EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT

An Initiative of the City of Seattle

Environmental Equity Assessment Pilot // OVERVIEW

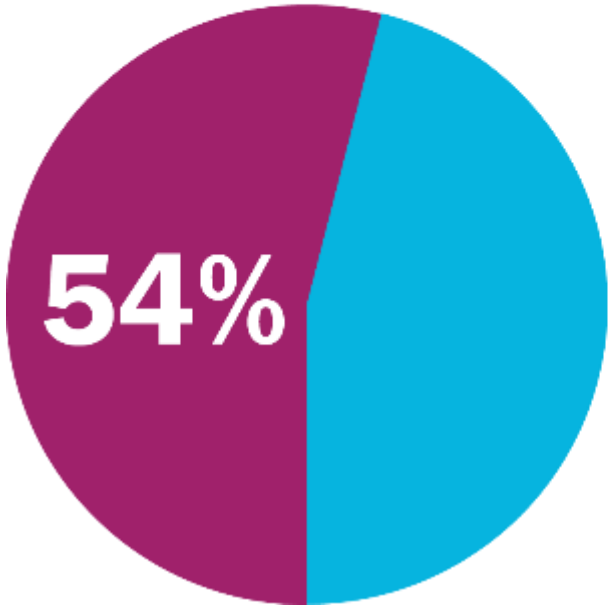
Puget Sound Green Infrastructure Summit 2017

Changing Demographics

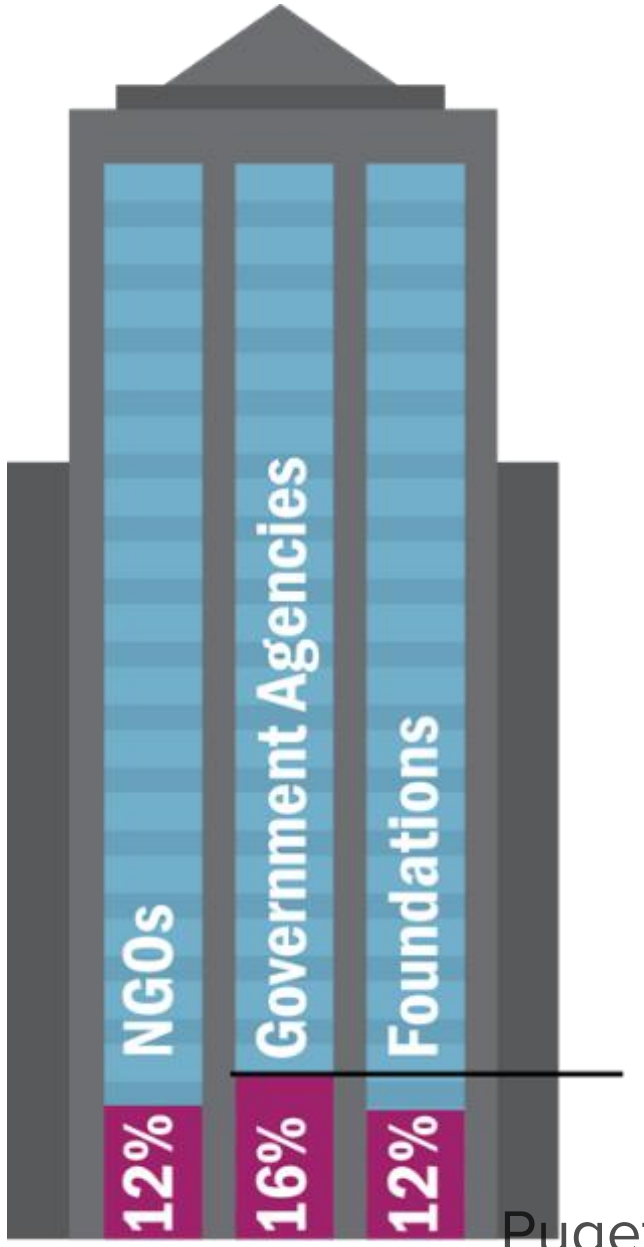
2005: 1 in 8 Americans were immigrants

2050: 1 in 5 Americans will be immigrants

2040: 54% people of color in Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metro area



The Green Ceiling



The Green Ceiling

People of color have only ever made up 16% environmental jobs, across NGOs, Government Agencies and Foundations.

Environmental Equity Assessment Pilot

EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT

Introduction | Socioeconomic Factors | Environmental Hazards | Community Assets | Composite Socioeconomic Index

Introduction

The Environmental Equity Assessment evaluates how equitably environmental impacts and outcomes are distributed in Seattle. The Assessment explores both quantitative and qualitative data that together begin to describe the landscape of environmental equity in Seattle.

The City of Seattle has long been a pioneer in the environmental movement. Though the City has made great strides to be green, it faces the **same challenge as the broader US environmental movement:** it is primarily white, upper-income communities that shape and benefit from environmental policies, approaches, and outcomes.

Across the US, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil.[1]

[1] Bryce Covert, "Racism and Discrimination Race Best Predicts Whether You Live Near Pollution," The Nation, February 18, 2016, http://www.thenation.com/article/race-best-predicts-whether-you-live-near-pollution/

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Socioeconomic Factors

Composite Socioeconomic Indicators

People with less socioeconomic mobility have fewer options when choosing where to live, work, learn, and play. Historically, certain racial and ethnic groups have been marginalized by or excluded from public and private investments, the impacts of which persist today. For these reasons the populations listed are at a higher risk and increased sensitivity to environmental pollution and hazards especially young children and the elderly people.

"[A] number of studies have reported increased sensitivity to pollution, for communities with low income levels, low education levels, and other biological and social factors. This combination of multiple pollutants and increased sensitivity in these communities can result in a higher cumulative pollution impact." [1]

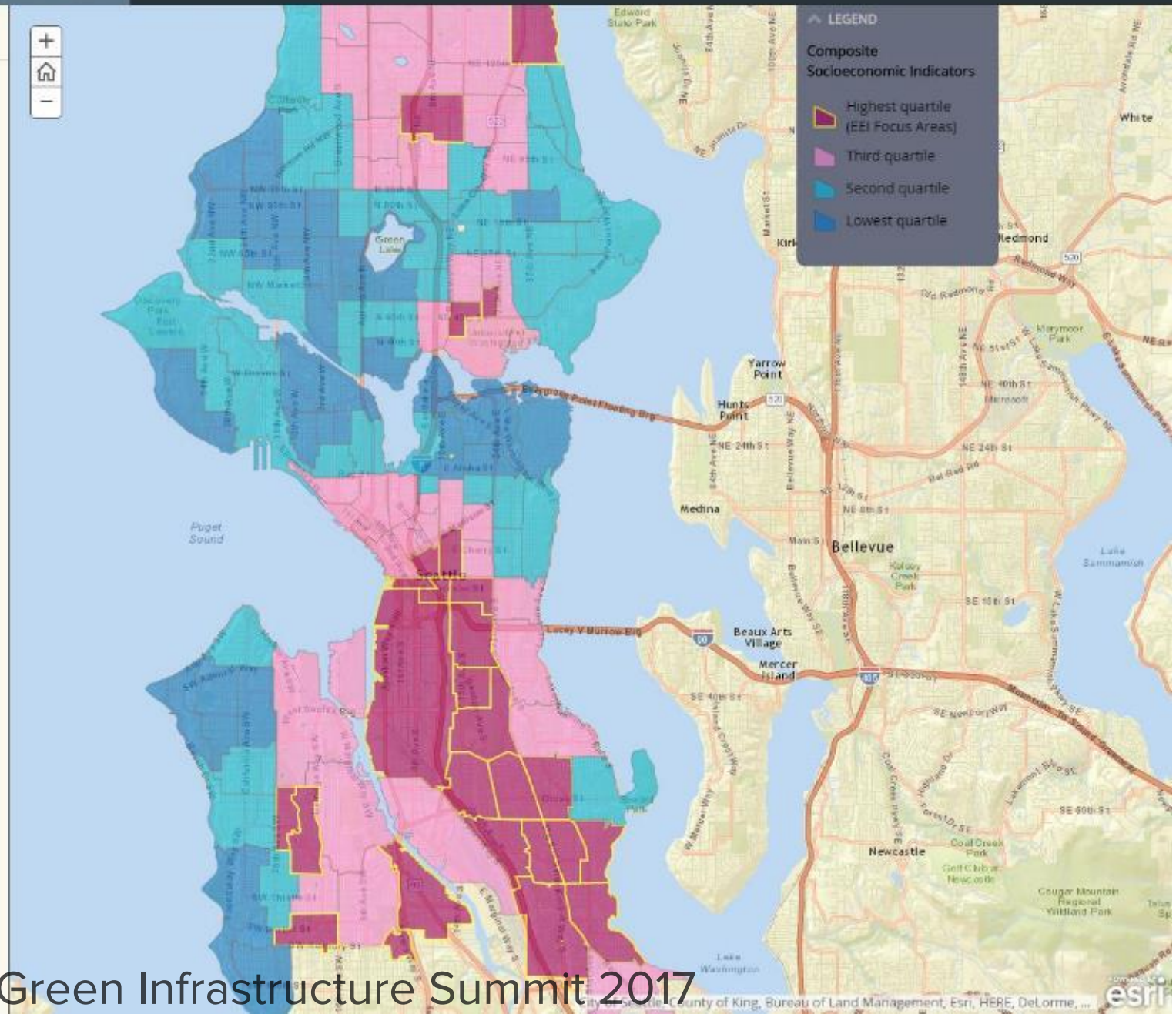
The Environmental Equity Assessment uses a socioeconomic index of four factors:

- people of color
- low-income people
- linguistically isolated households
- foreign-born population

Areas where these groups are a large share of the overall population frequently correlate with the availability of affordable housing, unemployment rate, and food insecurity. **People of color are disproportionately represented among these outcomes.** Further, affordable housing is often located closer to facilities with negative environmental impacts and further from positive environmental community amenities. The Environmental Equity Assessment explores these physical factors and indicators.

Outlined in yellow are the Equity & Environmental Initiative (EEI) Focus Areas: census tracts with the highest concentrations of the four demographic factors identified above.

[1] Cumulative Impacts: Building a Scientific Foundation, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Dec. 2010, Exec. Summary, p. ix. http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/cipa123110.html



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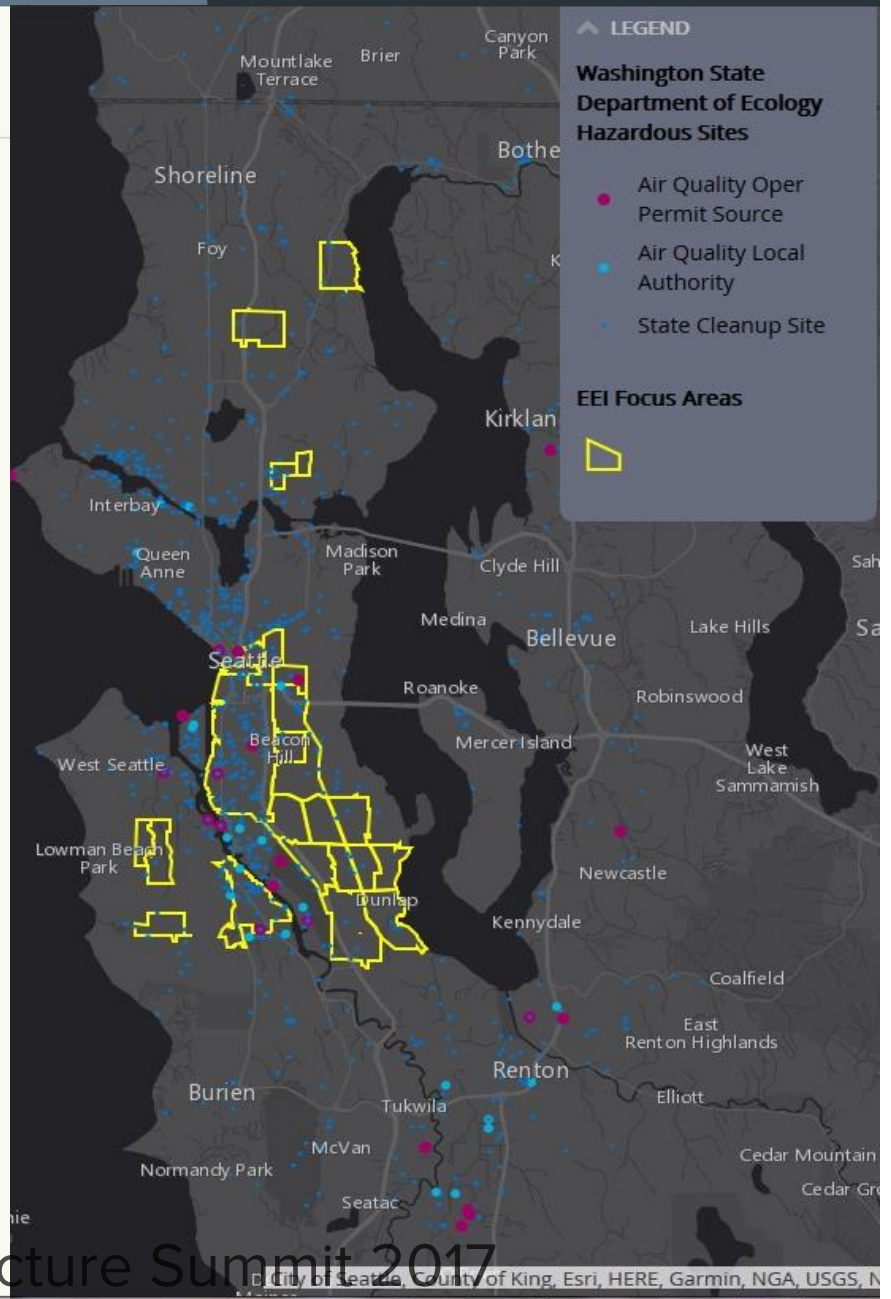
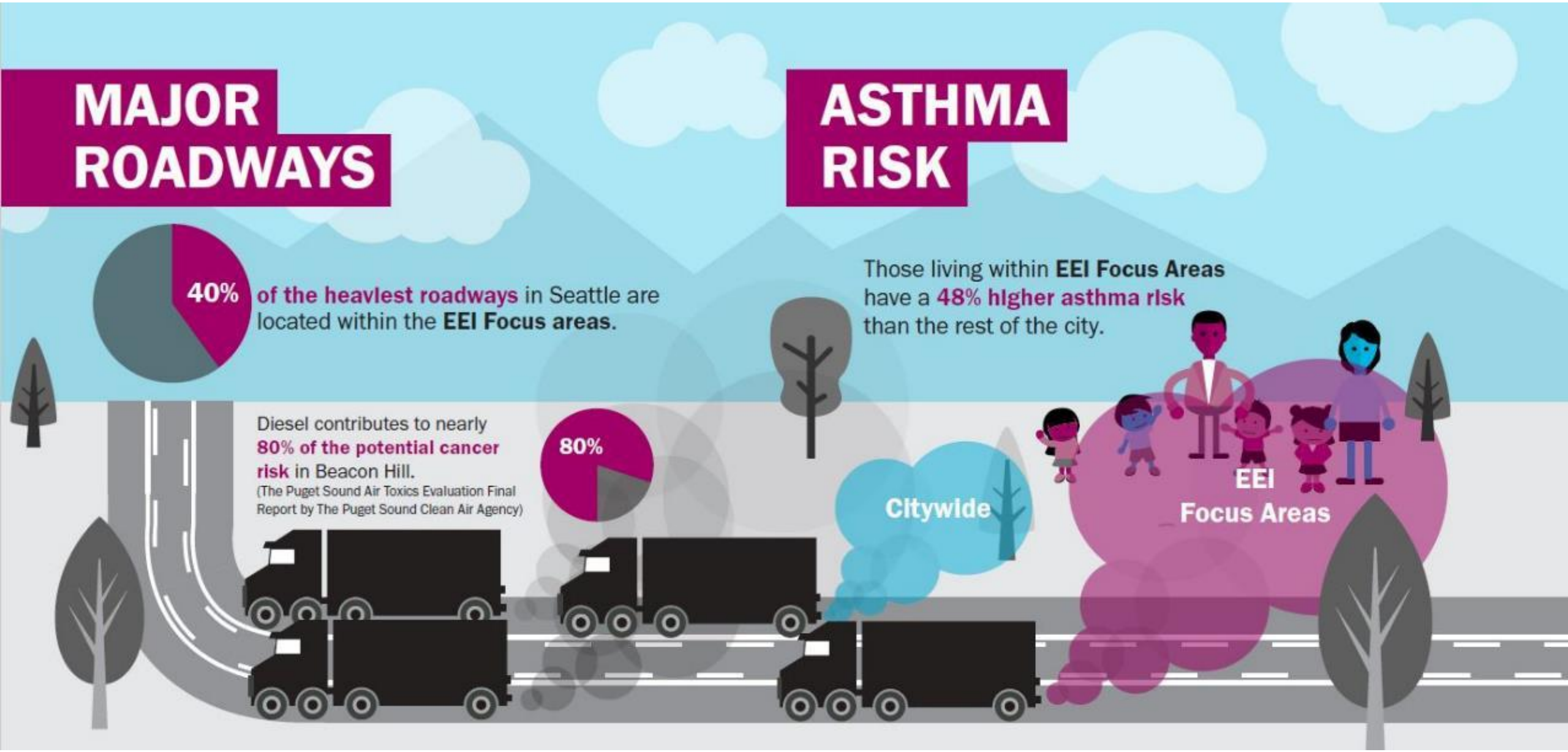
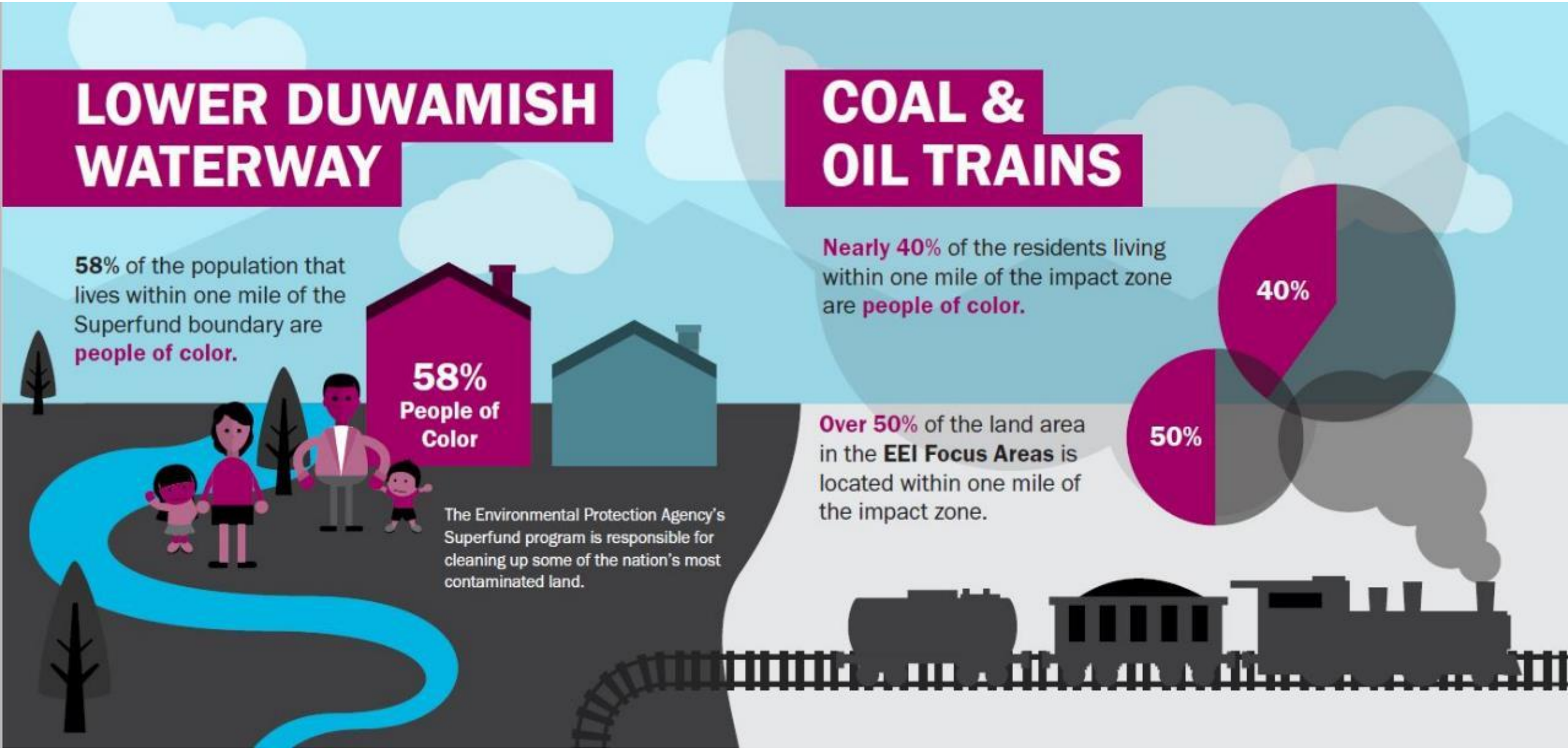
Environmental Hazards




MAJOR ROADWAYS
40%
of the heaviest roadways in Seattle are located within the EEI Focus areas.
Diesel contributes to nearly 80% of the potential cancer risk in Beacon Hill.
(The Puget Sound Air Toxics Evaluation Final Report by The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency)
80%
ASTHMA RISK
Those living within EEI Focus Areas have a 48% higher asthma risk than the rest of the city.
Citywide
EEI Focus Areas


LOWER DUWAMISH WATERWAY
58% of the population that lives within one mile of the Superfund boundary are people of color.
58% People of Color
The Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated land.
COAL & OIL TRAINS
Nearly 40% of the residents living within one mile of the impact zone are people of color.
40%
50%
Over 50% of the land area in the EEI Focus Areas is located within one mile of the impact zone.

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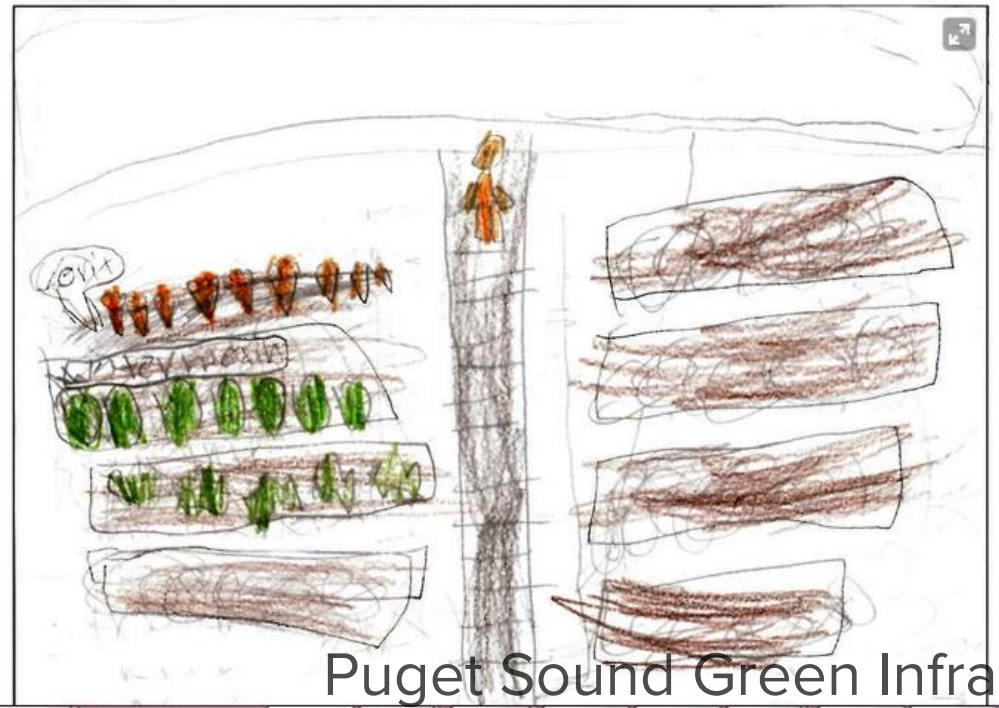
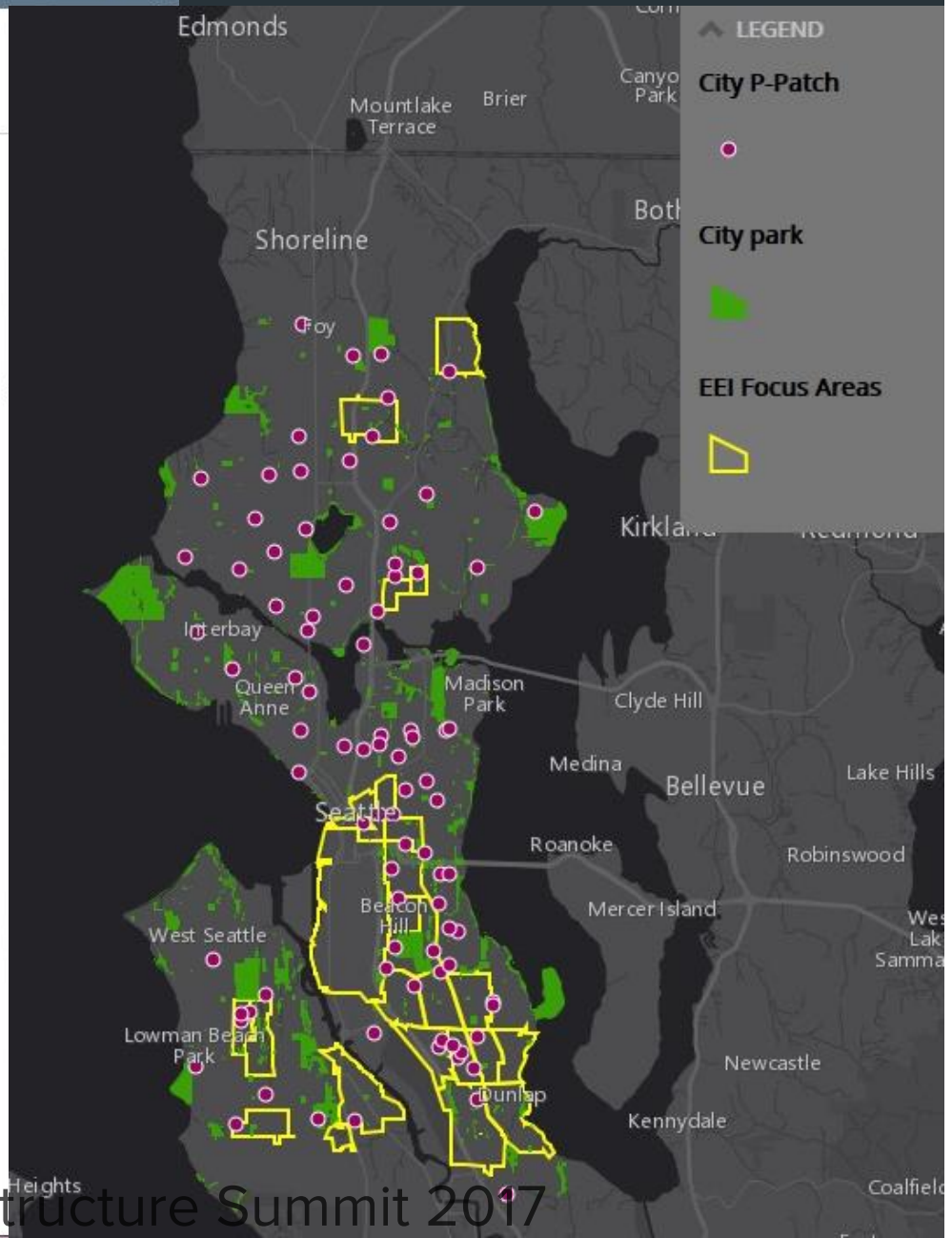
Community Assets

Open space plays an important role not only in environmental hazard mitigation but as a space where communities gather and interact. P-patches in particular create a sense of ownership for the communities who utilize these spaces.





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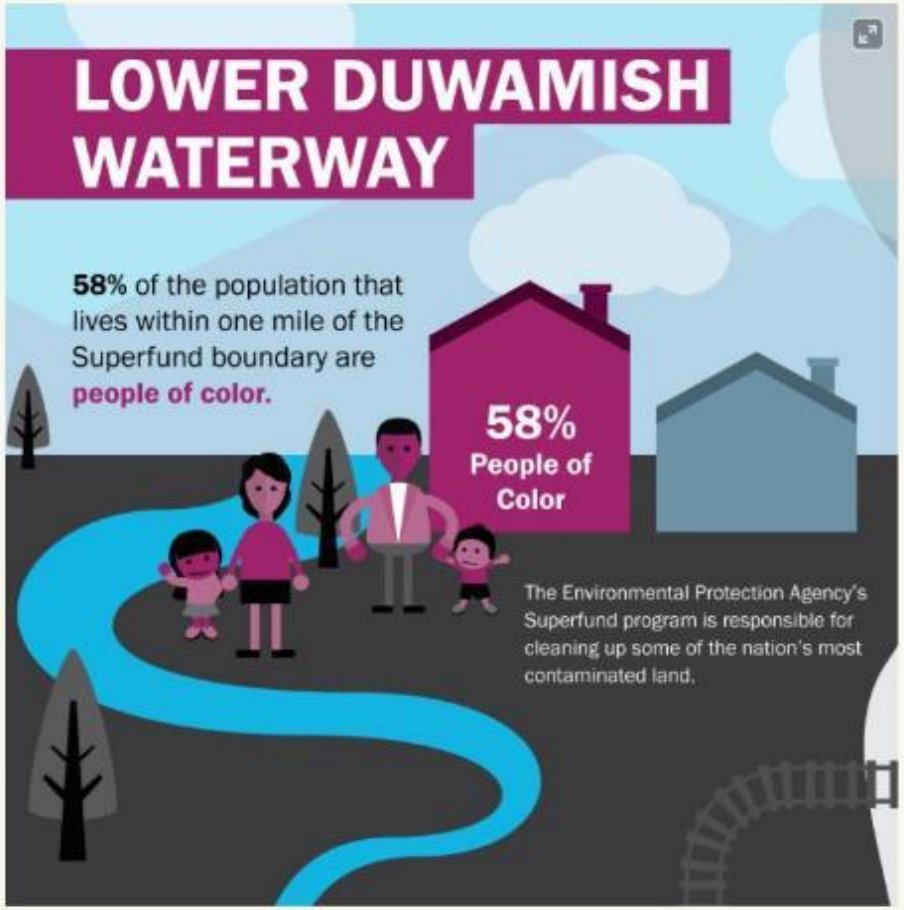
QUANTITATIVE DATA

Lower Duwamish Waterway

Community Story: Shelina Lal — connecting across generations



From Seattle Public Utilities: The Lower Duwamish Waterway (LDW) remains a treasure for the Seattle area despite a legacy of pollution. Once a meandering river, the LDW was dredged and straightened in the late 1800s to make way for large shipping vessels. Decades of polluting industry along its banks left significant contamination in the mud of the waterway and along its banks.

QUALITATIVE DATA

SOUND IMPACTS

A Green Infrastructure Impact Metrics Portal

Puget Sound Green Infrastructure Summit 2017

SOUND IMPACTS

A Green Infrastructure Impact Metrics Portal

The problem

- Environmental impacts are tracked by many different entities and in different ways.
- Collective impacts are hard to measure when data aren't synchronized or collected in the same way.
- "End of pipe" impacts are tracked: Water quality, Salmon populations, Orca populations… e.g. Puget Sound Vital Signs.
- But effort and investments are not being collectively tracked.

SOUND IMPACTS

A Green Infrastructure Impact Metrics Portal

The Solution

- Sound Impacts: The idea
  - Why aren't we all collecting the same data?
  - Why aren't we all reporting and sharing our efforts?
  - The Survey
- What's the incentive to use an external tool?
  - Collective ownership of the tool
  - Clear and effective visualization tools (Tableau software)
- How can self-reported data be used/ trusted for regional analysis.
  - Transparency

SOUND IMPACTS

A Green Infrastructure Impact Metrics Portal

How it works

- "Retail Users"
  - Orgs and agencies that engage in physical green infrastructure, restoration and stewardship activities.
  - Web-based and Bulk upload spreadsheet options
  - Create your own dashboard to track the stormwater, carbon, habitat, and human impacts of your works: over time, over space
  - See your "fingerprints" and your "footprints"
- "Wholesale Users"
  - Looking regionally to see where efforts are, where they are working, and connect the effort to the end of pipe impacts (is it working?)

SOUND IMPACTS

A Green Infrastructure Impact Metrics Portal

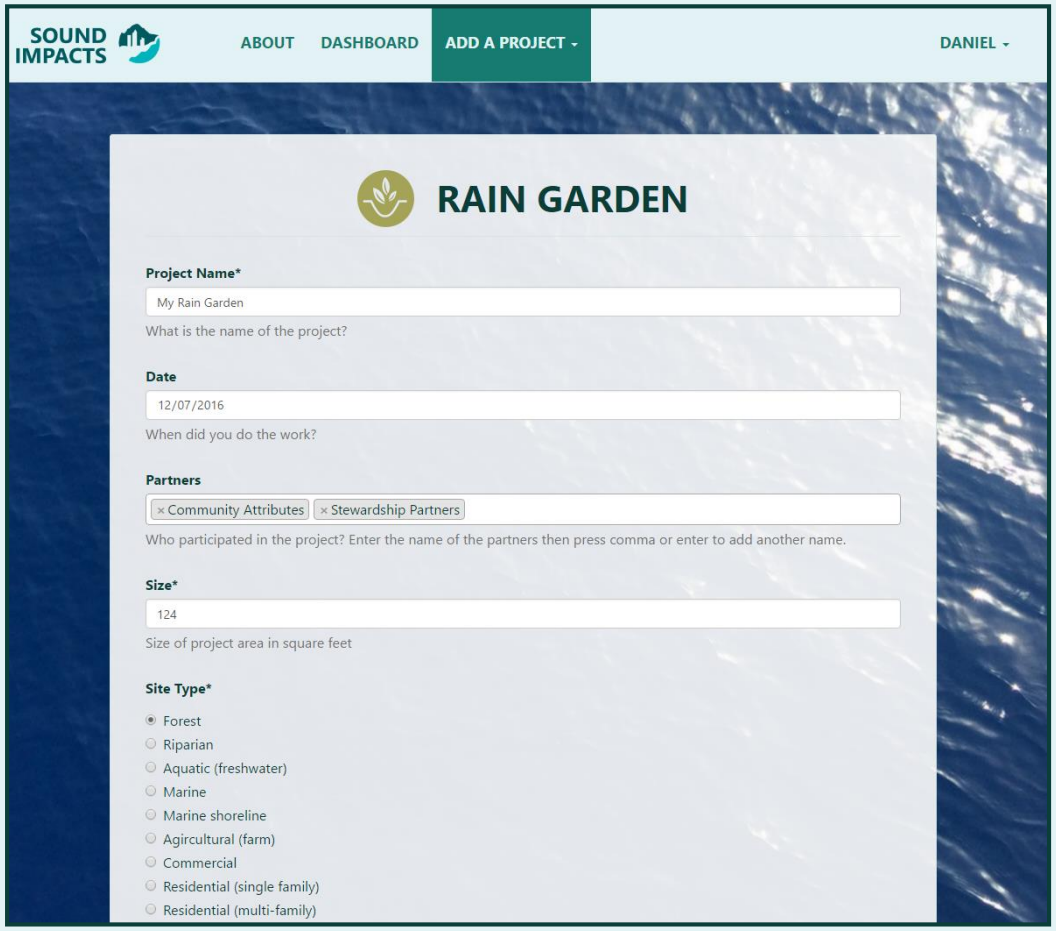
How it works

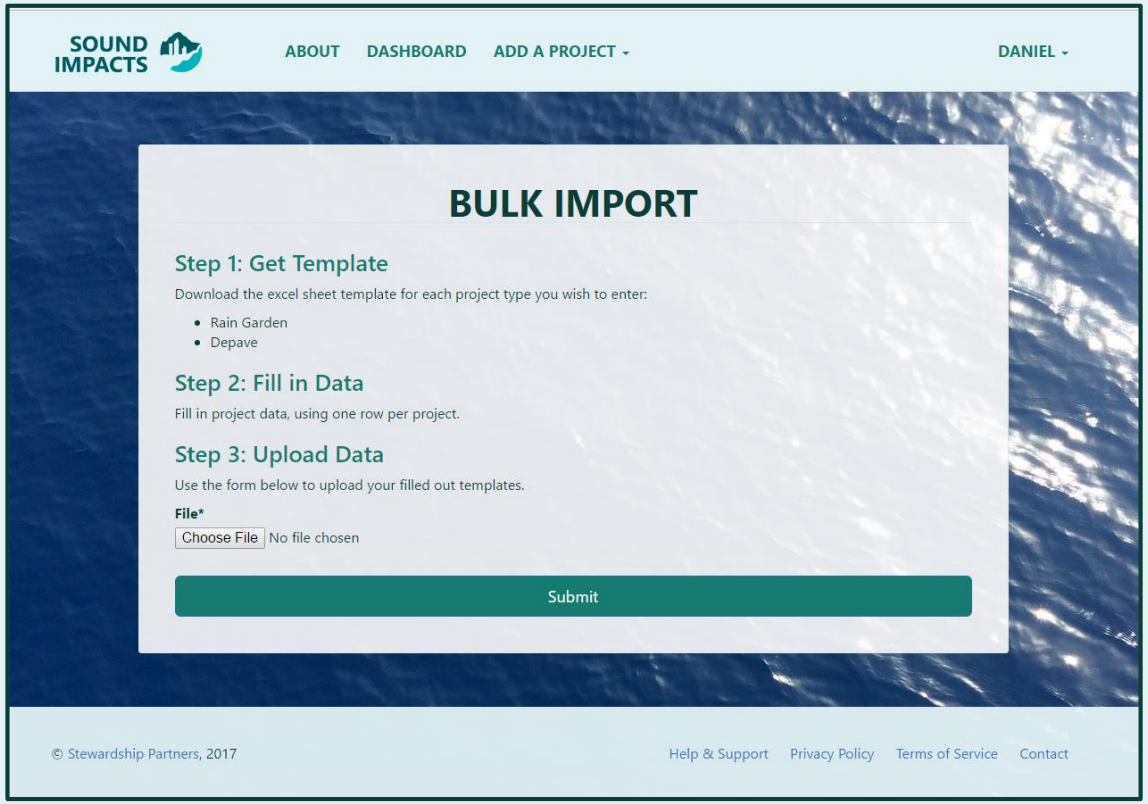
- Demonstration/walk though
- Aligning metrics with other data is collected for other reasons: code compliance, planning and budgeting.
- Seattle 2030 District Stormwater Calculator

SOUND IMPACTS

A Green Infrastructure Impact Metrics Portal

Adding Projects





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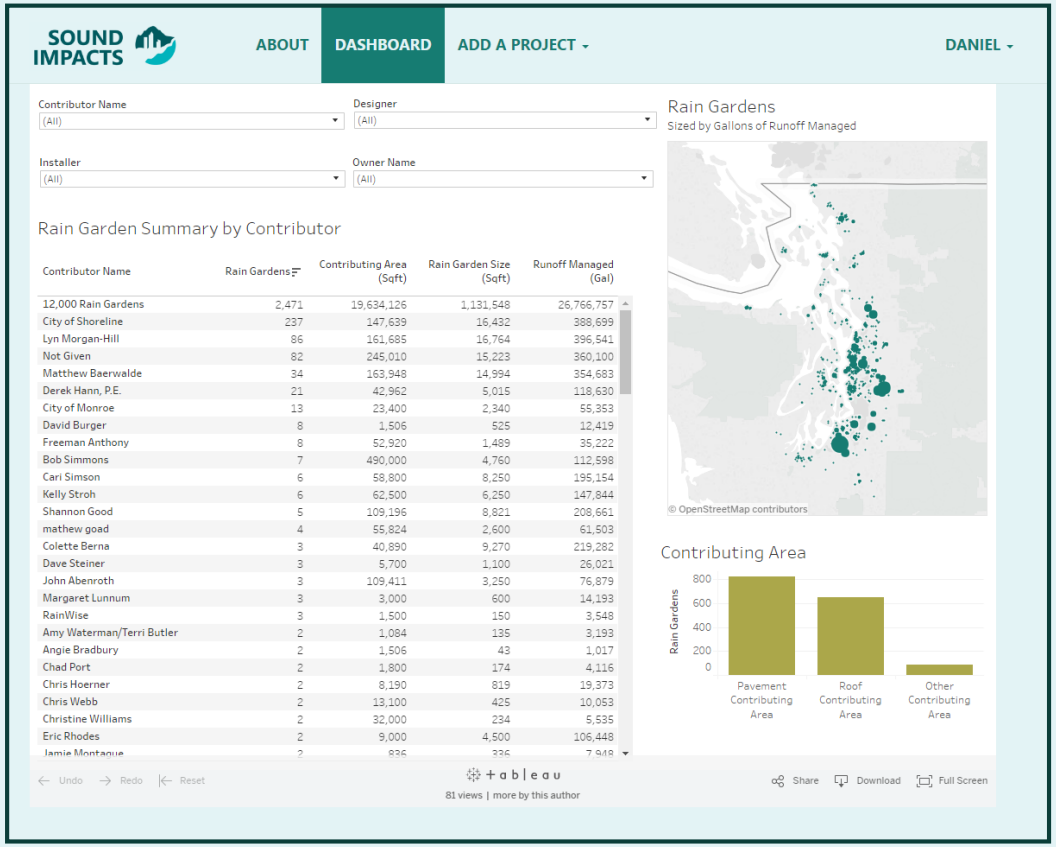
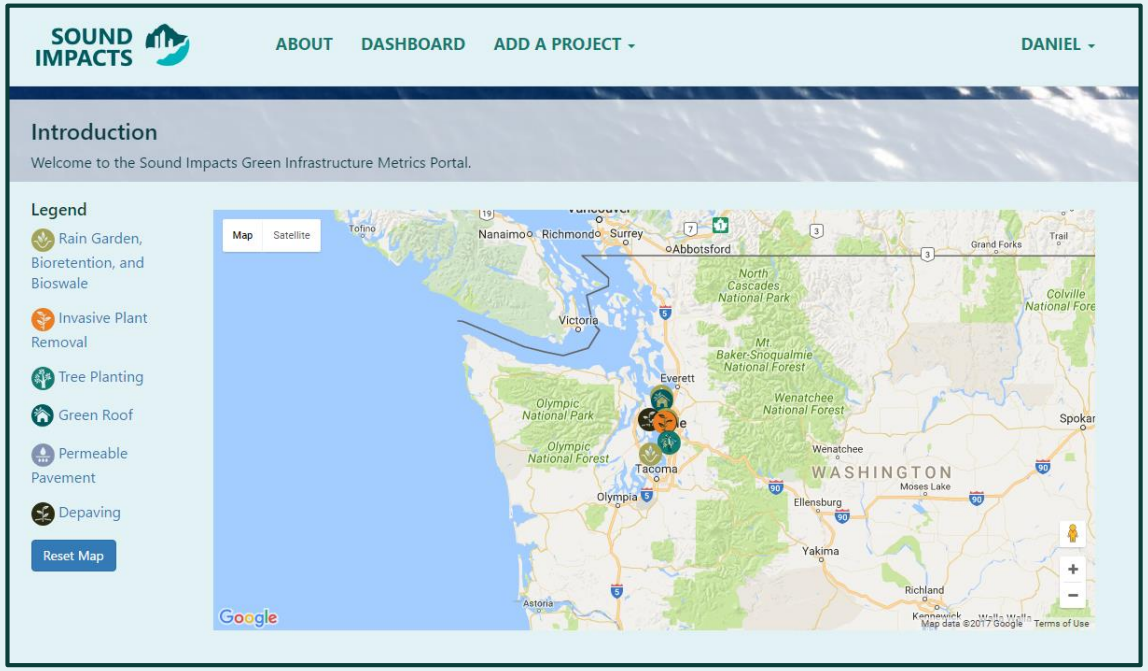
Viewing Impact





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SOUND IMPACTS

A Green Infrastructure Impact Metrics Portal

The Future of Sound Impacts

- Beta version live now.
- For version 2.0:
  - Funding- demonstrate proof of concept with Beta: we need participants to use it.
  - More metrics (beta is focused on stormwater) add carbon capture, heat island effects, groundwater recharge, people reached…
  - Data transparency, public database (i.e. data.wa.gov)

SOUND IMPACTS

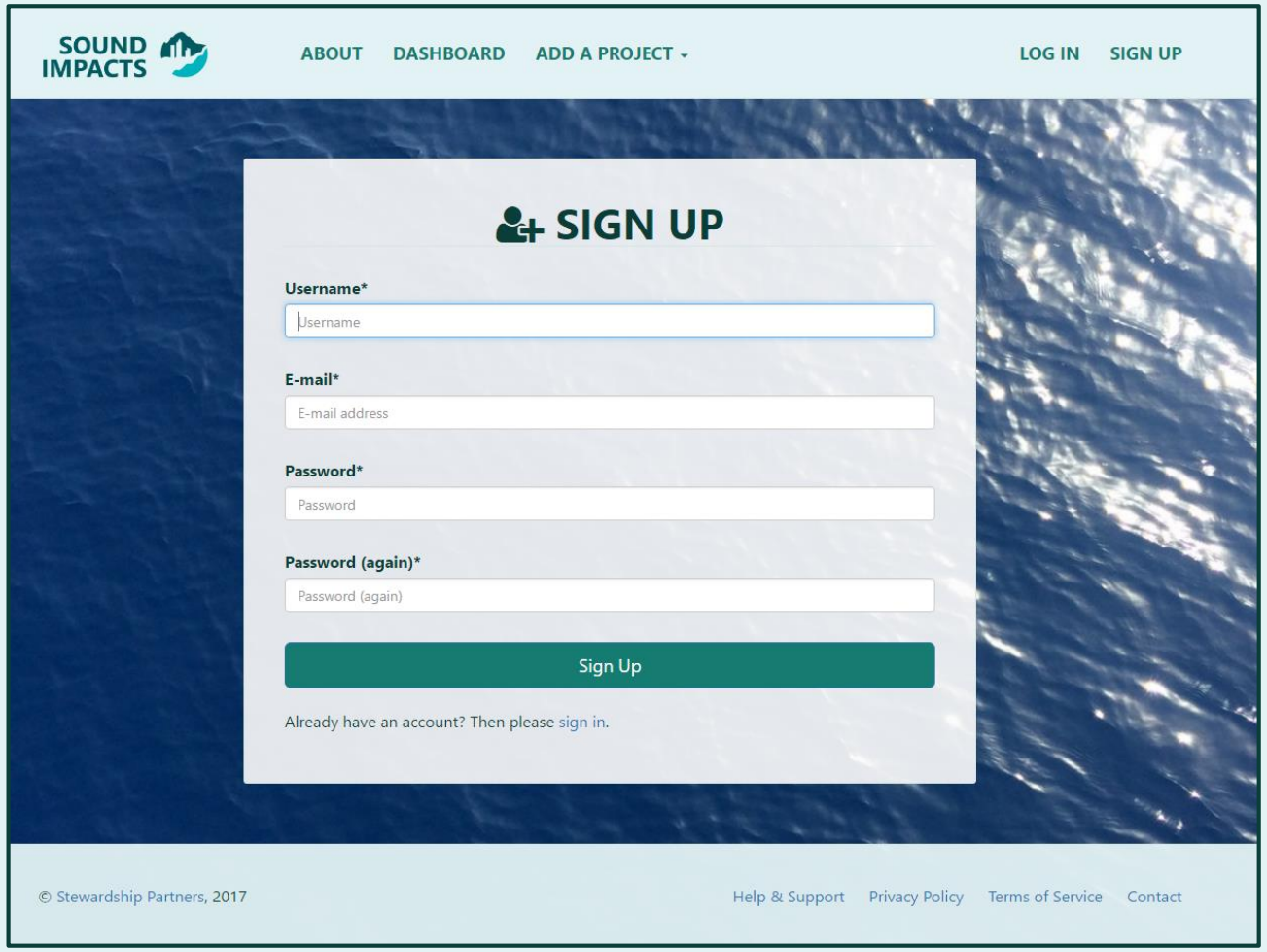
A Green Infrastructure Impact Metrics Portal

Sound Impacts Invites You to Discover Your Impact

Visit

www.SoundImpacts.org

To get started today



Puget Sound Green Infrastructure Summit 2017

“Parks for All” – Community Visions for Open Space

LOVE PARKS

SEATTLE PARKS FOUNDATION

Puget Sound Green Infrastructure Summit 2017

Core Criteria for Strong Partnerships:

- Increase connections and access to open spaces
- Shared and inclusive resident leadership
- Durable public & private partnerships

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Three Scales of Work:

***Community*: Fiscal Sponsorship & support of community groups**

***Connected Public Space Systems*: Multi-neighborhood planning, prioritization and implementation**

***Civic Scale*: Large projects requiring major political or financial capital & policy advocacy**

Three Scales of Work:

Community: Fiscal Sponsorship & support of community groups

Connected Public Space Systems: Multi-neighborhood planning, prioritization and implementation

Civic Scale: Large projects & policy shifts requiring major political/ financial capital

Public Space Systems in underserved communities

Challenges:

- Often numerous neglected open spaces
- Often low barriers for developers & high barriers to community influence
- Limited human capital – time, networks and expertise
- Trust deficit: Vision plans have a bad name…

Advantages:

- *Community* prioritization centers on their own needs
- At this scale *connections and access* are explicit
- More sites = compromise
- Greater community ownership and sense of place than at a single site (or at civic scale)
- Depth of engagement attracts public and private funding

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Lower Duwamish Valley

South Park & Georgetown

Little Brook in Lake City

Part of Thornton Creek Watershed

SEATTLE PARKS FOUNDATION

Contrasting the Duwamish Valley & Little Brook

Duwamish Valley:

- Very active, dedicated and organized **residents**
- Many community-based **orgs**: six in SP and five in GT
- Unifying, driving open space **motivation**: Health impacts of industry and superfund site
- News **attention** and focus of both public and private mitigation dollars

Little Brook:

- **Residents:** wide ethnic range language barriers, transplants
- Many outside **orgs**; few of & by Little Brook residents
- Little Brook is out of sight and out of mind… **motivation**: streetscape and connectivity
- Much public **attention** on redevelopment and transit

SEATTLE PARKS FOUNDATION

Little Brook is a test case for trust-building:

1. **Show up** BEFORE you're on the agenda
2. **Always ask: "Who's not in the room?"** Credible ambassadors; attending events
3. **Framing**: "Most people don't care about most things most of the time"
4. **Manage expectations**, but also create **awareness of possibilities**
5. **Compensation** & Accommodation
6. **Resident contracts**: Event planning, childcare, outreach, translation

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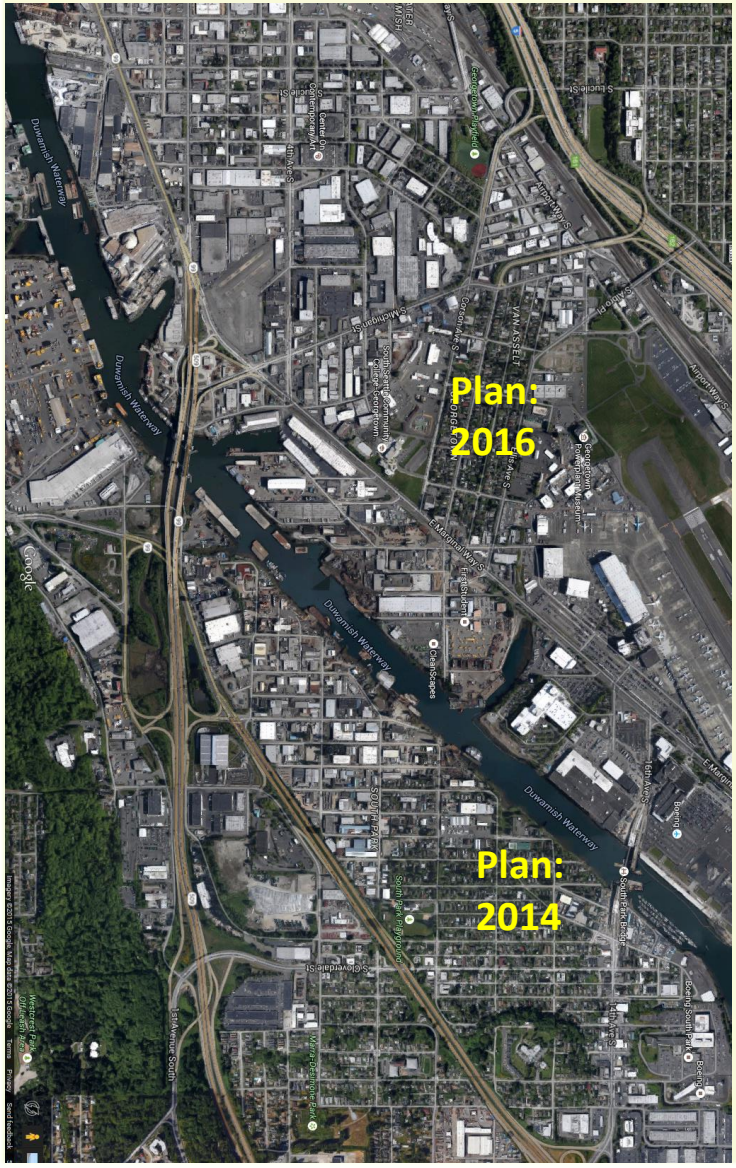
"By inviting people to the table who have not had access to the decision-making process, we can imagine and create new things together that alone we could never have dreamed of." – *Community Member*

SEATTLE **PARKS** FOUNDATION

seattleparksfoundation.org

Lower Duwamish Valley
South Park & Georgetown



Huge health challenges, but active and engaged community

- ***South Park***: 2009–Present
  (2014 Green Space Vision Plan)
- ***Georgetown***: 2015 – Present
  (2016 Open Space Vision *Framework*)
- ***Open Space Projects***: 3 Complete;
  4 in planning/construction
- Nearly $1MM fundraised or directly invested & 0.6+ FTE since 2009
- Supporting community-based orgs
- Coordinating with City of Seattle Duwamish Valley Action Team

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Diverse neighborhood, bisected by a thoroughfare & a hidden stream

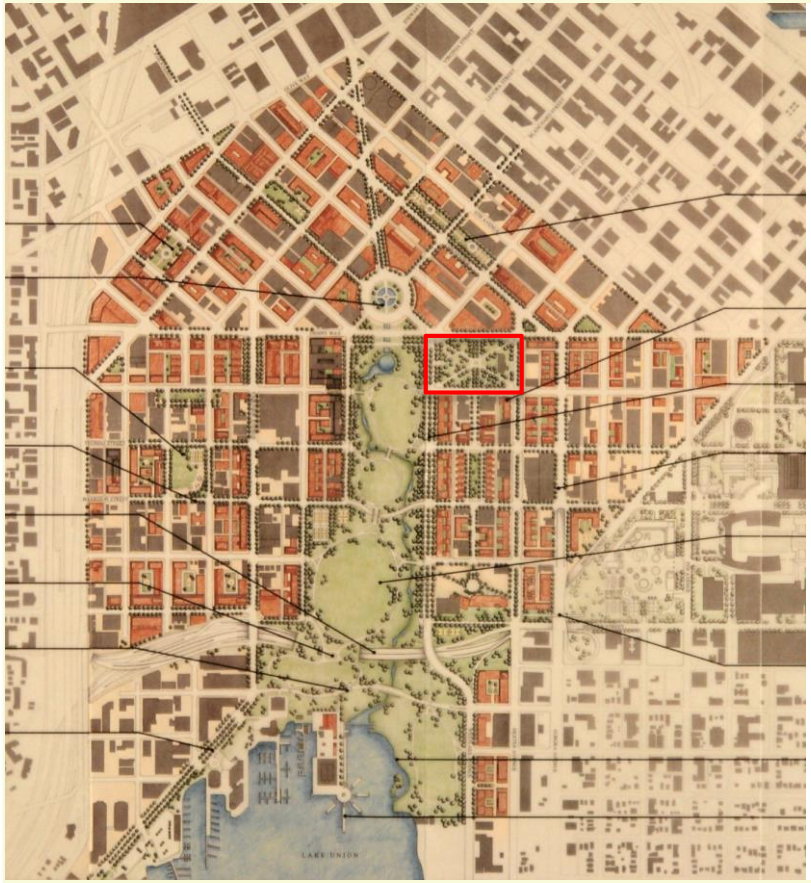
- ***SPF Outreach*: 2016–Present**
- Salmon-bearing watershed; Little Brook major contributor to lower downstream water quality
- Lake City Way negative for both creek and pedestrian safety
- Lack of infrastructure: crisis as opportunity
- Rapid development urges action, but outreach is challenging
- **Three-pronged Strategy:** 1) Land, 2) Outreach, 3) Youth Action

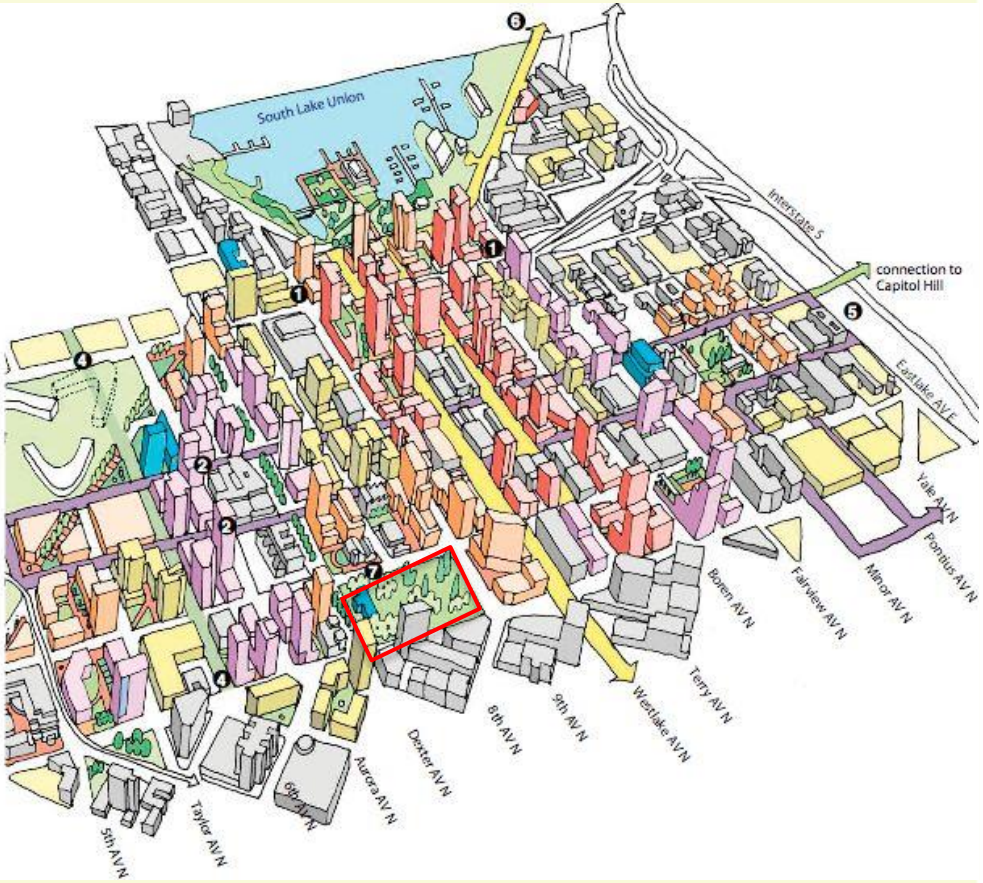
Little Brook in Lake City

Part of Thornton Creek Watershed

SEATTLE PARKS FOUNDATION

The Foundation's Origin & Evolution





The Seattle Commons

…as it could have been.

South Lake Union

…such as it is.

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