimbursement will include parking and mileage, food, facility rental, depending on the agreed upon scope of work, project budget, and city policies.

It is important to allow adequate time in contracts for the outreach and engagement process. Attachment 7 provides a sample timeline, illustrating that several months are typically required and should be built into the project timeline. Timing is particularly important where city materials need to be reviewed and translated by the liaisons before engaging in outreach, or where the city would like to collect surveys.

**What training should be provided?**

Training should orient the liaison to **basic city governance, the decision-making process, and contract and reporting requirements**. Additional, issue-specific background should be provided by the department, although overall training should be no more than three to six hours. The goal of the training is to provide a general overview of the city and how city processes work, as well as to orient the liaison to requirements and other performance expectations. Refer to Attachment 9 for the general training curriculum and the accompanying orientation PowerPoint, covering City of Tukwila 101 and Planning 101. Training should also include discussion of current outreach efforts and the need for greater inclusivity and equity, so that liaisons understand institutional barriers to engagement.
For new liaisons or those with limited experience, additional training on work plan development, event facilitation, and engagement strategies may be necessary. **Frequent, all-liaisons meetings** should be scheduled, as they can benefit by learning from each other and coordinating their work.

**How should performance be evaluated?**
Contracts should specify deliverables, but in many cases expectations for the number of community members to reach or events to host can be difficult to estimate, aside from instances where the liaisons are assisting in city-hosted events. This is because outreach expectations will vary significantly based on the issue and the community engaged. During liaison-led activities, city staff should be invited to participate at the discretion of the liaison. Although staff would likely benefit from attending the activities, their presence can also change the dynamic of the meeting and potentially jeopardize the opportunity for the liaison to receive honest feedback from community members.

In St. Paul, nine liaisons (receiving $5000 stipends) were able to reach more than 900 community members and host 50 engagement sessions, or about 100 outreach contacts and five engagement sessions per liaison. However, the program intentionally allowed liaisons to estimate their own goals, with individual estimates ranging from 60 to 200 people and 6 to 20 sessions.

However, it is important to ensure the quality and content of the liaison’s outreach. A schedule for reporting and check-in with the liaison should be established in developing their scope of work. Weekly reports should include outreach summaries and demographics for events hosted, services provided, and number of outreach contacts. These reports can also be used to share community feedback received or other deliverables.

**Internal Capacity**

Inclusive outreach and engagement requires a **citywide commitment to social equity**. This includes integrating the liaison program and other inclusive strategies into existing outreach efforts, including providing budgetary support.

**How should liaisons be integrated into existing outreach efforts?**
Contracting with community liaisons can be effective for inclusive public outreach and engagement. However, it is most effective when combined with other strategies, including those that are designed to reach traditional and underserved audiences. Based on lessons learned from Seattle, it is important to be transparent about how the City is engaging liaisons. Although the program may parallel other efforts, it is important that those traditionally engaged understand the goals of the liaison program.

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**KEY DEFINITION**

As defined by the Puget Sound Regional Council, **social equity** means that all people can attain the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and enable them to reach their full potential. Addressing the history of inequities in the systems we work in and their on-going impacts in our communities is a shared responsibility.

Social equity also means that those affected by poverty, communities of color, and historically marginalized communities have **leadership and influence in decision making** processes, planning, and policy-making.

Attachment 10 incorporates this definition and provides **principles of equitable development and planning**.
and how the outcomes, along with the outcomes of other outreach and engagement strategies, will be incorporated in decision-making.

As part of engaging liaisons, the city should identify where it has other programs that already provide opportunities for outreach or engagement. This allows for cost-effective prioritization of those communities and issues that would benefit most from additional engagement.

Additionally, the City should be transparent with community organizations about the liaison program. In St. Paul/Minneapolis, it was important that liaisons were not seen as threats to staff at community-based organizations who were providing outreach and education services. This trust can be built by seeking input from community organizations for design and recruitment, as well as setting clear parameters for the liaison’s scope of work.

**How can funding be sustainable?**

Planning for this outreach and engagement can be anticipated and incorporated into project budgets. New projects receiving funding can budget for liaison services in the same way that translation, interpretation, and facilitation services are increasingly being budgeted, such as in the development of the City’s Strategic Plan. Some staff time will be required to coordinate the program, however, which must also be incorporated into staffing budgets, particularly for the primary coordinator and advisory team. Eventually, a part-time coordinator position may be necessary to manage the program.

The liaison program can also be an asset when seeking additional funding. Increasingly, funding from foundations as well as state and federal government reward applicants that demonstrate a commitment to inclusive outreach and engagement. For example, several grant programs under the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities include explicit requirements related to equity. Some, like the Puget Sound Regional Council’s Growing Transit Communities initiative funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, provide local jurisdictions with **bonus points in grant applications** for projects that align with their equity and sustainability goals. For example, the Tacoma Housing Authority benefited from this alignment in their successful grant application for $1.8 million in capital funds, as did the Tacoma-Pierce County Habitat for Humanity in their application for $165,000 in self-help homeownership funding.

**What institutional support is necessary?**

The City of Seattle’s program receives significant support under the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative. This kind of comprehensive approach is effective at bringing change to institutions and systems by increasing internal capacity. In Tukwila, the Diversity and Equity Commission is an example of this work, resulting in accomplishments like a Community Access Guide available in multiple languages.

However, **ongoing training and resources are also necessary** so that staff can respond effectively to more engaged residents and can build trusting relationships. In Seattle, for example, an eight-hour training is provided to staff using the video series *Race: The Power of Illusion*, developed by the Public Broadcasting System, along with facilitated discussion. This training promotes an understanding of concepts like institutional racism and explores how current policies and practices can lead to inequitable outcomes for people of color. Background materials, lesson plans, and discussion guides can all be found at [http://www.pbs.org/race/](http://www.pbs.org/race/)
CASE STUDY: EQUITY INITIATIVES IN SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY

Both Seattle and King County have received national attention for their efforts to not only mitigate the effects of discrimination, but to address the underlying systems that lead to persistent inequity. These high-level, visible commitments to achieving equity are necessary to support change at all levels of city government by providing tools, resources, and leadership to staff.

In Seattle, for example, the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) strategic plan for 2009-2011 included a focus on internal outcomes in City government. As a result, over 8,000 City employees participated in race and social justice training. Through King County’s Equity and Social Justice Initiative (ESJI), new tools have been developed to support City staff. These include a Community Engagement worksheet as well as an Equity Impact Review tool to consider the equity impacts of policies and programs.

King County’s Equity and Social Justice Initiative also uses the four-hour Unnatural Causes series from PBS to explore socio-economic and racial inequities in health. Video information, including comprehensive discussion guides, can be found online at http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/. The County’s 2012 Equity and Social Justice Annual Report, which explores access to opportunity and the determinants of equity, can also be shared as a resource to increase awareness and understanding of the need for equity, as well as provide examples of how to incorporate equity into a variety of local government actions and initiatives. Other resources include an equitable community engagement guide and worksheet.

For Tukwila, training on diversity, equity, and inclusion could be arranged through the Diversity and Equity Commission for all City staff. It could also be coordinated with the Tukwila School District to maximize resources and impact. Additional training resources include the following:

- **Equity Matters** offers training and support services and has worked with clients including the Kent School District, Lake Washington School District, and family health nonprofit WithinReach.

- **Applied Research Center** offers racial justice training and consulting, as well as skill-building webinars.

- **Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training** has assisted institutions like the City of Seattle in developing Antiracism Teams for internal organizing.

- **The People’s Institute Northwest** offers a two-day Undoing Racism Workshop and has worked closely with local school districts, municipalities, and nonprofits.
• **Racial Equity Tools** includes a wealth of equity resources on: essential concepts and issues; assessing and learning; planning and implementing; and sustaining and refining.

• **Western States Center** contains tools, such as “Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book for Social Change Groups,” and resources developed by other organizations.

**Pilot Program Development**

Before launching a comprehensive community liaison program, a **pilot is recommended** to develop the procedures and structure that will work best for the City of Tukwila.

The pilot should involve a small number of liaisons (no more than three) around a timeframe that is one year or less. This timeframe should allow up to two months for liaison recruitment, including **significant time invested in relationship-building** with community organizations to refine the pilot structure and to recruit liaisons.

A **single issue** should be the focus of the liaison work, compared to a fully developed liaisons program, like Seattle, where a team of liaisons are available to contract with City departments around multiple issues.

During this time, the City should contract to refine reporting forms, the liaison contract, and develop project-specific training materials. If working with a fiscal agent to manage the liaisons, this organization should be well-respected in the community and have previous experience working with the City.

A City staff member will also need to be designated who can serve as **point of contact.** This person should have experience in outreach and engagement and be able to coordinate with the Department and facilitate interactions with the liaison. A fully developed program will likely need to budget at least a part-time coordinator, particularly as the number of liaisons increases. During the pilot, as well an ongoing program, we strongly recommend budgeting for **staff training** to increase their ability work to with diverse communities.
LOOKING AHEAD

In planning for its future, the City of Tukwila is fortunate to have a diverse population of communities and residents as its foundation. Just as inclusive outreach and engagement strengthens and builds the capacity of residents, so does it strengthen and build the capacity of current and future leaders of the City.

With Technical Assistance funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Forterra was able to meet with City of Tukwila staff, nonprofit organizations, and community members to explore how a community liaison program could meet their needs for inclusive outreach and engagement. Based on work done in cities like Seattle and St. Paul & Minneapolis, this report serves as a basis for moving forward with piloting such an approach by providing considerations and materials for implementation.

*Forterra would like to thank the City of Tukwila* for their efforts making this project a success and the U.S. EPA’s Office of Sustainable Communities Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program for funding the work.

Please contact Forterra if there are any questions about this report:

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*Photo credit: City of Tukwila*
ATTACHMENTS

Attachments 2-10 are available upon request from Forterra.

Attachment 1. List of individuals interviewed
Attachment 2. City of Seattle Public Outreach and Engagement Program Overview
Attachment 3. Sample Liaison Request Form
Attachment 4. Sample Budget Scenarios
Attachment 5. Sample Liaison Recruitment Template
Attachment 6. Sample Liaison Work Plan
Attachment 7. Sample Liaison Timeline
Attachment 8. Sample Cost Reimbursement Sheet
Attachment 9. Liaison Training Curriculum and Materials
### Attachment 1. List of individuals interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>City of Tukwila</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jack Pace</td>
<td>Director, Department of Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Villa</td>
<td>Police Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Linton</td>
<td>Assistant Police Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marty O’Brien</td>
<td>Foster Golf Links</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joyce Trantina</td>
<td>Mayor’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christy O’Flaherty</td>
<td>City Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Giberson</td>
<td>Director, Public Works Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Still</td>
<td>Director, Parks and Recreation Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derek Speck</td>
<td>Economic Development Administrator</td>
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<td>Evie Boykan</td>
<td>Human Services Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicholas Olivas</td>
<td>Fire Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Grisham</td>
<td>Emergency Services Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Flores</td>
<td>Assistant Fire Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nate Robinson</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Teen Specialist</td>
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<td>Brandon Miles</td>
<td>Senior Planner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen Gantz</td>
<td>Program Manager for Parent Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassie Hunter</td>
<td>Tukwila Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>City of Seattle</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahar Fathi</td>
<td>Office of Immigrant Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sol Villareal</td>
<td>Community Engagement, Mayor’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Bush</td>
<td>Seattle’s POEL program director</td>
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<td><strong>Community Organizations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahmed Jama</td>
<td>Executive Director, Somali Community Services Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexandra Blum</td>
<td>Somali Community Services Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alma Villegas</td>
<td>Program Supervisor, Global to Local</td>
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<tr>
<td>Njambi Gishuru</td>
<td>Burst for Prosperity, Kenyan Women’s Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Malloy</td>
<td>International Rescue Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon Khin</td>
<td>Northwest Communities of Burma</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Karyssa Jackson</td>
<td>Communications and Outreach Coordinator, District Councils Collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Swenson</td>
<td>Executive Director, District Councils Collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heidi Schillinger</td>
<td>Equity Matters</td>
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