AGENDA
GOVERNANCE GROUP
May 21, 2021 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Join Zoom Meeting

Time	*Agenda Item*	*Facilitator*
2:00	**Welcome**	*Marguerite Ro*
2:03 – 2:15	**Grounding & Connecting**	
2:15	**Consent Agenda** *Objectives:* review and approve the May 21 agenda and April 16th Meeting notes	*Marguerite*
2:17-2:25	**Retreat Recap** *Objectives: Director's review of key discussion points, plans for follow-up and wrap up on Levy Renewal discussion, working through conflict and Governance 2.0*	*Andréa Akita*
2:25 – 3:45	**Wrap-Up: Best Starts Implementation Plan Sections** *Objectives: Reach consensus on recommendations for Implementation Plan draft*	*Andréa*
	Future of COO Governance *Objectives: Review workgroup discussion and build governance plan for COO 2.0*	*All*
3:45 – 3:55	**Next Steps, Future Meetings**	*All*
4:00	**Adjourn**	

Governance Group Members

Lydia Assefa-Dawson	*Ubax Gardheere*	*Marguerite Ro*
Michael Brown	*Matelita Jackson*	*Sili Savusa*
Vazaskia Crockrell	*Paola Maranan*	*Tony To*
Deanna Dawson	*Jenn Ramirez Robson*	*AJ McClure*
	Yordanos Teferi	

COMMUNITIES OF OPPORTUNITY GOVERNANCE GROUNDING

RESULTS STATEMENT

Create greater health, social, economic, and racial equity in King County so that all people thrive and prosper, regardless of race or place.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Consistently demonstrate the values of equity, respect, and partnership.
- Ensure low-income communities and communities of color affected by inequities develop and own the solutions.
- Advocate for and change institutional policies and processes to support equity goals.
- Encourage investments (both funding and in-kind resources) in long-term community capacity building and in systems, policy and practice changes that lead to greater racial and economic equity throughout King County.
- Catalyze alignment of funding streams and partner across issues and sectors to seek preventive strategies that address root causes of today's inequities.
- Be transparent and show how data and community expertise inform initiative strategies.
- Continuously learn, improve, and share work publicly.
- Focus on geographic communities with the greatest needs, while simultaneously sharing lessons learned and building relationships across King County – *We are one King County.*

VALUES

We commit to guide Communities of Opportunity using these values:

Equity: work intentionally to eliminate racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and geographic disparities in health and well-being

Process Equity: an inclusive, fair, and open process

Community Engagement: authentic community engagement that involves listening to and understanding the unique histories of communities

Driven by quantitative and qualitative data: Data will track and report progress, as well as support given for promising and evidence-based practices

Innovation: Recognize that change involves risk and value an adaptive approach that views failure as an important part of the learning process

2_Governance Group
Meeting Notes: April 16, 2021
via Zoom

Governance Group Attendees: Michael Brown, Marguerite Ro, Sili Savusa, Yordanos Teferi, Ubax Gardeerhe, Marty Jackson, Tony To, Paola Maranan, Lydia Assefa-Dawson, Jenn Ramirez Robson. **Staff:** Andréa Akita, Cristina González, Whitney Johnson, Aaron Robertson, José Camacho Martinez, Roxana Chen **Facilitator:** Alessandra Zielinski

The Governance Group unanimously approved acceptance of the **May Consent Agenda**, approving the March 19, 2021 meeting notes and April 16 agenda.

After **grounding and equity moment breakout** groups, Andrea provided an update on the **Best Starts for Kids levy renewal process**. The renewal legislation was passed by the King County Committee of the Whole, with recommended amendments from the Regional Policy Committee. The legislation will proceed to the full Council.

During the last meeting, Governance Group asked about COO's plan for community engagement on proposed changes. COO staff will be working with BSK staff, as BSK plans its community listening sessions; COO's team will coordinate scheduling of its listening sessions and look for opportunities to combine or complement the Best Starts sessions.

Implementation Plan: [COO program modifications (slide deck)](#) - The staff grouped proposed COO changes into two categories: 1) Programmatic and Administrative changes, that staff team will continue to refine, and; 2) Implementation Plan policy recommendations that GG will discuss during this meeting and as part of the May retreat.

1. Programmatic and Administrative Changes
   a. Learning Community Recommendations: Overall continue on course set – support capacity building and community-based research and innovative pilots; remove sub strategies described in the initial Implementation Plan.
   b. Systems & Policy Change Recommendations
      - Integrate Best Starts Healthy and Safe Environments program within COO Systems and Policy change efforts.
      - Continue to provide multi-year funding
   c. Place-based & Cultural Community Partnerships Recommendations
      - Increase clarity on goals for result areas and how funding supports solutions at the intersection of housing, health, economic opportunity, and community connections.
      - Consider separating partnerships and collaboration funding from funding for projects.

> Learning and feedback from Partnership Community of Practice will inform recommendation as well.

2. Implementation Plan Policy Level Modifications: Place-based and Cultural Community Partnerships

    a. Prioritizing communities with greatest health and well-being disparities. Staff recommendation is to create a priority for communities in places in the lowest 20th percentile for health and well-being indicators in King County (based on COO composite index), mapped by census tract. The composite index can also be applied using a score, which could be used for cultural communities, to reflect the disparate health & well-being by racial identify groups. Isolated, rural communities would remain eligible for funding.

    How is this a change? In 2015 when the original place-based site partnerships were selected, eligibility was limited to communities in the 20th percentile. Eligibility was expanded by Council in the Implementation Plan for additional place-based and cultural community partnerships in the lowest 40th percent. Cultural Communities in which the cultural base represented has disparate health and well-being using index as a guide were eligible; and isolated, rural communities with significant disparities compared to areas in which they are located and have other indicators of poor health/well-being outcomes has also been eligible for current levy funding.

    COO composite scores that we saw for race/ethnicities, it's the sum of eight indicators included in the composite used to select COO's original geographies. The composite includes life expectancy at birth, rates of obesity, smoking, diabetes, frequent mental distress, unemployment, 2+ poor housing conditions, and living below 200% Federal Poverty Level

    The slide showing composite index scores for comparing King County average with African American, American Indian/Native American (AI/AN), Latino in South KC are were noted as COO cultural community partnerships (Replanting Roots, SUNN, Comunidad) Composite scores for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders and other racial-identity groups is available.

Questions/Discussion:
- The staff's recommendation is mean to creates prioritization, without setting strict limits.
- If COO is staying at the same funding level, then we should be more focused; and if disparities are increasing, we need to limit where limited funding goes.
- If we have limited resources than we have to have some priorities – 20% is right on target and we should further focus on BIPOC communities.
- What expectations does holding the 40% and rural/isolated communities create? Will there be any pressure to create set-asides?

- Identify more vulnerable communities that experience inequities that we want to focus on.
- Suggestion to GG members is that we set the highest, clearest bar on racial equity. To note that POC live in every part or our county/district.

- Thinking about the challenges we are receiving about where/who fund. There are parts of the 20% we have not funded due to both resources and well as not having large percentage of people of color. There are also places we do not fund where are a lot of people of color, but not the 20% of outcomes. In both these examples we get challenged of why we do not fund there. A measure that could explain that could help us make the case.

- Unique to COO is the unique focus on a population vs. Place-based approach. A core part of our presence and influence should be to stand up for Equity vs. Parity. Originally data for places was by census tract; the amendment adopted by council created requirement to report reach by zip code. This goes to the question of equity and parity and what people are looking at.
- Current data shows an incomplete picture of what we're trying to do. Perhaps adding another lens in our criteria that is more explicit could be more helpful in clarifying where we want resources/funding to go. Our index is somewhat race agnostic, even as we talk about racial equity driving the work. We must have a laser focus on racial equity. The question is how do we elevate the reason why place matters? In many ways it's because race matters – the maps show lots of overlaps. Relates to messaging somewhat – part of the value of investing in place is because we're investing in communities of color. If the aim is racial equity, it's important to be explicit about that.
- For framing – add racial equity to piece but that COO was also ahead of time with the triple impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (economic opportunity, health, housing, public safety, racial equity). Crisis has exposed a long history of disinvestment! COO does systemic change! Being bold with our framing is something we want to see. In order to address root causes the work COO is doing for systems change is doing that.
- Place/ important to talk about impacts of gentrification. Access to Opportunity maps (EDI – City of Seattle) and analysis also consider historic disinvestment into neighborhoods.

Important statements and directions to staff including – 1) shouldn't pull back – racial equity & racial justice and standing firm on the 20% index and investing in BIPOC communities and communities historically disinvested in; 2) be clear in how we communicate in the implementation plan about addressing specific needs from a racial equity lens.

Next Steps: The May 7th Retreat agenda will include (a) Community building; (b) Consensus on Implementation Plan; (c) Scenario Planning; and (d) Governance Group 2.0

Meeting adjourned adjorned

3_Staff Report to COO Governance Group, May 21, 2021

We've highlighted three activities from COO staff and partners for this month's report: Generative Conflict sessions, the COO Narrative, and the Commercial Affordability Pilot.

I.   LEARNING FROM CONFLICT

After the discussion at the Governance Group retreat on May 7th, staff wanted to share additional context on Generative Conflict workshops/sessions that COO is offering to its funded partnerships, as well as for the Governance Group, staff, and consultants. Both of these series were created for COO, in response to interests expressed by community partners and by Governance Group to implement approaches for understanding and for creating constructive ways to work through and address conflict.

Vision Change Win Generative Conflict Learning Sessions for COO Contracted Partners
In early 2020, COO hosted a Conflict Transformation workshop that was led by Ejeris Dixon, Founding Director of Vision Change Win (VCW). The workshop was such a success that COO grantees wanted to continue working with VCW and requested a more comprehensive experience with the organization.

VCW is currently facilitating eight Generative Conflict sessions for four of our community partnerships: A Supportive Community for All-Snoqualmie Valley, Rainier Valley, Replanting Roots, Rebuilding Community-Central Area, and Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits (SUNN). VCW Generative Conflict learning sessions will take up to six months and will conclude in September 2021. Below are the expected outcomes from the sessions for COO participants.

At the close of the program, we expect that participants will:
- Understand conflict as organizational issues, not just interpersonal issues
- Create organizational structures that prevent or alleviate organizational conflict
- Be able to identify conflict early enough to be able to adequately address it
- Be better able to hold and navigate conflict and harm within the organization
- Be better able to know when and when not to get outside assistance with conflict

VCW sessions for Governance Group Members, COO Staff and Consultants
Workshop 1: June 2nd from 9:00 a.m. to noon & Workshop 2: June 7th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
The purpose of this two-part series is to provide the Governance Group, COO staff, and COO consultants with similar language to discuss conflict and the tools to engage in conflict in a healthy and transformative way. The intent for the workshops is not to discuss or "solve" current conflicts. Through participating in these sessions, our hope is that Governance Group and its staff team will to be clearer and more intentional about naming conflict and ensuring

COO's values are the driving factor in our approach, to clarify roles and expectations of governance and staff to integrate these learnings into our policies and practices. These sessions will give COO new frameworks around conflict and will set the foundation for COO 2.0 to have a shared analysis, clear language and actions related to future conflict.

II.   COO NARRATIVE

Based on the narrative planning conversations that Governance Group undertook over 2020, Sian Wu from Resource Media has compiled a summary report and recommendations for COO. The report can be read here. The conversations for the COO Narrative was pushed out because of necessary discussion and decision-making for Levy renewal requirements. We will return to the Next Steps in Narrative in June/July, focusing on ways to put the narrative into action.

We have been observing how COO narrative ideals are being put into play, shaping broader policy conversation and reinforcing Governance Group's two primary goals: 1) Policymakers understand COO as an important and essential part of BSK; and, 2) that COO is known by others (policymakers, funders, potential partners) – who we are, what we do and why we do it – in order to influence, leverage and align others to our vision and approach. During Council discussions on the Best Starts renewal, a Councilmember expressed support for BSK and specifically for expanding COO's commercial affordability program, using the same language we use in describing thriving communities in on-the-record comments during a full Council meeting. In addition, COO staff were encouraged to see community leaders collaborating outside of direct COO programs/funding, through join advocacy as part of an Unincorporated King County BIPOC Alliance.

III.   PROGRAM UPDATE: COMMERCIAL AFFORDABILITY PILOT

NDC (National Development Council) and its consulting team wrapped up the planning phase for the Commercial Affordability Pilot at the end of 2020 and jumped into the implementation phase, developing models, tools, and services that will increase community ownership and equitable development opportunities. The Pilot seeks to influence systems, policy change and investment practices to assist micro- and small businesses to remain open in their community and contribute to economic stability and resiliency in COO communities, including through job creation and retention. Three of the projects that are receiving technical assistance and funding for tenant improvements include:

SeaTac International Mall, SeaTac, has transformed a former auto parts store into a lively international mall, hosting 26 retail bazaars, a grocery store/deli, two business offices, a chiropractor, and a community center for East African Community Services. NDC provided a grant of $150,000 to the developer to help pay for major tenant improvements to build out space to create a retail bazaar where interconnecting walkways enable customers to walk freely from unit to unit. NDC, Craft3, and third-party TA providers funded by the Pilot provided

one-on-one support to the project developers including construction management, structuring financing, identifying project needs, and helping connect businesses to relevant support. Additionally, with the help of the Pilot's small business loan guarantee fund, the business center secured a small business loan from Craft3 to fill the gap of project development costs and business start-up costs not covered by grant. A grand opening ribbon cutting event was held during the first week of May, with media coverage in the [SeaTac blog](#), [Westside Seattle](#), Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce's [Facebook live video](#), and in Twitter posts by [Councilmember Zahilay](#) and [Councilmember Upthegrove.](#)

Catfish Corner, 23rd & Jackson in Seattle, a legacy restaurant dislocated from its neighborhood in 2018 will be able to return to the Central District, celebrating its grand opening event in June. The business is moving into a new mixed use, affordable housing, and retail development in the heart of the Central District. The businesses' long-term lease enabled NDC to provide a grant of $245,000 to Community House, the nonprofit building owner/developer to complete the business owner's portion of the cost of tenant improvements. NDC, Craft3, and third-party TA providers funded by the Pilot provided one-on-one support to developer and to the business owner. Additionally, Craft3 provided a small business loan to business owner to cover start-up expenses and working capital to move into the space. The [Capitol Hill Seattle blog](#) reported the anticipated return of Catfish Corer to the Central District in an article posted earlier this month.

Spice Bridge, Tukwila, is the Food Innovation Network's non-profit food business incubator site providing immigrant and refugee food entrepreneurs access to affordable commercial kitchens and supporting them in running their own businesses. NDC provided technical assistance and a grant of $100,000 to Global to Local to fill a financial gap for funding major tenant improvements in support of Spice Bridge's revolving cohort of up to 15 food businesses that will share the commercial kitchen and retail space over the next decade.

Additional projects in the pipeline. NDC and its contractors are providing technical assistance to the developers/small businesses of two other potential commercial projects. They expect that another project will be ready for real estate funding to complete its project by the end of the pilot period.

Communities of Opportunity
Narrative Recommendations

OVERVIEW

Since the spring of 2020 Resource Media has worked with Communities of Opportunity to develop narrative, messaging, elevator pitch and emblematic stories about their program, so that it may drive a larger funding strategy at the public and private level, and give tools to its program participants and leaders. This memo outlines our recommendations, based on the research interviews we conducted, facilitated sessions with the Governance Group and narrative working group, and external research on narrative frameworks in progressive causes and movements working toward building and improving community.

WHAT IS NARRATIVE AND WHY PUSH A NARRATIVE?

Political will is based on a set of assumptions, which manifest themselves in the world through stories told repeatedly, in different ways and by different people. Those stories, coupled with values and beliefs, shape how people see the world, and cumulatively feed into a larger narrative, or set of cultural assumptions, in which we all immerse ourselves. This overarching narrative either limits or expands the policy choices that are viewed as viable in any given political context – be it in the U.S. Senate or local County investments. Resource Media sees the openings for policymaking that advances equity in health and community as contingent on political will that is deeply influenced by existing narratives around community health and prosperity.

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RESOURCE MEDIA

Here we put forward a new narrative to support equitable reforms and investments by animating and amplifying a narrative that focuses on what's possible rather than what's wrong, and recognizing the strengths and benefits of investing in COO.

'BREAKING' BLOCKS PROGRESS

In order to understand the political landscape that COO exists within and is entering into in the coming year, it's helpful to gain an outside perspective on how systemically racist and inequitable policies and practices continue to perpetuate themselves. The Othering and Belonging Institute at the UC Berkeley discusses the concept of 'breaking': creating us vs. them fracture lines that are perceived to be essential and embedded into social orders, creating a separateness between specific groups based on race, class, educational attainment or culture. Overall, civil society and progress is inhibited when this 'breaking' is particularly hard, assumed and extreme, resulting in little will to bridge to other groups to achieve transformational change.

The institute acknowledges that breaking occurs on a spectrum, with 'hard breaking' exemplified by an outright denial of full humanity of marginalized groups, or promoting hatred and disgust of others and proposing violence against these groups. While this is certainly happening on a national level, officials and funders in King County do not propose or foment these ideas out in the open. But, by always having a more extreme point of view to compare themselves to, it can be difficult to dissolve more 'soft breaking' examples, such as:

- creating hierarchies and belief in inferiority/superiority
- limiting participation to certain individuals or groups
- assigning roles with restricted access or opportunities
- leveraging segregation as a strategy
- requiring "other" individuals/groups to surrender their differences and/or their sovereignty

BREAKING AND BRIDGING POST-2020

We know that national narratives, sentiments and traumatic events impact us all on the local level and 2020 has brought plenty of that to reality. COO partners and Public Health employees are now in a much different place in 2021 than when this project first started in 2020. With these changes come challenges and opportunity.

What is breaking:

- The country and the region is awakened to the systemic racism that affects our communities—it is no longer advocated only by the most ardent racial justice advocates and activists, it is *seen* by the way that COVID-19 has killed more Black and brown members of our community, and how more members of the Black community are harassed, killed, arrested and jailed by everyone ranging from neighbors, to the police, medical system and the court system.
- Economic instability and anxiety for what the future holds is affecting people who were formerly on the edge of poverty, resulting in lost jobs, an inability to afford education, unstable housing and increased reliance on public benefits, which have not been redesigned for our new realities, and faces tenuous financial support.
- Our community fabric has been disrupted, particularly for those who are most marginalized. In-person gatherings, even for essential purposes like education have been disrupted. The organic, close-knit community interactions that people used to experience, like a table at the community center or chatting with someone on the bus have become increasingly rare. Community organizations are finding it more difficult to reach people with messages on important programs or community involvement efforts, especially with the digital divide.
- There is political instability but hope with the latest round of election results at the local and federal level. As of writing in early January of 2021, the nation's capital has been stormed by rioters seeking a coup at the president's behest, and dozens of lawmakers supported overturning election results in key swing states. Locally, Seattle's mayor, police chief and superintendent of public schools have either resigned or announced they will not be seeking another term, and there is an active recall campaign of a Seattle City Councilmember. For members of the public who desire stability and progress, they are not receiving it. While some are employing a 'wait and see' attitude, others see it as a huge opportunity for change.

COO's role as a bridger

A core antidote to the widespread breaking (whether happening at the personal or societal level) is bridging—finding common humanity and expanding our collective value set to care for and be in good relationship with all types of people, because it makes everyone's experience and place in society stronger and more joyful.

This concept is already at the heart of COO's mission and its core values. In COO's new narrative, it will be essential to **1. Acknowledge the level to which our society has broken and left behind members of our community and 2. Champion the value of building bridges and connections through work like COO's, which relies on cooperation, strong, authentic and transformational relationships.**

When it comes to specifics on how exactly COO programs achieve outcomes, we can use concepts like targeted universalism to discuss how communities are situated differently within a system, and therefore need specific solutions that are designed by them. By stating a universal goal, for example, "healthy, thriving communities to support all families," it can leap over hurdles in political decision-making bodies, while still committing to tailored and customized approaches that target the most investment to those who need the most work to get there.

COO as a bridger is not only your role but your unique responsibility. Bridging is more than good relationships, it's also about mitigating power dynamics, redistributing resources, and even bringing groups together that historically have not gotten along or been able to find common ground.

COO's approach provides further tools to create bridging—within programmatic and organizational decisions, this group of people has pursued evidence and data to inform funding, program strategy, and policy change, all while using relationships to make it happen.

The role of belonging

Belonging is an essential pre-cursor to bridging work within organizations, as well as a potential outcome of that work. It's the feeling that oneself, one's identity group or one's organization is accepted, welcome and an integral part of its society occurs on various levels and on various sides of the political spectrum. We have seen the economy and politics of belonging play out in starkly different ways over the course of 2020. In examining threats, those harboring white supremacist thoughts have been able to find a sense of belonging among online hate forums, and in-person, when attending rallies and seeing their points of view reflected back by the president. On the opportunity side, Black Lives Matter protests have galvanized and revealed a number of allies for the lives of Black people and against institutional oppression.
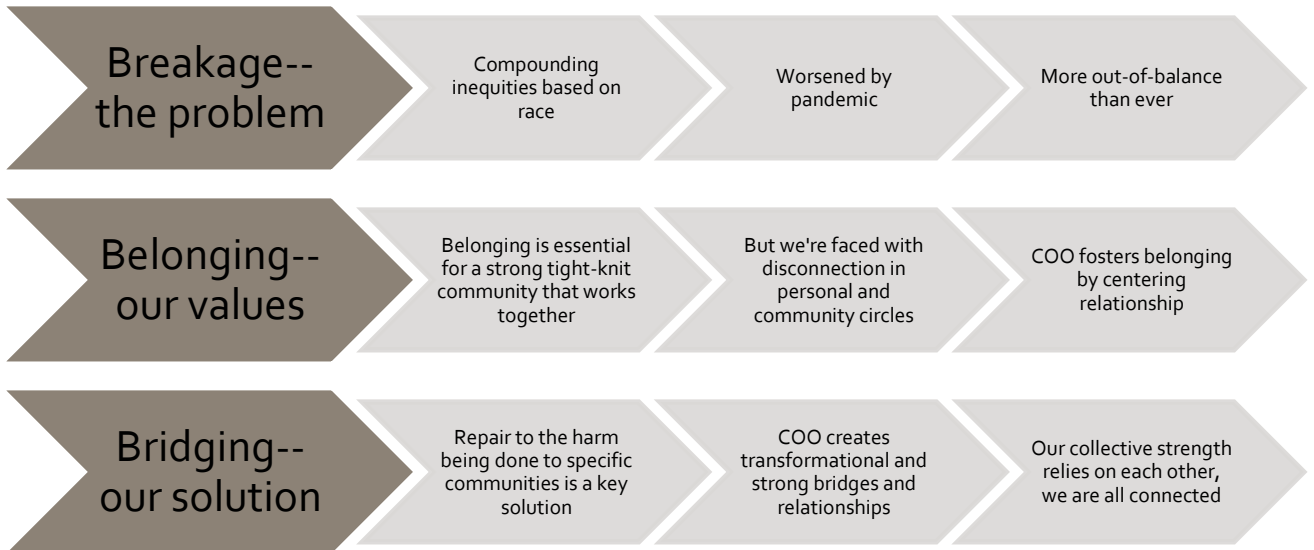
At times belonging and strategic breaking are necessary and appropriate, such as "limiting participation to certain individuals or groups" for racial caucusing or trying to create an environment where marginalized groups feel safe to share. COO provides identity groups with autonomy while creating community by listening to group needs and extending the circle outward, so that others more involved in decision-making processes can learn from them.

In this very polarized environment, it's important to note that those who have already struggled with feeling that they belong—those who don't speak English, are not white, or who have low-wage jobs and no access to intergenerational wealth, are facing another huge divide perpetuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now it has become very apparent who has class, education or income privilege based on how and where they spend their time, their overall health, likelihood for survival and political leaning. Moreover, institutions responsible for keeping us safe, like the Department of Health and Public Health, Seattle & King County, are seen as de-facto enforcers of these differences within COVID-19 recommendations and guidance. People are now feeling alienated, lonely, and distanced from friends and family within their own social groups, let alone building bridges with new groups and individuals, and fostering a sense of belonging among them. The ability to create that belonging is vastly under-resourced and out of balance.

But with this dynamic comes an opportunity. What if, in this hunger to re-engage and connect to society, comes a willingness to cast off the divisions and comfort zones that defined existing relationships and social circles? Will the acknowledgement of people who keep our economy and our society running—our "essential workers"—result in more solidarity and knowing that their needs and rights are connected to everyone's wellbeing?

A COO NARRATIVE THAT WORKS FOR PROGRESS

If we put all of this together, we start to see a narrative journey that makes the case for more support of COO to continue and expand its mission with community.

Breakage-- the problem	Compounding inequities based on race	Worsened by pandemic	More out-of-balance than ever
Belonging-- our values	Belonging is essential for a strong tight-knit community that works together	But we're faced with disconnection in personal and community circles	COO fosters belonging by centering relationship
Bridging-- our solution	Repair to the harm being done to specific communities is a key solution	COO creates transformational and strong bridges and relationships	Our collective strength relies on each other, we are all connected

Narrative analogy to communicate system change

COO's program and funding strategy has been and will continue to center around systems change—whether that's reducing inequities in health and housing, or through investing in equitable economic and community development opportunities. When it comes to communicating the promise and urgency of societal change, not just at the individual or program level, but at the systems level, there are a number of challenges. First, the American public often doesn't understand the democratic and political systems in place due to a consistent under-investment in education and concerted disenfranchisement and dis-information. Second, getting involved in any sort of public process to achieve political or policy change or gain neighborhood investment has often lacked reward, been overly onerous and slow-moving.

It's not that people don't care about achieving change and improving their communities. It's just that they are often more likely to be able to understand, resonate with and thus share solutions that are more individual-oriented. Cue the "bootstraps" mentality that so often leads to a discounting of systemic inequities and an over-reliance on the "you can't trust government" trope which perpetuates the cycle.

For example, people are more likely to pitch in to help out with their child's school, than they are to go lobby in Olympia for overturning funding restriction laws. They are conscious of not turning the gas on too high, but are unaware of the attempts to increase natural gas shipments

and pipelines over Washington's borders. They make sure to say "BIPOC" and are willing to police other people's speech, but stood by to watch affirmative action die in Washington state. This essentially creates an optical illusion, where the person thinks that they are doing the right thing, but are actually doing very little to change the systems that are thwarting change. More on this phenomenon here.

So, the need to communicate systems change needs new tools to make it easier to grasp. For example, the metaphor of water creating "constant pressure" against the wall of a dam, has been used as a way to explain how people become homeless. Or if a metaphor that explained the economic system works like a computer program—that it was designed by people to function in a specific way—we could get people to see that it can be redesigned or "reprogrammed" to function in other ways.[1]

Understanding this challenge, Resource Media posed a number of options for how to communicate systems change and how COO addresses systems change in its own unique way, and the group agreed on these two metaphors.

1. **To describe the world we face**: Our region is **off-balance.** For years communities of color have disproportionately experienced disinvestment and systemic barriers resulting in significant inequities. Now, we are all experiencing the layered crises of COVID-19, economic recession and systemic racism. COO helps to provide a **counter-weight** to these oppressive forces, and provides the stability, strength and flexibility that people need to rebuild, and **rebound** joyfully, for healthy kids, families, **grounded** in strong communities.

2. **To describe how we work**: King County's diverse and **close-knit** communities have been working together for decades from workers' rights and education and on COVID-19 and systemic racism. COO provides resources so that these relationships can **weave** together expertise, lived experience and innovation. It is a **container** that **holds** essential work and programs that is **carried** through in the daily lives of our King County communities, in our schools, playfields, housing, and clinics. Embedded in COO's values is the idea that we all depend on each other, so we support each other through strong community and strong relationships.

These two metaphors work to achieve high-level understanding of the urgency of the problems that COO is addressing and **why** COO needs to be supported specifically.

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[1] "We need to talk about how we talk about systems change," https://www.comnetwork.org/insights/we-need-to-talk-about-how-we-talk-about-systems-change/

VALUES ALIGNMENT

Throughout our narrative building process, Resource Media recognized that there was a spectrum of definitions around core values of COO, its signature approach and priorities. Resource Media designed a values spectrum mapping exercise, to allow each member of the group to express their own opinion on COO's ideal placement on a values spectrum. This exercise recognizes that an organization's position is not always black and white, and there are diverging opinions on specific values and approaches. The goal was to uncover outliers in opinion and converge on core values, approaches and priorities, while also uncovering where there wasn't clear agreement, so that COO should employ a "both/and" approach to the values.

Ways of Being

- Learning over Teaching
- Idealist over Pragmatist
- Transformer over Sustainer

What we do

- A spectrum across community and multiple sectors
- Intermediary between grassroots and grasstops
- Embrace engagement and power building
- We deliver impact and build momentum

How we do it (the COO way)

- A race-based focus
- Prioritizing relationships
- Leveraging partnerships to achieve policy goals
- Embrace innovation and first-time approaches
- Carefully addressing urgent problems

MESSAGING & ELEVATOR PITCH

The cohesive values discovered by the group have led to the following messaging pillars, which work to define and set apart COO's unique program and leadership approach.

SYSTEM CHANGE THROUGH BUILDING POWER TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY

Communities of Opportunity goes beyond providing resources to communities and programs. It looks at the systems and policies that have shaped the inequities and injustices that our communities feel every day. We know that beyond changing hearts and minds, we need to shape and reform policies that center the communities most impacted by those policies.

Reforming policies means looking at the evidence and data for why reform needs to happen, who it affects and who it will benefit. It also means providing goals, milestones and accountability to leaders who are responsible for reducing inequities.

INTER-DEPENDENT, RELATIONSHIP-BASED WORK

Communities of Opportunity puts people at the center--we know that some of our greatest strength and our assets are based in the networks and relationships built up through communities working hard for better outcomes. Our work puts these relationships front and center, and creates structures and networks to allow new relationships and networks to flourish and extend, always inter-dependent on each other.

COO creates networks and relationships that create communities that help people belong. We work together to achieve goals, keeping in mind that we all benefit when all of our voices are heard.

BASED IN COMMUNITY WITH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND OWNERSHIP

COO looks to community knowledge and expertise to design and implement solutions that work best for local communities. We trust first-hand knowledge and understand that realities are constantly changing. In order to implement solutions that have the highest rate of success, we must develop them hand-in-hand with community.

FLEXIBLE, NIMBLE INNOVATION

COO is unconventional--we address issues that aren't always seen as public health issues, but they are absolutely fundamental and essential to address, if we want to see equitable health outcomes in King County communities.

COO is flexible and nimble to the times and events that face our region. We are continuously adapting, changing and examining our work for constant improvement and innovation.

Elevator Pitch:

A group session prompted several Governance Group members to share how they envision a short and convincing 'pitch' for COO would take shape. After some tweaks and edits, we have matched these pitches to various distinct COO goals. These are deliberately written in a colloquial style, as they're meant for verbal delivery.

Independent funding goal:

For you're an investor who's looking to reduce inequities in health/housing/economy, COO is a collective catalyst for nimble action that engages communities. Unlike any single government partner, COO gives power to community expertise. We make grants based on evidence of need and have the relationships to get it done--we address urgent problems by leveraging community expertise/government insight/philanthropic resources.

Public funding goal:

For policymakers who want to make real, lasting change, Communities of Opportunity is a collaborative funding program that offers a change in mindset. What makes us different is that together—government, philanthropy and community organizations—we look at how communities are impacted by inequitable policies and systems. We collaborate on shaping and reforming these policies and systems to benefit the people most impacted by these inequities, growing skills and relationships along the way.

Community partnership goal:

For community groups and members who want more influence in solving essential problems, COO is a unique partnership that joins government, philanthropy and community. We provide grant funding that gives people access to the power, knowledge and relationships they need to achieve fundamental policy and systems change, with a focus on health, housing and economic opportunity. We're community-led, so the way we work is a little different—it's flexible and innovative. We center community needs for healing and growth in our neighborhoods. We're about collective learning and action, community voice and power, civic engagement and leadership. All working toward racial equity for a more inclusive, vibrant region. There's plenty of room at the table and we welcome you!

Communities of Opportunity
Strategic Communications Plan

WHAT IS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS?

There are many definitions for 'strategic communications,' but here's one that we've developed that works well with this project: Strategic communications is a method to achieve a goal through concerted, targeted communications tactics that use the right level of effort to reach the right audiences effectively.

Goals

As Resource Media worked with COO on strategic communications planning, we discussed the needs that drove this planning, and had all participants chart them on a graph—depicting what is a short-term objective, long-term objective and "not our job" –factors out of our control but would be beneficial to our work.

In definition of goals, we ran the group through this evaluation analysis to uncover which goals are best to approach using the SMART goals criteria:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable (can we easily know if this goal has been achieved or not achieved?)
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound

The following goals were elevated as the most important:

- Policy makers understand COO as an important and essential part of BSK levy renewal
- COO is known by others (policymakers, funders, potential partners) in order to align their goals and approaches with ours.
- Goals themes: Influence, Funding, Leverage

Audience Mapping

We have received a number of core target audiences that are in COO's universe but have not yet organized them in terms of how they should be communicated to. Our session discussed naming these core audiences while mapping them onto an 'audience onion,' concentric circles that plot various different audiences and where they are in proximity and relationship to COO, and how much power they have in relation to our goals. These audiences were mapped as such, with participants placing sticky notes for where specific audiences should be placed.

Immediate Funding Goal Audiences

DECISION-MAKERS:
- King County Council
- Mayors and council members from King County cities

INFLUENCERS:
- Community groups leaders
- BSK staff and leadership
- King County Council staff
- Other funders

COO Alignment Goal Audiences

DECISION-MAKERS
- Other funders
- King County agencies leadership
- Policymakers

INFLUENCERS
- Existing and potential community partners
- BSK staff and leadership
- COO Governance Group

Ladder of Engagement

Utilizing a ladder of engagement assumes that not every audience will be ready to act upon the specific action we'd like them to do, particularly if the barrier is rather high and the audience needs some context and understanding of the issue or the organization. This ladder of engagement lays out the following steps:

- Awareness—At this stage the audience is learning who is COO, what you do and what issues you are addressing.

- Acceptance—The audience is becoming convinced that the issues that you are addressing and seeking funding for are urgent and deserve more resources
- Action—The audience is ready to take a specific action that will advance your goal
- Advocate—The audience is satisfied with the action they took and is willing to tell others about COO.

Audiences According to Ladder of Engagement

Below is an Audience Engagement Messenger Mapping Worksheet that was provided to the COO group, in parts where the group did not fill in, Resource Media provided recommendations.

As a reminder, the goals the group was responding to were:

1) Policymakers understand COO and become champions for growing, sustaining and leveraging funding;

2) COO is known by others (funders, potential partners, decision-makers) – who we are, what we do and why we do it – in order to influence, leverage and align others to our vision and approach.

AWARENESS—who needs to get more generally aware of COO?	ACCEPTANCE—who needs to be persuaded?	ACTION—whose specific decisions or actions will make a major difference	ADVOCATE—who's most likely to be our champion?
Public sector: Electeds and staff in eastside, S. King County, City of Seattle; Dept heads, Housing, Econ Development **Philanthropy:** Gates, Medina, Vulcan, JPMorgan, Bank of America, United Way, Beneficial State Bank **Potential Partners:** CDFIs such as Craft 3, LISC, Enterprise, HealthierHere, hospitals and health systems, higher education **Private Sector:** Chamber of Commerce, Challenge Seattle	**Public sector:** King County Council with BSK/COO relationship, King County Dept. of Natural Resources & Parks **Philanthropy**: Schultz Foundation, Satterberg Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Foundation	**Public sector:** BSK leadership, DCHS leadership, County Council **Philanthropy:** Ballmer Group **Other partners:** Sound Cities Association	**Public Sector:** Cty Executive should be a vocal champion; All cities who have a COO site **Philanthropy:** Seattle Fdn, Ballmer **Higher Ed:** UW—getting them on board and becoming a champion **Internal**: Community partners (COO grantees), group members, Public Health leadership **Other partners**: 4 culture, City of Seattle EDI staff, The Urban Institute

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RESOURCE MEDIA

Effective Messengers

Sometimes it's not just what is said, but who is saying it, that makes for an effective communications strategy. Here we'll have a discussion about who needs specific messengers for effective communications. Some community audiences may be distrustful of certain sectors of messengers, just because of who they're affiliated with (perhaps government or foundation). Others have continually relied upon certain audiences and have shut out others purposefully (with great harm) and things need to be shaken up a bit. Sometimes unlikely alliances can make a statement that something is not as controversial as one might think. We have brainstormed which messengers would be important to engage, are not part of our orbit yet but could be with more concerted outreach.

These specific messengers are the ones most available to COO, and have been matched up to phases and audience targets, as having the most potential for being effective communicators. These are *subject to change* after checking with the outreach capacity and potential with each group. But overall, think about the following criteria when selecting messengers/spokespeople for outreach:

● Select someone who can speak in detail and authentically to the target audience, matched up to the phase of communications they are in. If an audience needs general awareness messaging, select a messenger who can convey a vision at a broad level. If in the acceptance phase, choose someone who can go into details and answer questions.
● Consider who the target audience is "in community with," who they trust based on past experiences and their job role
● Consider the power of fresh perspectives and teaming up, leveraging COO's cross-sector approach

MESSENGERS TO BUILD AWARENESS	MESSENGERS TO BUILD ACCEPTANCE	MESSENGERS TO SPUR ACTION	MESSENGERS TO ENCOURAGE ADVOCACY
COO GG members and staff COO grantees; staff and board members PH and DCHS leadership Seattle Foundation leadership	BSK/COO staff COO grantees matched to specific geographic leadership Current funders	BSK, COO leadership Exec's office	Current COO partners Current COO funders COO staff

Tactics

There are a number of different ways to communicate with our core audiences, including one on one briefings, videos, community events, blogs, media coverage, etc. We'll take everything we've learned from the strategic communications planning and put it all together:

- What tactics reach our target audiences in a timely way?
- What tactics will help desired messengers shine?
- Which tactics show off the story we want to tell about specific problems and solutions, and the core values of COO?

Below are some recommended tactics to employ, matched to the various ladder of engagement phases:

FOR IMMEDIATE FUNDING GOAL:

Awareness
- Elevator pitch
- Use of narrative analogy
- News coverage; feature stories
- Social media posts
- Video
- Briefing/meeting

Acceptance
- E-newsletter content with key messages
- Opinion pieces
- 2nd/3rd briefing/meeting
- Fact sheet
- Blog post
- News coverage; timely hook

Action
- Tailored email with call to action
- Social media post with @mention or call to action
- Letter writing

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RESOURCE MEDIA

Advocacy

- Organizing call/webinar
- Regular private briefings

FOR SUSTAINED INFLUENCE GOAL:

Awareness

- Elevator pitch
- Video of success stories
- Social media posts with visuals
- News coverage, feature stories
- Use of narrative analogy

Acceptance

- Case for support
- Targeted emails with invitation to connect
- Briefing/meeting
- Blog posts and think pieces

Action

- Invitation for meetings with funders
- Calls for applications/proposals/services containing key messaging

Advocacy

- Renewal conversations and proposals that uplift new solutions and actors
- Collaboration and networking with COO leadership

Hopes for COO's Future

We hope that this narrative, messaging and strategic communications planning offer some guiding insight, motivation and ease in planning for fatigued community members and groups, and provide an incisive communications roadmap for "keeping on keeping on." With the stark needs to build up and build back communities, deepen relationships and remove inequities, there are enormous opportunities to put these communications tools to work.

COO Proposed Modifications

Strategy (ies)	Recommended Refinements
Place-based and cultural community partnerships	Name change to reflect investments in places and in cultural- and identity-based communities (formerly, *Places: Awards to Community Partnerships)* Change: Prioritize efforts in place-based communities that rank in **the lowest 20th percentile of composite index** for health and well-being indicators in places; and cultural and identity-based communities most adversely affected by inequities.
Systems and Policy Change	Name change: Abbreviated to Systems and Policy Change (formerly Institutional*, Systems and Policy Change*). Change: Integrate and align program approaches with Sustain the Gain's Healthy and Safe Environments program.
Learning Community	Change: Remove the specific categorical funding outlined in first Implementation Plan to provide greater clarity in purpose and responsiveness to community-driven solutions.

Place-based & Cultural Community Partnerships

The **existing nine place-based** and cultural community partnerships are eligible for contract extensions and may submit a proposal for up to one-year of renewed funding, **January through December 2022**.

There would be **no new partnerships funded** until 2023.

There will be an **open Request for Proposal process in mid-2022** in which existing partnership and new applicants may apply for a multi-year commitment of funding, **beginning January 2023-2027.**

Rationale

o Partnerships will continue to build momentum and achieve impact from their work.

o Critical work underway with partnerships that is informing how COO should supports this work in the future.

o Increases ability for COO to align its funding commitments and cycles across its strategy areas.

Place-based & Cultural Community Partnerships

COO is making investments in communities with the greatest opportunity for closing health and well-being disparities **by race and by place.**

Therefore, COO will <u>prioritize</u> its multi-year funding commitments for partnerships that represent:

- **Identity-based communities** who are most adversely impacted by health, social, economic, and racial inequities. COO seeks to support solutions that positively impact conditions in Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, and within communities with shared and multiple cultural identities.

- **Place-based communities** in where there is a confluence of indicators pointing to the most disparate health and well-being outcomes in King County. Priority is for communities ranking in the *top quintile (20th percent), the greatest opportunity areas for improving health, well-being conditions.*

Place-based & Cultural Community Partnerships
Determining eligibility for funding

Allow for applications that demonstrate communities are adversely impacted by inequities, where COO composite index data may not be available.

- **Isolated, Rural Communities** with significant disparities compared to areas in which they are located and have other indicators of poor health/well-being outcomes would be eligible.

- **Identify-based communities** with evidence of significant disparities in health/wellbeing would also be eligible.

Revised Proposal: Funding by Strategy

Best Starts – COO Current Strategy	% of total	Proposed	Implementation Plan original estimate
Place-based and Cultural Community Partnerships	57%	**40% to 45%**	40% to 50%
Institutional, Systems & Policy Change	27%	**35% to 40%**	25% to 35%
Learning Community	17%	**15% to 20%**	15% to 25%

> *The Best Starts Implementation Plan includes descriptions of the Governance Group (pp 1-2) and a description of the Communities of Opportunity strategy area, changes/modifications to the strategy (pp 3-4) and strategy details (pp. 5-9).*
>
> *This confidential draft is provided to the Governance Group. The draft plan is being reviewed by Best Starts, DCHS and PHSKC leadership. Format and content are subject to change.*

Background

Governance Boards

Children and Youth Advisory Board

King County Ordinance 18217[1] established the Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) in January 2016 to oversee *Best Starts* and the Youth Action Plan (YAP).[2] The CYAB represents an array of King County residents with geographically and culturally diverse perspectives. Executive Constantine appointed, and the King County Council confirmed, these 40 experts, stakeholders, researchers, and community leaders. The CYAB serves in an oversight and advisory role, providing recommendations on the distribution of *Best Starts* funds, and works with the *Best Starts* team to ensure that all communities in King County have a voice.

The CYAB developed an equity statement in April 2016, which informed the 2016–2022 King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.[3] CYAB members use the statement to help shape their oversight of *Best Starts* and to advise the County Executive and County Council. The CYAB holds *Best Starts* accountable to bringing equity to the forefront of its work. The CYAB's equity statement continues to be a pillar for *Best Starts.*

- Equity is an ardent journey toward well-being as defined by the affected.
- Equity demands sacrifice and redistribution of power and resources in order to dismantle systems of oppression, heal continuing wounds, and realize justice.
- To achieve equity and social justice, we must first root out deeply entrenched systems of racism.
- Equity proactively builds strong foundations of agency, is vigilant for unintended consequences, and boldly aspires to be restorative.
- Equity is disruptive and uncomfortable and not voluntary.
- Equity is fundamental to the community we want to build.

The CYAB has helped shape *Best Starts'* successes for children, families, and communities of King County by:

- Guiding the creation of the *Best Starts for Kids* Implementation Plan.
- Adopting the Children and Youth Equity statement for its own governance and for guiding *Best Starts* Implementation.
- Influencing the language adopted in the 2016 King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.
- Informing *Best Starts'* RFPs and funding decisions with expertise on and representation from all walks of life, and with geographically and culturally diverse perspectives.

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[1]Children and Youth Advisory Board. [LINK]

[2] King County Youth Action Plan Task Force (2015). King County *Youth Action Plan*. [LINK]

[3] King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, 2016-2022. [LINK

- Providing strategic guidance for the *Best Starts* Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan (Motion 14979)[4].
- Forming a youth justice committee, which has advised the County Executive and County Council on developing budgets that are restorative and redistribute power. This includes heeding the call to redistribute funds from law enforcement and the justice system to community-led support for healing, prevention, and restorative justice, via a public health approach.
- Providing guidance and ongoing oversight to the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account (PSTAA) Implementation Plan, regarding education outcomes for children and youth.
- Fostering powerful youth and young adult participation on the CYAB Youth Leaders Committee, which is undertaking a youth bill of rights and building a youth health board.

Communities of Opportunity Governance Group

The Communities of Opportunity (COO) Governance Group (GG), serves as the COO *Best Starts* Advisory Board, as established by Ordinance 18442[5] updating K.C.C. chapter 2A.300. The GG ensures that COO investments are consistent with levy requirements, effective, and transparent to the public and takes on the responsibility for the resource allocation and decisions on funding awards made by COO.

As a model for shared power and decision making, the GG includes a majority of members from communities, with other appointees who represent County government and philanthropy. The GG advises COO on the development and implementation of strategies, as guided by the values of authentic community engagement, equity, respect, and partnership.

The GG (and its predecessor, the COO *Interim Governance Group*), established a set of Guiding Principles which have shaped the ways that COO designs and implements its programs, creates relationships with stakeholders and partners, and uplifts the strengths and power within communities. Equity, particularly racial equity, remains a core principle and value for the GG and their resolve, commitment and strong leadership have contributed to:

- Co-designing and implementing of strategies and investments in (a) place-based and cultural community partnerships, (b) systems and policy change, and (c) shared learning and capacity building to put equity into action.
- Engaging with its stakeholders and community partners in procurement processes, orientation and training sessions, evaluation design, reviews of data and reporting, learning sessions, and summits to showcase partners' successes.
- Leveraging public and private resources and financial commitments to support COO-funded strategies and projects.
- Leading the region in the examination of regional public policy problems and solutions.[6]
- Driving systems change through a cross-sector, multisite approach to advance racial equity and shift power.

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[4] Motion 14979, King County Council (2016) [LINK]
[5] Ordinance 18422, King County Council (2016) LINK
[6] The Municipal League Foundation awarded Communities of Opportunity with its 2018 James R. Ellis Regional Leadership Award

Introduction to Strategies

The theoretical framework for *Best Starts* and its goals remain constant from the original levy to the next. Science and experience lay out a clear blueprint for what children and families need to thrive and grow. According to scientific research, if children are to reach Best Starts' goal of growing up happy and thriving, they need positive activities in their life. The below strategies are organized by Investing Early (0-5), Sustain the Gain (5-24), Communities of Opportunity (COO), Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative, and new programming.

Communities of Opportunity

Communities of Opportunity (COO) influences the ways in which public and private resources are marshalled, aligning with the strengths and assets of communities toward greater equity in King County. While the average measure of quality of life health factors are among the highest in the country, a person's zip code, income, and race are major predictors of their chances of living well and thriving.

To help change this trajectory, Communities of Opportunity was created in 2014 through a partnership between King County and Seattle Foundation to improve health, social, economic, and racial outcomes by focusing on places, policies, and system changes. COO has grown to become a network of residents, communities, decision-makers, and funders who believe every community can be a healthy, thriving community and that equity and racial justice are both necessary and achievable. Best Starts understands that the conditions in communities play an important role in contributing to healthy, thriving children and families.

Low-income communities and communities of color have not experienced the same access to opportunities and their voices and priorities have been marginalized and disregarded.[7] COO believes the most meaningful, just, and sustainable solutions are those that are generated in partnership with these communities who know what they need to be healthy and thrive. By focusing on building power within communities, COO supports capacity of community-based groups who are working at intersection of health, housing, economic resiliency, and community connections. COO addresses inequities that exist across the region so that communities with the most to gain can thrive, on the evidence that gains made in those communities will benefit the social and economic well-being of the entire region.

COO's approach is based on science and community input. At the heart of COO's theoretical framework for change are three, mutually reinforcing strategies:

Partnerships in place-based and cultural communities: Supporting local solutions to positively impact community conditions.

Policies and systems change: Creating and sustaining equity through mobilizing community members, educating stakeholders and decision-makers, building power, and advocating for change.

Capacity building for and innovation by community-based groups: Testing innovative models in a learning community, while leveraging the power of collective knowledge to accelerate change.

7

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (COO)

Racial equity has been at the core of COO's work since its inception. COO is more resolute in its commitment to dismantling institutional racism and systems that perpetuate white supremacy. The racial equity divide is exacerbated by health and economic impacts of the global pandemic. COO will increase its support to educating, organizing, and advocacy by and for communities of color. COO advances community-based priorities, tapping into the strengths, expertise, and leadership within communities to promote equitable, inclusive, healthy, and thriving communities.

Best Starts intends to continue to fund strategies from Best Starts 1.0 in Best Starts 2.0 based upon community feedback and strong outcomes. Figure 11 below summarizes where strategy detail can be found as required by Ordinance 19267[8]*Consider and promote harmony with the previous Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan to Ordinance 18373[9], specifically describing which strategies from the previous Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan shall continue in the proposed Best Starts for Kids implementation plan.*

Figure 11: Recommended Strategy Refinements

Strategy (ies)	Recommended Refinements	Details on page(s)
Place-based and cultural community partnerships	Name change to reflect investments in places and in cultural- and identity-based communities (formerly, *Places: Awards to Community Partnerships*) Change: Prioritize efforts in place-based communities that rank in **the lowest 20th percentile of composite index** for health and well-being indicators in places; and cultural and identity-based communities most adversely affected by inequities.	Pg. ###
Systems and Policy Change	Name change: Abbreviated to Systems and Policy Change (formerly Institutional*, Systems and Policy Change*).	Pg. ###

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[8] Ordinance 19267, Metropolitan King County Council (2021) [LINK]
[9] Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan (2016) [LINK]

	Change: Integrate and align program approaches with Sustain the Gain's Healthy and Safe Environments program.	
Learning Community	Change: Remove the specific categorical funding outlined in first Implementation Plan to provide greater clarity in purpose and responsiveness to community-driven solutions.	Pg. ###

Figure 12

Funded strategies	Pages
Place -based and Cultural Community Partnerships	*Pg. 105*
Systems and Policy Change	*Pg. 106*
Learning Community - Capacity Building and Innovations	*Pg. 107*

How we are going to measure success (indicators)

The goal of these strategies is to contribute to the headline (also known as population level) and secondary indicators listed below through the funded programs and the hard work of community organizations. *Best Starts* programs are not solely responsible for changes in these indicators, but it stands to reason that investing in particular areas will support these goals

Communities of Opportunity Headline Indicators

- Households earning a living wage, above 200 percent of poverty
- Youth and young adults who are in school or employed
- Adults employed / in civilian work force
- Youth who have an adult to turn to for help
- Engagement in civic activities
- Good to excellent health (self-reported)
- Renter households paying less than 30% of income on housing
- Renter households paying less than 50% of income on housing
- Involuntary residential displacement (measured by residential migration)

All funded programs will have an evaluation plan, like Best Starts 1.0. Please see page 62 for a more detailed evaluation discussion

Communities of Opportunity Implementation Details

Estimated funding levels for all program strategies:
2022: $
2023-2027 total funding
 $

COO works to secure additional funding sources to its program strategies; thus, it is important to retain flexibility in allocating amounts to the program areas. In addition, COO works in an adaptive model to develop community-centered innovations. Such adaptive work may need flexibility in investment areas as learning progresses, and as needs for specific types of investment may vary in a given year. Estimated funding percentage ranges are proposed for each of the program areas for contracts (staff/administrative costs for COO are excluded).

Estimated funding levels: #% to #% of COO Best Starts total funding

> **Place-based and Cultural Community Partnerships (formerly Places: Awards to Community Partnerships)**

Description:
The patterns of inequities in King County can be mapped across both a racial and a geographic landscape, reflecting a history of discrimination and structural racism. Patterns with boundaries drawn by policies, institutional practices, and other norms working in various, often reinforcing ways that severely limit access to opportunity. Race and place cannot be ignored in the solutions for establishing access to opportunities of all children, youth, and families. COO recommends continuing to invest in communities with the greatest opportunity for closing health and well-being disparities by race and by place. Therefore, COO will **prioritize** its multi-year funding commitments for partnerships that are representative of:

- **Cultural and identify-based communities** who are most adversely impacted by health, social, economic, and racial inequities. COO seeks to support solutions that positively impact conditions, particularly in Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, and among people with low-incomes, immigrants and refugee communities, people with disabilities, nongender conforming communities.

- **Place-based communities** where there are a confluence of indicators pointing to the most disparate health and well-being outcomes in King County. Priority for communities ranking in the lowest *quintile for health and well-being.* These areas will be considered having the greatest opportunity to close the gaps that exist –based on COO composite index of health and well-being indicators.[10]

  Isolated rural communities with significant disparities compared to areas in which they are located and have other indicators of poor health and/or well-being would be eligible for funding.

COO will use its composite index as tool for targeting its resources to communities where access to opportunities are limited and lagging compared to other communities across the County. The indicator scores were used for eligibility for place-based community partnerships, by ranking and mapping composite scores by census tracts. Because quantitative data sources are limited in their ability to capture all health/well-being disparities that communities experience, COO

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[10]COO establishes eligibility for place-based partnerships in communities with the most to gain: the greatest health and well-being inequities, based on a composite index combining 10 indicators of health and well-being (a composite scoring that is mapped by Census Tracts). [link to Tableau visualization/map] [composite is being updated]

encourages applicants to provide qualitative data and other quantitative data that demonstrates disparate conditions in health, economic, and social well-being.

COO believes that collaborative and cross-sector partnerships are necessary to create and sustain long-term outcomes. COO directs its support to coalitions and collaborative partnerships led by and for the communities they are representing. These partnerships develop a shared vision, with a specific agenda and goals for implementing change strategies that impact the health and well-being of their communities.

Proposed Refinements:
- Prioritize efforts in place-based communities that rank in **the lowest 20th percentile of composite index** health and well-being indicators for places; and for cultural and identity-based communities most adversely affected by inequities, using composite index scores as a guide. The first three, 'original' place-based site partnerships selected by COO met this criterion. The first implementation plan expanded eligibility to include eligibility to communities that in the lowest 40th percentile. There are not sufficient resources to serve all communities that fall within these ranges, therefore, COO is limiting its resources to those communities that do not have the same access to opportunities for health, economic resiliency, safe and affordable housing, and community connections.
- Name change to reflect that partnerships include both place-based and cultural communities (formerly Place: Awards to Community Partnerships)

Rationale:
The health and well-being of children, youth, and families is directly impacted by whether they live in strong, stable, inclusive, and supportive communities. While average measures of quality of life, social, and health factors in King County are among the highest in the country, these averages mask stark differences by **place**, income, **race, and ethnicity**. From community to community, access to safe and affordable housing, health, economic opportunities vary widely. [11]

Many present-day policies and practices continue to build upon and support systems that favor the health and economic prosperity of White individuals at the expense of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. The effects of systemic racism and chronic stress accumulate over a lifetime. Examples from snapshots across the lifespan of Black King County residents highlight the disproportionate impact of how racial discrimination and systematically oppressive policies and practices continue to have local impacts in the lives of Black residents compared to White residents in King County. In King County, Black adults are more than four times as likely to run out of food without money to purchase more than White adults; In Seattle, Black household mean net worth is $23,000 which is only 5% of White household median net worth, $456,000. [12]

Connection to Indicators and Theoretical Framework:
- Households earning a living wage, above 200 percent of poverty
- Youth and young adults who are in school or employed
- Adults employed / in civilian work force
- Youth who have an adult to turn to for help

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[11] Public Health - Seattle & King County, City Health Profiles, https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/data/city-health-profiles.aspx; and The Race Gap in King County: Racism as a Public Health Crisis: https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/data/race-gaps.aspx
[12] The Race Gap in King County: Racism as a Public Health Crisis - King County, November 2020 [LINK]

- Engagement in civic activities
- Good to excellent health (self-reported)
- Renter households paying less than 30% and households paying less than 50% of income on housing
- Involuntary residential displacement (measured by residential migration)

Proposed Timeline
Currently funded partnerships will be eligible for funding renewal, process beginning in 3rd quarter 2021. New funding cycle to beginning in 2nd quarter of 2022 open to new partnerships.

Systems & Policy Change (formerly Institutional, Systems and Policy Change)
Estimated funding levels: #% to #% of COO Best Starts total funding

Description
COO investments build power in communities to reform the institutions, systems and policies that create and perpetuate inequities in specific places and throughout the entire region. COO supports community-engaged or community-led efforts to transform systems and policies for stronger community connections, economic opportunity, better health, and/or housing that will decrease and/or prevent continued inequity in low-income communities and communities of color in King County.

COO's goals for this funding are to:
1. Increase the readiness and ability of groups led by communities most affected by inequity across King County, to inform, improve and guide implementation of systems and policies.
2. Support community-led efforts well positioned to inform, improve, or guide implementation of specific systems and policies that contribute to better community connections, economic opportunity, health, and housing; and
3. Increase connection, relationship and partnerships among grantees engaging in systems and policy change work, as well as other COO efforts.

Through this program strategy, COO supports efforts that are community based, led by and for people most impacted by inequity. Resources are prioritized to communities where there are the greatest inequities: communities of color, native and indigenous communities, and other marginalized communities, and organizations working at the intersection of racial justice and other inequities. The strategy recognizes that systems and policy work require time and does not follow a linear path, therefore COO funds activities across a spectrum of policy change processes. It emphasizes power-building over actions achieved without empowering communities to shift conditions that hold inequitable conditions in place: policies, practices, resources, and power.

COO will coordinate investments to reform the institutions, systems and policies that create and perpetuate inequities in specific places and throughout the entire region. Over time, these policy changes can take hold across the region. The COO theory of change depends on this work taking place concurrently and with shared accountability across partners.

Proposed Refinements:
- Name change from "Institutional, Systems, and Policy Change" to Systems and Policy Change.
- Change: Align and integrate Best Starts Healthy & Safe Environments with COO's Systems & Policy Change efforts. This change will increase the connection between Best Starts programs focused on policy, systems and environment changes and opportunities for coordinated approaches to youth-focused and youth-led projects.

The alignment will enhance collaboration and learning, as well as increase opportunities for leveraging resources and positive outcomes for communities.

Rationale:

The inequities that exist due to generations of public policies and practices that allocate benefit and burden in ways that have favored some while disfavoring and oppressing others are well-documented. Centering the voices of Black, African American, Indigenous, and other People of Color in investments and program decisions is the way for King County to build new anti-racists, pro-equity public policies and practices that will promote comprehensive well-being for the entire community.

Connection to Indicators and Theoretical Framework:

- Engagement in civic activities
- Households earning a living wage, above 200 percent of poverty
- Youth and young adults who are in school or employed
- Adults employed / in civilian work force
- Youth who have an adult to turn to for help
- Engagement in civic activities
- Good to excellent health (self-reported)
- Renter households paying less than 30% and households paying less than 50% of income on housing
- Involuntary residential displacement (measured by residential migration)

Proposed Timeline:

Process for renewal of some existing contracts in 4th quarter of 2021. RFP release in 2022 and subsequent years for the levy.

Learning Community
Estimated funding levels: #% to #% of COO Best Starts total funding

Description:

The COO Learning Community leverages the power of collective knowledge to accelerate change. COO's investments support community innovation and bold ideas, building evidence on the factors promoting health and well-being. The Learning Community supports community stakeholders engaging in shared learning and practice innovative solutions. Under the Learning Community model, COO provides resources to support learning opportunities bringing people together across sectors, places, and projects in activities to advance skills, knowledge, and strategies to impact COO result areas through:

- Critical Connections: Building the relationships, collective vision, and momentum for systemic change across sectors, geographies, and silos.
- Capacity Building: Supporting leadership development, organizational and partnership infrastructure, and sustained civic capacity to actualize equity – policy after policy, issue after issue, year after year.
- Innovations: Creating new tools and models to actualize the thriving communities we envision.

A learning community or community of shared practice creates spaces (both actual and virtual) for communities and organizations to share the work they have undertaken. These spaces will foster collaboration across places and among

organizations and/or actors. More broadly, the learning community will facilitate momentum-building at a regional level.

Engaging in shared learning with a consistent group over a period of time, is an important strategy to building deep content knowledge, adaptation of skills, and connections to peers that will continue to grow. Working and learning in a cohort, enables leaders, organizations, and partnerships to share ideas and test new concepts, be introduced to new experiences, while putting their skills into practice. The hope and intention are that these relationships will accompany participants as they transition in and out of the learning space and create bonds where peers continue to reach out to one another, work alongside as they practice the learnings in real settings.

COO cohorts take on opportunities to challenge the dominant frameworks and explore ways to shift them to promote and sustain equitable and thriving communities. In some cases, the cohorts are sharing or developing new tools, such as assessments and curriculums that can benefit the broader community.

Through this strategy Best Starts will continue capacity building, including supporting leadership development, organizational and partnership infrastructure, and sustained civic capacity to actualize equity. COO's capacity building includes four elements designed to reinforce one another: basic operational stability, knowledge of issues and landscape, strong partnerships, and building power. The Learning Community will continue to offer capacity building through activities, and offerings designed in response to needs and interests expressed by community-stakeholders. Capacity building will be focused on funded partners and other organizations/groups working on related and aligned efforts.

Proposed Refinements:
COO will remove the funding categories that were described in the in the first Implementation Plan for the Learning Community. There were three categories for which activities and funding would be organized: (a) Strategic Innovations to Benefit COO Communities; (b) Forums; and (c) Technical Assistance. These initial groupings were conceptual placeholders and did not prove to be useful ways to organize resources or efforts. As COO began co-designing activities with community stakeholders through research, interviews, and group discussions, COO has redefined its Learning Community activities. These approaches have been co-designed to be adaptive and responsive in ways that original sub-funding categories constrained opportunities for innovation.

Rationale:
The Learning Community engages individuals and organizations across King County to create stronger relationships that will increase inclusion and belonging, civic and social engagement so that all communities can be healthy and thriving. This program strategy builds the foundation for shared vision that brings people together to transform systems and policies to be equitable and anti-racist.
Investments through this strategy build power and capacity of community-based organizations, support the development of community leadership, expand community ownership and anti-displacement strategies, research, and innovative pilots. These activities and investments contribute to evidence on the factors that impact and improve health and well-being conditions in communities and put that knowledge into action.