



King County

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## Policy Paper:

# Equity and Social Justice Investments and Impacts

### IN BRIEF

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- ❖ The new King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan (2016-2022) provides a comprehensive roadmap — vision, framework, policy agenda and internal measures — for advancing the vision of a King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive.
- ❖ The strategies for Equity and Social Justice are to invest upstream and where needs are greatest, in community partnerships, and in employees. These strategies will be supported with transparent and accountable leadership.
- ❖ The 2017-2018 budget biennium is a key opportunity to invest in these strategies in ways that advance the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan's goal and policy areas.
- ❖ The Strategic Plan defines a Pro-Equity Policy Agenda in eight areas (determinants of equity) and aims to integrate and implement pro-equity practices in our major functions of government, ranging from leadership, operations, and services, to plans, policies, and budgets, to workplace/workforce and community partnerships.

# OVERVIEW – A King County Where All People Have Equitable Opportunities to Thrive

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## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

For many in the region King County is a great place to live, learn, work, and play. Our region has some of the most prosperous communities in the world. However, a closer look at the distribution of resources and wealth reveals that we have deeply entrenched social, economic, and environmental inequities—by race and place—that in many cases are worsening and threaten our collective prosperity.

King County’s work on equity and social justice can be described as fitting into distinct phases. Before 2008, departments and agencies focused on disparities and disproportionality, but in generally uncoordinated ways across the County. In early 2008, then-King County Executive Ron Sims launched Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) as an Executive initiative to integrate an equity lens into policies and decisions, organizational practices, and engagement with community. Starting in 2010 with new King County Executive Dow Constantine and the County Council, Equity and Social Justice became an integrated part of the County’s work with the countywide Strategic Plan and ESJ ordinance. This new ordinance named the Inter-Branch Team as the coordinator and facilitator of the County’s equity work and formalized systems and frameworks, including the Determinants of Equity.

### Our troubling and growing inequities

- ✦ Our middle class has practically stopped growing. In King County, 95 percent of the net new households created since 2000 earn either less than \$35,000 a year or more than \$125,000.
- ✦ Since the Great Recession, the average income for whites in King County has risen steadily and significantly, while blacks have experienced net average income loss.

This last year represents the latest phase for King County Equity and Social Justice with two major developments: the creation of the Office of Equity and Social Justice and the launch of the first ESJ Strategic Plan process. Established on January 1, 2015, the new Office of Equity and Social Justice works hand-in-hand with the Inter-Branch Team to support the work of all County employees and agencies. The office also serves as the main resource and coordinator of key County efforts to advance equity in the organization and community. Although there is now an ESJ Office, every County agency and employee is ultimately responsible for advancing and being accountable for ESJ activities and deliverables.

The Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is a blueprint for change, mutually created by King County employees and community partners. The shared vision we developed through this process is consistent with the overall vision of King County’s Strategic Plan: A King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive. The ESJ Strategic Plan is based on the understanding that how we approach our work on Equity and Social Justice is just as important as what we seek to accomplish.

## BUILDING ON SUCCESSES, BECOMING PRO-EQUITY

Building on past successes and to become pro-equity, King County has four main strategies for advancing Equity and Social Justice



### 1. Invest upstream and where needs are greatest:

Moving upstream means:

- ❖ Focusing on early childhood investments that prevent mental, behavioral, and physical issues later in life.
- ❖ Preventing crises and problems from occurring instead of treating the after effects.
- ❖ Continuing and expanding strategies that reduce involvement in the criminal justice system and keep families together.

We recognize that many of our government policies and practices have historically been designed to react to problems and crises in our communities after they arise. Using a “stream” metaphor, these problems are the downstream results of inequities that exist in social, physical, and economic conditions in our community (also known as our “determinants of equity”). Moving upstream allows us to examine the root causes of these conditions and create solutions that operate at a systems and structural level, ultimately preventing crises and problems from occurring and leading to healthier, more equitable outcomes.

The equity frame also demands that we focus on where the needs are greatest—geographic areas and low-income populations, people of color, and immigrants and refugees.

### 2. Invest in community partnerships

King County has a history of community engagement, but those interactions are often ad hoc, with insufficient compensation for the time and expertise of people and organizations, and without investment in organizations’ capacities to continue and expand work. This plan is designed to move the County from these occasional interactions to strategic investment in community partnerships that will inform the County’s programming, service delivery, and budgeting and provide equitable opportunity for all residents to advocate on their own behalf and influence the decisions that impact their lives. This strategy is rooted in the principle that those affected have the right to define decisions.

### **3. Invest in employees**

King County government's greatest asset is our approximately 14,000 employees who are dedicated to improving the lives of the county's more than two million residents. They are the experts in providing the best services because they know and work with our communities every day. King County's ambition is to become the best-run government in the nation with a workforce that is racially diverse and culturally responsive at all levels. To achieve this, we must ensure that every employee is valued for her, their, or his unique assets and experiences and we invest in growing their talent—regardless of who they are, where they come from and where they are in the organization. We are committed to focus our efforts on employees who have historically lacked equitable access to jobs and development opportunities, and employees at lower pay ranges.

### **4. Accountable and transparent leadership**

Accountable and transparent leadership is critical to effectively implementing the ESJ Strategic Plan. The success of this Plan and considerable progress on equity is fundamentally tied to consistent and visible leadership at all levels around a shared vision for ESJ within and across King County government and the region. All employees are change agents, though the County's top leaders are ultimately responsible for championing and advancing ESJ. A government that is rooted in equity and social justice means that leaders hold themselves and each other accountable, while working openly with residents, employees, and community partners.

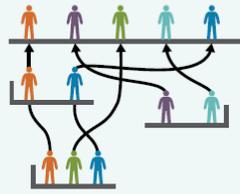
## **Pro-equity in ESJ Strategic Plan Goals and Policy Areas**

The ESJ Strategic Plan defines a Pro-Equity Policy Agenda aimed at advancing regional change and building on our work and lessons learned thus far, while deepening and expanding access to the County's determinants of equity: child and youth development, economic development and jobs, environment and climate, health and human services, housing, information and technology, justice system, and transportation and mobility.

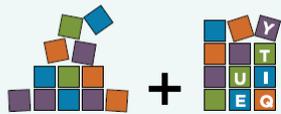
To become pro-equity in our County practices and governance, we need systems and standards that build on our best practices and learnings from our equity journey to date. We will integrate and implement pro-equity practices in our major functions of government where we can effect change, including leadership, operations and services; plans, policies and budgets; workplace and workforce; community partnerships; communication and education; and facility and system improvements.

Advancing and becoming more pro-equity in these functions of government (also known as our Strategic Plan goal areas), we will contribute to better outcomes in the community.

**PRO-EQUITY MEANS**



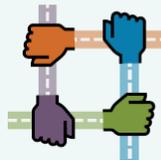
Defining outcomes for all, identifying obstacles faced by specific groups, and tailoring strategies and building on assets to address barriers (targeted universalism).



Dismantling systems of power, privilege and racial injustice in favor of equitable access to resources and decisions.



Focusing on the people and places where needs are greatest – such as low-income communities, communities of color, and immigrant and refugee populations.



Creating inclusive processes and including people early, continuously and meaningfully.

**KING COUNTY'S PATH TOWARD PRO-EQUITY**



Investing in a child's early development – building on the assets of each community – to establish a strong foundation for lifelong health and well-being so all children and families experience improved outcomes and thrive, regardless of who they are and where they live.



Removing barriers to jobs at King County government for historically disadvantaged communities by improving employment practices like prioritizing language skills, building school-to-work pipelines, having clear, accessible career pathways, and taking out needless educational requirements.



Providing low-income populations more equitable access to public transportation and other public assistance programs with King County's ORCA LIFT Reduced Fare Program.



Partnering with communities most impacted by inequities in shared decision-making and acting on resident priorities, Communities of Opportunity is changing policies and systems to improve health, social, racial and economic outcomes.

This Equity and Social Justice Policy Paper focuses mainly on the strategies of investing upstream and where needs are greatest and in community partnerships. Since Equity and Social Justice is integrated into King County's Best-Run Government activities, the Best-Run Government Policy Paper more comprehensively outlines the activities and investments that are part of the investing in employees strategy and workforce/workplace equity goal area of the ESJ Strategic Plan.

## ESJ INVESTMENTS TOWARDS A STRONG KING COUNTY

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The 2017-2018 biennium is a key opportunity to invest in strategies of the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan's goal and policy areas and achieve the objectives for 2022. This package of investments is strong, achieving a balance between central and agency investments. And, when considered in conjunction with the employee investments (described in the Best Run Government Policy Paper), there is a balance between investing upstream and where needs are greatest, investing in community partners, and investing in employees.

Agencies are increasingly aligning their overall planning and operations in ways that support the ESJ priorities reflected in the recently-completed ESJ Strategic Plan. Departments and agencies will be expected to complete department/agency-level ESJ Strategic Plan Implementation Action Plans with activities and measures by early 2017. Many of the goals and objectives in the ESJ Strategic Plan can and will be pursued with current levels of resourcing and by re-prioritizing. At the same time, some goals and objectives propose system, practice, and policy changes that are new, significant, and/or require King County to identify new resources for successful implementation.

***What follows is a selection of a broad range of key new investments in the 2017-2018 budget, as well as 2015-2016 investments that will be continued into the next biennium. Investments will be measured and reported on as part of the ESJ Strategic Plan implementation process.***

### **Helping every child to achieve her or his fullest potential in life: Investing upstream, where needs are greatest and in community partnerships**

The Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Levy 2017-2018 implementation aims to direct over \$56 million in investments and services per year that set up kids to succeed, help remove barriers in institutional policies, practices, and systems and move toward racial equity and better outcomes for overburdened communities.

Proposed investments in partnerships with communities, including people of color, non-English speaking, and low-income populations, will help create prevention and early intervention programs that help establish strong foundations for the lifelong well-being of children, youth, and families. Programs include (but are not limited to) home-based services, maternal and child health, community-based parent support and childcare infrastructure, trauma-informed practices, school-based health centers, proactive prevention of childhood lead poisoning, and place-based work with Communities of Opportunity.

## **Turning the tide on health inequities: Investing upstream, where needs are greatest and in community partnerships**

In terms of recent successes, King County has among the best HIV viral suppression rates in the country—the gold star measure of program effectiveness. Through a federal grant, King County reduced youth obesity by 17% in low-income school districts (Auburn, Highline, Kent, Northshore, Renton, Seattle and Tukwila). In addition, patient outcomes among King County’s most vulnerable residents improved at the Navos primary-care pilot in Burien, where medical and behavioral health are integrated with the goal of keeping residents out of the criminal justice system and emergency rooms. Lastly, funded in past years from the Seattle Families and Education levy, the School Based Health Centers deliver results including decreases in absenteeism and improvements in grade point averages, higher rates of immunizations, improved asthma outcomes, and increased use of contraception.

The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget aims to reduce health inequities by maintaining, and in a few cases expanding, access to prevention, primary care, food safety, and other health care services for low-income populations, including communities of color and limited English-speaking populations through efficiencies and programmatic alignment. Examples of maintained and expanded access include:

- ❖ Access to life-saving cancer screening through the Breast, Cervical and Colon Health Program for an additional 281 low-income and uninsured clients, including immigrant populations such as undocumented immigrants who do not speak English.
- ❖ Additional 6,600 dental health service visits available to low-income populations including homeless populations, Hispanic and limited-English-speaking children and youth, who are most likely to experience tooth decay.
- ❖ Extended hours at the STD clinic will be maintained to serve low-income and uninsured clients, a majority of whom are persons of color and men who have sex with other men (MSM) – populations that are disproportionately impacted by HIV and other STDs.

## **Working with families regarding developmental disabilities, employment, and education:**

### **Investing upstream, where needs are greatest and in community partnerships**

In terms of key on-going work, the Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD) in Community and Human Services has been working to improve outreach and engagement for limited or non-English speaking families. For example, the Birth to Three Early Intervention Program has translated their information materials into several languages and works with community groups to provide outreach to non-English speaking parents and parent groups. Similarly, the School to Work program prepared both printed and video invitations in several languages to encourage participation in the program’s annual resource fairs by non-English speaking parents and students. Upon request, interpretation services were available at the fairs.

In addition, Employment and Education Resources (EER) supports youth and adult employment and education programs in collaboration with many community partners. EER serves at-risk youth – those who have dropped out of school and those who are at risk of dropping out – as well as juvenile justice and gang-involved youth. Adult clients are low-income job seekers, dislocated workers, and people with

barriers to employment, such as limited English proficiency, homelessness, and prior criminal justice involvement. Data from EER shows that clients are predominantly people of color, low and very low-income, have a lack of education, and have criminal justice experience. Many have struggled with homelessness or disabilities that make it challenging to enter the work place and to succeed there. One key metric that EER tracks is how much a job placement increases a person's annual income. Job placements from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 through King County's EER programs increased participants' average annual income from \$8,468 to \$30,269 per year.

## **Improving behavioral health outcomes and reducing involvement in the criminal justice system for people: Investing upstream and where needs are greatest**

The primary goal of the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) action plan is to prevent and reduce chronic homelessness and unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice and emergency medical systems and to promote recovery for persons with disabling mental illness and chemical dependency by implementing a full continuum of treatment, housing, and case management services.

Investments in MIDD will support the following primary goals:

- ❖ A reduction in the number of mentally ill and chemically dependent people using costly interventions like jail, emergency rooms, and hospitals.
- ❖ A reduction in the number of people who recycle through the jail, returning repeatedly as a result of their mental illness or chemical dependency.
- ❖ A reduction of the incidence and severity of chemical dependency and mental and emotional disorders in youth and adults.
- ❖ Diversion of mentally ill and chemically dependent youth and adults from initial or further justice system involvement.
- ❖ Explicit linkage with, and furthering the work of, other efforts including the Adult and Juvenile Justice Operational Master plans, the Plan to End Homelessness, the Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plan, and the King County Mental Health Recovery Plan.

For Therapeutic Courts:

- ❖ King County Adult Drug Diversion Court (KCADDC), Juvenile Drug Court, and Family Treatment Court will continue to operate under MIDD 2. Family Treatment Court will receive increased funding to leverage a federal grant, expanding services at the Maleng Regional Justice Center (MRJC) in south King County and improving services at both Family Treatment Court locations.
- ❖ The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget includes new MIDD funding for housing vouchers for KCADDC participants. Recovery-oriented transitional housing improves program compliance and participant graduation rates, which in turn reduces jail day usage, recidivism, symptoms of substance use disorder (SUD), and also leads to long-term housing improvement.
- ❖ Regional Mental Health Court (RMHC) and Regional Veterans Court (RVC) provide alternative solutions to those who find themselves in the criminal justice system due to mental illnesses and substance abuse. The therapeutic courts provide structure and accountability along with treatment

options for mental illness and substance abuse to persons who suffer major mental illnesses and to veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Additional MIDD investments include:

- ❖ Funding to determine the design and feasibility of a Community Court. Community Court would provide an alternative to mainstream court for high-needs, low-risk individuals with behavioral health issues.
- ❖ Pre-booking diversion program for drug and prostitution crimes, via Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD).
- ❖ With the Familiar Faces Initiative, a dedicated PAO attorney to work on cases for high-utilizers of the jail who have substance use or mental health conditions.

### **Addressing disproportionality and bias in our justice system: Investing upstream, where needs are greatest, in community partnerships, and in employees**

The population in our justice system disproportionately includes people of color, particularly African Americans/Blacks, people with low incomes, and those with substance abuse and mental illnesses.

- ❖ The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget invests in populations where needs are greatest, including funding to implement a Needs/Responsivity Assessment Tool in Adult Detention that helps the County become more client-centered by helping them have the best chances to stay out of jail and successfully re-enter society.
- ❖ The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) proposes to invest in its employees, requesting implicit bias/de-escalation training for all commissioned officers to employ policing strategies and techniques that focus on building community relationships.

The population in the juvenile justice system also disproportionately includes youth of color.

- ❖ The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget includes continued investment in programs providing diversion from court and detention and culturally appropriate services for youth and families, often through partnerships with community organizations. Programs include Family Intervention Restorative Services (FIRS), which provides evidence based intervention services and a 24/7 respite center for youth who are violent towards a family member; Creative Justice, an arts-based alternative to incarceration; the 180 Program, a pre-filing diversion program that builds youth skills through a workshop with community leaders; and Raising Our Youth as Leaders (ROYAL), which provides intensive case management to reduce youth recidivism, especially among youth of color.
- ❖ King County is committed to being the first urban county in the nation to decrease its juvenile detention population while also reducing the racial disproportionalities within it. Juvenile Court has implemented a number of process changes intended to reduce the use of detention, such as a two-tier warrant system and a screen and release process made possible by an on-call evening judge.
- ❖ The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget includes the Dialectical Behavior Therapy training, which is a therapy-based approach to help Juvenile Detention staff have the skills to change juvenile behavior.
- ❖ Meanwhile, the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) proposes to expand its restorative justice program to justice-involved youth throughout King County.

## **Improving voter access for limited English speaking populations:**

### **Invest upstream and where needs are greatest, in employees, and in community partnerships**

The Elections Department proposes the continuation and expansion of outreach and education work begun in 2016 related to Ordinance 18086 (promoting access to elections for historically underrepresented citizens), as directed by the King County Council. These initiatives and projects are meant to address existing disparities in civic participation among underrepresented communities in King County.

- ❖ The budget includes a request for extending full translation of voting materials to Korean and Spanish speaking voters at the same level of services as currently provided to Chinese, Vietnamese, and English speaking voters.
- ❖ The Department of Elections will leverage Seattle Foundation funding to invest in community engagement activities in underrepresented communities to assist citizens with voter registration, increased access to voting materials, and overall voting education.

## **Partnering with the community organizations to provide recreational opportunities for underserved communities:**

### **Invest upstream and where needs are greatest, in employees, and in community partnerships**

The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget will increase recreational opportunities for underserved youth in King County using the Rental Car Sales Tax. Previous to this budget, 75 percent of the Rental Car Sales tax revenues was devoted to paying debt service on Kingdome bonds, and 25 percent to support King County Parks' Youth Sports Facilities Grant program. Now that the Kingdome bonds are retired, the 75 percent of Rental Car Sales Tax is now available for youth sports activities, providing a great opportunity to advance Equity and Social Justice through our King County Parks system. The 2017-2018 budget uses these funds to provide grants and programming that increase recreational opportunities for underserved youth in King County through the following categories:

- ❖ Recreational Access Grants: Focused on communities of opportunity to provide grants that foster youth access to the outdoors and recreation and support participation in youth sports.
- ❖ Parks and Recreation Improvement Grants: Parks and recreation improvement grants that have a low-to-no match requirement for permanent recreation amenities installed in King County Parks in underserved areas.
- ❖ Recreational programming: Program that adds recreational specialists to serve Skyway and East Federal Way, providing programming similar to the White Center Teen Program.

In addition, the proposed Parks capital program focuses on regional trail investments such as the Lake-to-Sound Trail which will expand access to recreation and non-motorized transportation facilities in underserved communities.

## **Expanding transportation choices and opportunities for communities and employees, especially those with needs: Invest upstream and where needs are greatest, in employees, and in community partnerships**

Metro Transit's 2017-2018 investments have important impacts toward the County's Equity and Social Justice goals, including:

- ❖ 300,000 additional service hours: The additional service hours will improve transit reliability, address crowding, and increase service; 70-80 percent of these additional hours will serve low-income communities and/or communities of color.
- ❖ Metro Connects: Metro Transit proposes to build the organizational capacity to support Metro Connects, a transit system that provides all-day service throughout the county. The new system will substantially benefit communities dependent on transit and is intended to be more accessible for limited English speakers.
- ❖ Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE): Internal investments will support PACE, a partnership to create an environment for positive change, improved communication among all employees, and a workforce that reflects, respects, and embraces diversity as a shared core value of service to the public.
- ❖ Training and Development: The agency's budget funds increased development opportunities for all employees and emphasizes building inclusive hiring processes as the system and the need for additional transit operators grows.
- ❖ ORCA LIFT: The 2017-2018 budget continues to prioritize ORCA LIFT, Metro Transit's successful low-income fare program, and supports the development of the Next Gen Orca fare card, which will simplify the purchase of Orca cards for all. Additionally Metro Transit proposes providing an additional incentive for youth to use the Orca card for fare payment, which would increase youth ridership and ORCA use and would increase access to transit for low income families.

## **Increasing business opportunities for those historically disadvantaged: Invest upstream and where needs are greatest and in community partnerships**

As part of its efforts to increase equity and opportunity especially for those who are most historically disadvantaged, the Finance and Business Operations Division proposes to expand its regional network of certified small firms and increase the number of contracts awarded to small businesses; continue funding for the Apprenticeship Coordinator position; and fund the Priority Hiring Program to facilitate disadvantaged and under-represented populations into the pre-apprenticeship pipeline. In addition, the Division is proposing that a \$7,500 threshold be established for property taxes on mobile homes. The Mobile Home Assessment Threshold would eliminate the assessment of mobile homes worth less than \$7,500, which in turn protects low-income mobile home owners from having to pay taxes on their mobile home.

## **Information Technology:**

### **Invest upstream and where needs are greatest and in community partnerships**

King County Information Technology proposes to extend I-Net services, including Internet access, to other government agencies and nonprofit organizations in underserved communities of King County. In addition, the department proposes to develop a regional Digital Equity Action Plan that will identify regional partners committed to collaboration on initiatives to promote digital equity in the region.

## **Accelerating the County's progress in equity through strategic activities and building internal and community capacity:**

### **Invest upstream and where needs are greatest, in employees, and in community partnerships**

The ESJ Strategic Plan lays out aggressive, measurable actions to achieve a transformed County government by 2022, in conjunction with the Best Run Government investments. The Executive's budget proposes one additional new staff person as a central resource to support new activities in the ESJ Strategic Plan, including:

- ❖ Implementing the Strategic Plan, including agency action planning, monitoring, and measuring.
- ❖ Developing and delivering new ESJ fundamentals training and training specific to each goal area, with the goal of training all King County employees.
- ❖ Creating a community liaisons program to support further development and maintenance of community partnerships that serve the most underserved and least represented in county decision-making.
- ❖ Building a regional equity collaborative, leading and working with the Regional Equity Network and major partners (e.g., UW, Seattle Foundation, Gates Foundation, Puget Sound ESD, cities) to advance a regional equity agenda, advance major institutional change across sectors, and support/build community capacity for change.
- ❖ Improving the school-to-work pipeline, strategically investing in preparing youth who experience the greatest barriers to work opportunities in King County and other major employers.

In addition, in the summer of 2016 the Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, created by the County Council and the Executive, finalized its report on how to better integrate our newest residents. The Executive is proposing one staff position and a small amount of other resources to support a new Immigrant and Refugee Commission and a regional hub for immigrant and refugee issues. This funding level was the minimum recommended by the Task Force, and will allow the County to make important advancements in this area where there is growing need.

## Background on ESJ budget analysis and decisions

This section explains the analysis and decision-making that led to the investments described in this Policy Paper. The Executive formed a Workgroup, led by the Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget (PSB), to review about 80 ESJ investment proposals submitted from agencies across the county and valued at about \$145 million in total. This included about 20 proposals with an impact of \$5.4 million to the General Fund (GF). The Workgroup also worked with PSB staff to analyze other agency proposals with ESJ impacts. The Workgroup consisted of seven members, including two members of the ESJ Inter-Branch Team (one Council central staff), two staff from the Office of Equity and Social Justice, two staff from PSB, and one staff from the county's Human Resources Division.

The Workgroup worked with PSB staff to analyze ESJ investment proposals (and to prioritize and rank the proposals with a General Fund impact), using the following criteria:

- ❖ **Resource availability** – Have resources been identified to support the proposal? Can the agency afford the proposal? What is the impact to the General Fund?
- ❖ **Impact of investment** – What is the intended impact of the investment? Will the agency be able to measure the impact?
- ❖ **Organizational capacity** – Can the agency support the proposal? Will the effort be successful?
- ❖ **Sustainability** – Does the proposal lead to long-term, sustained change in policies and or systems?

The Workgroup's goal was to make recommendations that represented a balanced, enterprise-wide approach to funding ESJ investments, including both central investments and investments in agencies; included investments across agencies with varying levels of capacity and existing resources; and invested in proposals that will drive ESJ efforts both within King County government and in the community.

## CONCLUSION

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King County's efforts to improve equity and social justice both internally and externally by budget measures should consider crucial components to success. Successful ESJ efforts require County leadership (at departments, in the Executive Office, and in Council) to be held accountable to aligning their agencies' resources toward the goal of equity and social justice; effective processes and tools with an effective, embedded ESJ lens; and engaged employees empowered to take an equity lens in their daily operations and decision-making, be it in the field, as finance managers, or budget analysts. While many of the ESJ investment proposals submitted by agencies reflect an increased sophistication in advancing pro-equity practices, budget constraints and limitations continue to be a challenge and not all worthy proposals were funded. In addition, the incremental budget process—analyzing each department's budget at the margin—continues to be a challenge to investing deeply in efforts to impact equity and social justice in King County, both in the government and the community.

As stated previously, however, the 2017-2018 budget biennium is a major opportunity to invest in strategies of the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan's goal and policy areas and achieve the objectives for 2022. The complete set of investments laid out in this paper is strong and balanced, supporting agency investments aligned with our ESJ strategies and building the central capacity to advance ESJ countywide. When considered in conjunction with the employee investments (described in the Best Run Government Policy Paper), the ESJ Strategies are supported: investing upstream and where needs are greatest, investing in community partners, and investing in employees.