



Utility Advisory Committee

Olympia Equity Index and Service Equity Analysis Briefing

Agenda Date: 6/1/2023
Agenda Item Number:
File Number:23-0388

Type: information **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

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Recommended Action

Information only. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Share background, overview and purpose of the Equity Index and the associated Regional Environmental Partnership (REEP) service equity analysis completed in 2022.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter:

Susan McCleary

Background and Analysis:

The 2019-2024 Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit (Permit) issued by the Department of Ecology identifies overburdened communities as a priority audience for stormwater education and outreach under the general awareness category (s5.C.2.a.i). Additionally, the Permit requires the City to create opportunities for the public, including overburdened communities, to participate in the decision-making processes involving the development, implementation and update of the Permittee's Stormwater Management Action Plan (SMAP) and Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) (S5.C.3.a).

Stormwater Utility staff developed the Equity Index to address Permit requirements. The Equity Index was produced as part of a larger project in partnership with Regional Environmental Education Partnership (REEP) with Thurston County and the Cities of Tumwater and Lacey. The Index was co-conceived by REEP partners with guidance and development from University of Washington's Action Mapping Project (AMP).

The Index is a tool that helps us identify geographic areas in our community where people experience varying levels of burden. This information was used to conduct a service equity analysis

of past and current outreach and engagement programs over the past ten years.

Climate Analysis:

Research has demonstrated that vulnerable populations may be at the highest risk from impacts of climate change. The equity index helps us to identify geographic areas within the City of Olympia where people experience higher levels of burden and may be at a higher risk from the effects of climate change such as urban heat island, flooding and chemical exposure.

Equity Analysis:

This project provides the Stormwater Utility with information to apply a service equity lens to future planning and program development.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The City and the Olympia community desire equitable practices in our decision-making processes, programs and policies that result in the fair distribution of benefits and services across the community.

Options:

None. Briefing only. Review program and provide feedback to staff.

Financial Impact:

Equity-centered capacity building is needed to ensure the Stormwater Utility's service equity goals are met. Building relationships with diverse community groups and developing and implementing programs that integrate culturally responsive practices requires staff time and resources. There is also the challenge of building an appropriate assessment and evaluation system to track progress made in adopting equitable strategies, policies, and programs. City staff will assess the need for additional resources as our service equity work evolves.

Attachments:

[Link to the 2019-2024 Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit](#)

[Link to the City of Olympia's REEP service equity analysis results visualization. Visualizes REEP program participation and REEP event locations relative to the Thurston County equity index](#)