



**COMMISSION  
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**Item No.** 7b

**BRIEFING ITEM**

**Date of Meeting** July 14, 2020

**DATE:** July 7, 2020  
**TO:** Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director  
**FROM:** Luis Navarro, Director, Workforce Development Programs  
**SUBJECT:** Workforce Development Strategic Plan, 2021-2023

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the request of the Port of Seattle Commission special committee on equity and workforce development, staff in the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI) has been developing a three-year Workforce Development Strategic Plan for 2021-2023 (Strategic Plan). The plan development was guided by the Port's Century Agenda and key provisions from the Workforce Development Policy Directive (Policy Directive) adopted in June 2020, and the plan ensures that the Port's investments in workforce development and related activities produce outcomes that support a skilled workforce in Port related industries, and that workforce development programs create equitable access for all. The plan includes a regional landscape analysis, an in-depth review of results of investments (ROI) and outcomes in workforce development for 2015-2019, and finally the proposed investments for 2021-2023.

**BACKGROUND**

On June 23, 2020, the Port Commission adopted a Policy Directive with the purpose of fulfilling the Century Agenda strategic objectives of increasing equitable access for workers in port-related economic activities in maritime, aviation, construction trades, green careers, and other port related economic industries and activities. The Policy Directive guided the workforce development efforts of the Port of Seattle to benefit workers, Port customers and tenants, and port-related economic activities in near port communities in King County and the general area.

The Policy Directive provides guidance in two key provisions:

- **Goal 1:** Increase Equitable Access to Economic Prosperity. Increase equitable workforce access for the trades in port-related economic activities, with an emphasis on expanding opportunities to near-port communities, which are most disproportionately impacted. Port staff will develop program priorities, actions, benchmarks, and metrics for success.
- **Goal 2:** Leverage Port Impact and Innovation. Identify and prioritize opportunities for leadership to influence and promote a sector-based approach to workforce development centered on equity, diversity and inclusion.

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### **ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

The team reviewed the guiding principles provided by the Port Commission and conducted an in-depth analysis of past investments and obtained feedback from internal and external stakeholders to develop strategies, activities, targets and expected outcomes for 2021-2023.

The following are the main priorities of the Workforce Development Strategic Plan:

- Clear strategies and activities associated with each strategy that create opportunities for workers to acquire the skills, experience, and the education they need to secure increasingly complex and better compensated jobs and careers
- Provide equitable access to training and career pathways opportunities
- Leverage Port investments by partnering with other public agencies and industry stakeholders
- Ensure that a qualified team of Port staff and external subject matter experts is available and supported with the appropriate resources and investments to deliver on the promise of a more inclusive and equitable workforce pipeline in Port related industries

The following are the elements of the Strategic Plan:

- Results of Port investments (2015-2019)
- COVID-19 community impacts
- Community engagement
- Landscape analysis
- Regional economy and labor market assessment
- Regional workforce development system analysis
- Port sectors strategies

### **PORT INVESTMENTS**

An independent analysis of the *Results of Investments* (ROI) for 2015-2019 conducted by consultant Bob Watrus, a workforce development expert hired by the Port to support the Strategic Plan, shows that positive outcomes were obtained in the various sectors supported by Port investments. The ROI report is presented in the categories of impact, influence, and leverage. During this time period, the Port invested \$6.5 million in workforce development, and the ROI is as follows:

- **Port Investment**, \$6,516,090 in workforce development in aviation, maritime, construction and strategic partnerships in the period 2015-2019.

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- **Impact**, \$5,640,023 was invested by the Port in workforce development programs in aviation, construction, maritime, and K-12 career connected learning.
- **Influence** – \$747,702 was invested in strategic partnerships and policy/system change; this is in addition to Port WFD staff time dedicated to this work. Results included the creation of the Regional Trades Partnership made up of regional public owners to develop a pipeline of skilled construction workers to help meet current and future needs driven by Port and other public infrastructure projects; in addition, the creation of the Youth Maritime Collaborative made up of 20 youth serving organizations with a focus on low-income youth and youth of color—maritime career awareness and career connected learning activities; including middle and high school teacher professional development and curriculum development tied to port-related sectors, in partnership with the Washington Alliance for Better Schools.
- **Results** – The port investments supported 9,824 job placements; 1,442 training completions; and 1,303 youth participating in experiential learning events. An additional \$128,365 was invested in new program planning and development.
- **Leverage** – Port investments in WFD resulted in over \$10 million in additional public and private funding which was leveraged to support workforce developments efforts in port-related sectors. This is a ratio of 1.5 of leveraged Port funds.

### ***COVID-19 Impact and Recovery Support***

The Strategic Plan includes specific COVID-19 response efforts targeted to benefit individuals in the communities most impacted. Each Port sector includes specific strategies and activities, such as targeted training and access to employment opportunities in Port industries. We continue to learn about the disruptive impact that COVID-19 has had on the Seattle-King County economy and labor market with over 300,000 workers in the region filing for unemployment claims in a nine-week period.

An analysis of these claims from the Seattle metro area, conducted by the Seattle Jobs Initiative, shows that:

- “Not all industries are equally affected by the COVID-19-driven recession, and within industries, not all occupations are equally affected.” In port-related industries, UI claims account for 35 percent of pre-COVID-19 jobs in construction and 22 percent in transportation and warehousing.
- “The hardest hit occupations are those that are low-paying, where workers are close to other people, and there is no option of telecommuting.”

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- “Workers of color, younger workers, and those with lower educational attainment have both sustained more job losses in the first wave of COVID-19 layoffs and are overrepresented in the essential workforce.”

Staff in OEDI also conducted a survey in May 2020, and results show the impact COVID-19 is having on the Port’s community workforce development partners – their ability to carry out workforce development programs, the demand for services and supports, and how these services and supports are provided. Survey highlights include:

- Most respondents reported that COVID-19 has had either a significant or severe impact on their ability to carry out their workforce development programs.
- Most respondents reported having experienced a significant increase in requests for financial support and unemployment support.
- Respondents reported seeing as the greatest needs right now: emergency assistance (financial assistance, food assistance, and rental assistance), help accessing services and support, and jobs.
- Most respondents reported providing services and supports online/virtually (e.g., online classes, online help with unemployment services, virtual help and telephone one-on-one assistance with job search and Basic Food Employment and Training, etc.). Here, issues include digital literacy, internet access, and language barriers.

Based on the feedback from community partners the team proposed the following strategies and activities in the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan related to COVID-19 response and recovery:

- Establish COVID-19 roundtable(s) with workforce development stakeholders (including Port aviation, construction, and maritime divisions) to assess the effects of COVID-19 on communities of color and near port communities. This includes gathering quantitative and qualitative data on community impacts from partners (e.g., quarterly surveys), discussing findings, and using findings to guide the Port’s COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.
- Review labor market data for COVID-19 impacts on aviation, construction trades, maritime, and green jobs, discuss findings with partners and stakeholders and learn about direct impacts on communities through the roundtable, and identify gaps to determine where direct investment would be most impactful.
- Support COVID-19 response and recovery legislation at the federal, state, and local levels with information on the impact of COVID-19 on the Port and port-related industries and a special emphasis on relief for disproportionately impacted communities.
- Make adjustments to the Port’s workforce development programs based on research on the impact of COVID-19 on aviation, construction trades, maritime, and green jobs as

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well as survey data and roundtable discussions (e.g., targeting of career pathways; partners and service providers; services and supports, including wrap-around supports; communities; and investments).

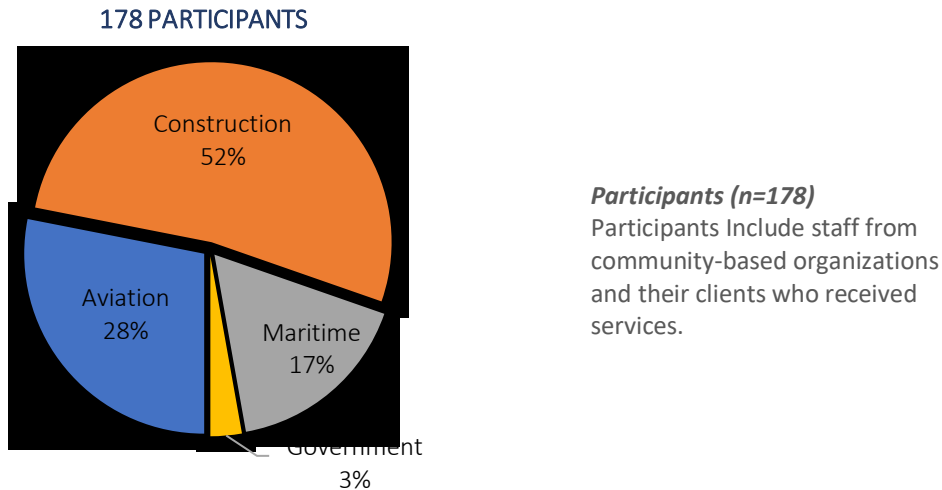
### ***Community Engagement***

During the plan development process, staff had significant engagement with over two-hundred internal and external workforce development stakeholders including; Port staff, community-based organizations, and individuals who received services from those organizations, also labor and industry partners. The feedback informed many of the proposed strategies. Staff in OEDI continue to meet at regular intervals with stakeholders to ensure that we are providing transparency and accountability. A community report provided key information that informed the Strategic Plan. The main themes of the community report include requests for:

- **Incorporate outreach.** Outreach to historically underrepresented populations and underserved, disproportionately impacted communities as part of workforce development strategies and programs (e.g., construction worker outreach, training, and retention services; and maritime career awareness and access).
- **Work with regional partners.** Work at both the program and systems levels (e.g., planning, developing, and implementing career pathway programs in partnership with education and training providers, community-based organizations, and industry partners; collaborating with other regional public owners such as the City of Seattle and King County to build a skilled construction trades pipeline; etc.).
- **Support development of equitable career pathways.** Support programs in the port-related industries of aviation, construction trades, maritime, and green jobs.
- **Engage industry partners.** Work and collaborate with industry in planning, developing, and implementing career pathway programs, including upskill/backfill.
- **Build wrap-around services.** Ensure that wrap around services are built into the Port's WFD contracts with community partners to increase retention and completion.
- **Promote creation of a regional fund.** Support a regional fund for wrap-around services and other essential services and supports.
- **Review Port policies and recommend changes.** Ensure that policies address issues and concerns raised by community partners regarding procurement and contracting and establish a feedback loop system to get their input on an ongoing basis.
- **Evaluate and share results.** Share results and outcomes of workforce development contracts, as part of transparency and continuous improvement.

The following is a graphical representation of the community sessions:

(table 1)



### **Landscape Analysis**

The 2021-2023 Strategic Plan considers an assessment of the regional economy and labor market, with a focus on port-related industries and occupations; input from the community; an analysis of the regional workforce development system; and COVID-19 impact and response/recovery.

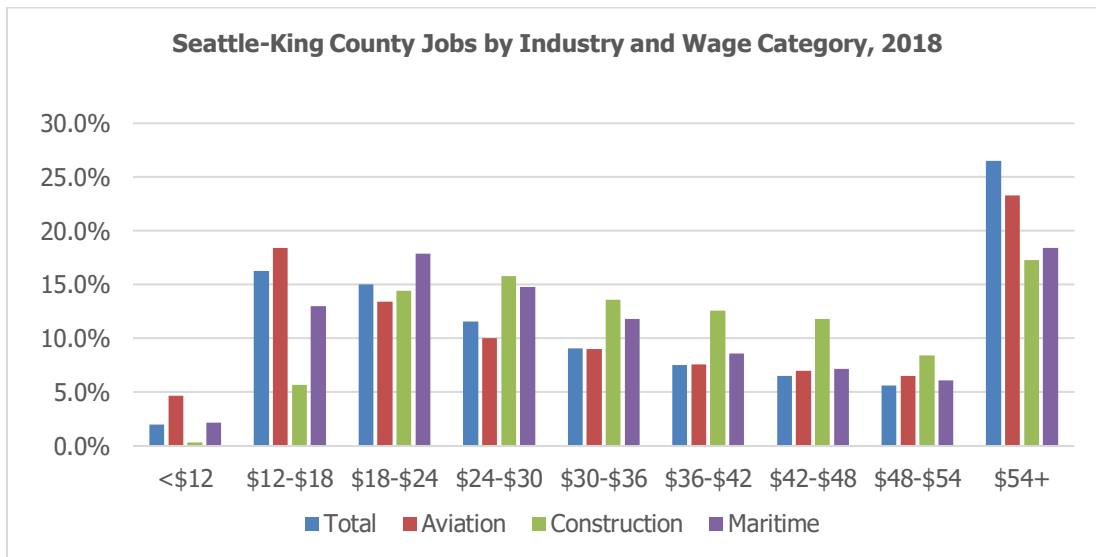
### **Regional Economy and Labor Market Assessment**

COVID-19 has had a major, disruptive impact on the regional economy and labor market. One indicator: unemployment insurance (UI) claims. In a nine-week period, there were over 300,000 UI claims in King County. Impacted jobs included tens of thousands of workers in port-related industries and occupations, and it is unclear how long it will take for the economy to recover.

It is important to keep in mind that Port-related industries and occupations will remain a good source of quality, family wage jobs and, therefore, they are a target of opportunity for workforce development efforts. For example, almost two thirds of all construction jobs in Seattle-King County paid \$30 an hour or more in 2018, as shown in the chart below (table 2). This compares to 55 percent of jobs across all sectors. For aviation, the figure was 53 percent and maritime, 52 percent.

**Port-related industries and occupations will remain  
 a good source of quality, family wage jobs**

(table 2)



Source: Washington Employment Security Department, 2020

Note: Aviation includes NAICS codes 4811 and 4881, Construction NAICS code 23, and Maritime NAICS codes 112511, 112512, 114111, 114112, 311710, 336611, 336612, 424460, 441222, 483111, 483112, 483113, 483114, 483211, 483212, 487210, 488210, 488310, 488320, 488330, 488390, 488510, 493120, and 713930

**PORT SECTOR STRATEGIES**

The Strategic Plan continues the Port sector approach, and it was developed following three overarching strategies embedded in the Policy Directive:

1. Ensuring impactful Port investments in high-demand careers
2. Focused on near-Port communities
3. Ensuring access to training and opportunities to historically underrepresented populations, people of color and women

Below is an overview of the elements within each sector of the Strategic Plan.

**1. Aviation Sector Strategy**

The aviation strategy creates access to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) employment opportunities for job seekers and develops career pathways for entry workers at the airport. It provides direct support to SEA (passenger air, air cargo, and connected subsectors such as logistics, maintenance, restaurant/hospitality, and retail) through activities including, but not limited to recruitment, retention support, education and training, and three aviation career pathway programs.

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The following are the proposed elements of the aviation strategy for 2021-2023:

- Continue funding the Airport Employment Center
- Support Airport University following the Federal Aviation Administration guidelines
- Support expansion of aviation career pathways for a total of three pathways

## **2. *Construction Trades Strategy***

The construction trades strategy continues to support the creation of a regional pipeline of skilled construction workers. The Port, as a major developer, relies on the availability of such workers. It also addresses the low participation and completion rates for people of color and women in the construction trades, and addresses gaps in the existing pipeline (e.g., lack of alignment with demand; a siloed approach to planning and implementation, funding, and evaluation; lack of coordination and limited capacity in terms of pre-apprenticeship training programs; etc.).

The following are the proposed elements of the construction trades strategy for 2021-2023:

- Strengthen regional partnerships with public owners
- Fully implement the Port's priority hire program
- Identify apprenticeship opportunities within the Port trades
- Continue to invest in construction worker outreach, training, and retention services
- Fully implement and enforce the Port's acceptable worksite standards
- Regular feedback from the construction industry stakeholders and the Port construction teams to support the availability of high need trades.

## **3. *Maritime Sector Strategy***

The maritime strategy focuses on increasing recruitment and retention, especially among youth who are not entering the industry; and developing maritime career pathways.

The following are the proposed elements of the maritime strategy for 2021-2023:

- Create awareness of and access to maritime careers
- Advocate for regional maritime workforce development efforts
- Develop maritime career pathway programs for youth and adults
- Support the establishment of a regional maritime industry table
- Continue to support efforts to introduce maritime into the K-12 education system



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**4. Green Career/Green Jobs Sector Strategy**

The green careers strategy supports the environmental and workforce developments priorities of the Century Agenda. Strategies include:

- Support the Port’s Duwamish Valley community equity program
- Collaborate with the Diversity in Contracting team to support women and people of color interested in starting small businesses in habitat restoration and related work
- Develop a green jobs career pathway program

**5. Youth Employment and Career Connected Learning (CCL)**

The CCL and youth strategies objectives include strong partnerships with internal stakeholders like Human Resources and the Port maintenance departments to develop opportunities for youth at the Port. Strategies include:

- Work with HR to align Port internships with regional workforce needs
- Partner with HR as a thought partner in the development of Career and Technical Education related curricula
- Create more opportunities for Launch programming aligned with CCL pipeline programs
- Coordinate with partner organizations to place Port youth interns into their organizations

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed investment for 2021-2023 is \$11.7 million, and it includes the staffing and administration costs and the proposed investments by sector (maritime, aviation, construction trades, and green careers). Each strategy and activity in each sector have been priced accordingly.

Sector	Total
Maritime Sector	\$ 1,538,250
Aviation Sector	\$ 5,178,244
Construction Trades	\$ 2,237,800
Green Careers/Jobs	\$ 200,000
Career Connected Learning	\$ 375,000
Technical Ed/Youth Emp.	\$ 140,000
Staffing and Administration	\$ 2,029,476
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,698,770</b>

**Staffing**

The Strategic Plan also includes the addition of human resources to ensure that the strategies and activities are managed as planned. The expanded team will be composed of a department director, program managers, data analyst and external subject matter experts who will manage

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the implementation of the various strategies including; systems change, policy recommendations, market research, data collection and analytics, and communications related to workforce development.

**ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING**

- (1) Presentation
- (2) Workforce Development Strategic Plan
- (3) Results of Investments analysis
- (4) Community feedback report
- (5) Workforce Development Policy Directive

**PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

- (1) June 2020 – Commission adopted the Workforce Development Policy Directive
- (2) February 2020 – Commission approved charter for the Equity and Workforce Development Committee
- (3) July 2014 – The Commission approved a Motion of the Port of Seattle Increasing Workforce Development and Career Opportunities Activities