



**COMMISSION  
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**Item No.** 11a

**BRIEFING ITEM**

**Date of Meeting** October 10, 2023

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**TO:** Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

**FROM:** Bookda Gheisar, Senior Director – Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion  
Pearse Edwards, Senior Director, External Relations  
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**SUBJECT: South King County Community Impact Fund Annual Report and Evaluation**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2019, the Port Commission authorized \$10 million over five years to build partnerships with near airport communities with the goal of advancing equity and access to economic opportunity. In 2020, the Port launched the South King County Fund (now SKCCIF) to support three primary programs – Economic Recovery, Environmental Improvement Projects, and WMBE support. SKCCIF is co-managed by the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI) and External Relations.

Order No. 2021-12 authorized the Executive Director to conduct an evaluation and develop recommendations for the future re-authorization of the program before the end of the funding program. These Evaluation documents reflect the support the program success and reflect positive outcomes of distributing financial investments to support communities most in need of economic recovery from COVID-19.

To date, the Fund has allocated \$7.3 million of the \$10 million in awarded contracts to 28 projects for Economic Recovery, 37 public improvement projects for Environmental Programs, and 7 WMBE small business initiatives. The fourth and final funding cycle is currently underway, with a budget of \$2.7 million, which will zero out the fund.

Funded Area	Partners	Projects	Allocated funds	Cash disbursements August 2023
Economic Recovery	22	28	\$ 5, 235,970	\$1,935,120
Environmental	26	37	\$ 930,717	\$276,830
WMBE	7	7	\$ 760,000	\$590,236

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

Capacity Building/Siliana Consulting			\$400,000 (over 4 years)	\$86,061
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>\$ 7,326,686</b>	<b>\$2,888,247</b>
<b>Cycle 4 funds available</b>			<b>\$ 2,739,715</b>	

**Cycle 4 Projected Allocation**

Economic Recovery	10 Projects	\$2 million – 2.5 million
Environmental	8-10 Projects	\$400,000 -\$600,000

**Economic Recovery Program**

Currently Economic Recovery has completed three cycles of funding allocation. The fourth and final cycle is currently underway with 13 South King County nonprofits submitting RFP applications. To date 28 programs have been funded with 22 King County partners. It is important to note that funding began shortly after COVID 19 hit the country. Many South King County communities of color, especially Black, Brown and Native peoples were especially hit hard. In response the Port of Seattle with intent focused its economic recovery efforts on these and other historically underserved communities which include immigrant, refugee, disabled, seniors, youth and veterans.

Awarded partner organizations are uniquely positioned to provide effective and culturally relevant programming and training that will prepare and equip community members to access and secure quality living wage jobs with the Port and in Port related industries. These industries are specific to Aviation, Construction, Maritime and Green jobs/Green Careers. Port investments with and in communities' advances closing the wage, income and wealth gap for people and families often excluded from opportunity, and ultimately contributes to an enhanced quality of life for near airport communities.

These communities represent the rich diverse population of South King County. To date 1,200 individuals have obtained port related job training, 500 job placements have been secured, 231 pre-apprenticeships placements in port-related industries have been made. Fifty-two Business Partners have been established and relationships are growing. The average starting salary for those securing employment is between \$19.05-\$34.00, many positions include benefits.

**Environmental Grants Program**

For the Environmental Grants Program, 11 of the 14 funded projects from Cycle 1 have been managed to completion. Of the funded projects, six were BIPOC-Led organizations, 654 trees were planted, 2,935 volunteer hours logged, 3,176 education and training hours. Moreover, fourteen park stewards are now working in green jobs and eleven parks are currently in restoration. Additionally, for the current Cycle 2 projects and the remaining cycles moving forward, Port staff will closely coordinate key environmental metrics with Port environmental staff, including invasive species removal, number of trees planted, and number of acres restored.

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

This will provide key community data to support the overall impacts of Port Land Stewardship activities in near-Port communities.

Based on community feedback and an extensive external and internal assessment, the need for the Fund remains critical to fulfilling the Port’s goal of creating equitable access to high-quality, livable-wage jobs in Port-related industries for women, people of color, and low-income people. The Fund also supports public improvement projects led by community-based organizations to increase access to healthier green spaces and improved health outcomes.

**BACKGROUND**

**Environmental Improvement Program:**

The Environmental Grants Program supports projects to improve the environment in near-airport communities of Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Normandy Park, SeaTac, and Tukwila. Community-led groups are invited to apply for funding for activities such as: public space improvements (including parks, school playgrounds, or public square); equipment or artwork installations; or neighborhood or environmental stewardship and restoration projects.

Through funding and partnerships with community-based organizations, the Environmental Improvement Program drives the Port’s investment in projects within cities around the airport to enhance livability, improve green spaces, and restore forests. The SKCIIF Environmental Grants Program expands the reach of the successful Airport Community Ecology (ACE) program into more communities that surround Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA). Communities in South King County disproportionately experience environmental harm due to a long history of inequitable land use practices and economic displacement that have pushed marginalized communities farther south.

The Port offers multi-year awards to applicants for projects spanning one, two, or three years for up to \$20,000 per year and not to exceed \$60,000 for multi-year funding. The multi-year funding element increases the impact of the Port’s community investments and helps to support sustainable project planning and implementation.

**Economic Recovery Program:**

With ties to all of Washington’s key economic sectors and connections to more than 500 employers operating at our facilities, the Port is uniquely positioned to help create a diverse talent pipeline that is well trained and equipped to access and secure family-wage jobs at the Port and in port-related industries.

The Economic Recovery Program invites proposals for projects with outcomes related to workforce development, job creation programs, or economic recovery solutions in Port or Port

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

related industries. Applicants must be a certified 501C(3) nonprofit organization or 501C(6) (chambers of commerce), a community coalition or group may apply but they must have a licensed nonprofit partner serve as their fiscal sponsor. Projects must serve those who are economically vulnerable.

Economic Recovery offers multi-year awards to applicants for projects spanning one, two, or three years. The vast majority (95%) of applicants request multi-year funding (2 or 3 years). The minimum multi-year request is \$60,000 and the maximum is \$250,000, the max awarded for the entirety of the contract. Multi-year funding increases the impact of the Port's community investments and helps to support sustainable project planning and implementation.

### **Diversity in Contracting (WMBE)**

SKCCIF supports WMBE Small Businesses through the Economic Development Division. Funded projects include the Highline Small Business Development Center, Advanced PortGen, and the Business Accelerator Mentorship program which develop capacity among WMBE firms to partner with the Port. Several of the funded programs focus on increasing WMBE's knowledge of how to navigate the city, state and federal contractual processes. Other programs provide WMBE entrepreneurs with mentors, especially needed for small businesses still impacted by Covid. Over the last three years the programs have experienced high attendance and participation from local WMBE's.

Interlocal Agreement (ILA): Highline College

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) mentorship and training

- 68 Training Classes; 816 Attendees

Advanced PortGen Workshop Series

6-week program focusing on government contracting fundamentals

Over 200 businesses have participated in Series

PortGen: Business Accelerator Mentorship Program

Intense 10-week training program providing a cohort group with robust curriculum and one-on-one industry mentorship

- 33 Cohorts participated

### **Program Improvements**

Significant improvements to the program include the following:

- Need for capital startup funds: 25% of the yearly funding will be provided within 30 days of the start of contract for Economic Recovery funded projects.

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

- Multi –year funding with a broader range of funding amounts, providing a minimum and maximum
- Drove policy change lowering the Environmental mandate match from 3:1 to 2:1
- Community reviewers participate throughout the consensus process
- Cohort learning model for Economic Recovery – meeting every other month discussing best practices, shared learning and networking to amplify impact.
- Consistent RFP release dates (July for Economic Recovery and September for Environmental)

**Evaluation and Assessment Findings:**

SKCCIF investments have empowered vulnerable communities to bring their community led program solutions and environmental justice projects to fruition. The intent of the fund is anchored in the Port’s commitment to equity and attainment of its century agenda goals. Success requires on-going communication, trust, mutual accountability, continuously learning and a commitment to process improvements. Some of the recommendations made have already been implemented as noted above. Other recommendations will require planning and prioritization.

In November 2022 the Port hired Contacto Consulting to evaluate what has worked and areas for improvement to support future decision making. The consultant’s assessment included literature and internal document review, examination of similar funds at other ports across the country, an online survey to community partners, two visioning sessions with community members, and in-depth qualitative interviews with 25 key internal and external constituents. Participants included applicants (funded and non-funded), community reviewers, consultants, Port Commissioners, ELT members and staff. The consultant’s review focused on four areas:

- Current state: Is there clarity about the intent of SKCCIF?
- Reaching communities: How can SKCCIF improve its connections with target communities?
- Equity: How can SKCCIF make the process more accessible and equitable?
- Vision: What could the future of the SKCCIF look like?

*For additional information on the findings and recommendations (See Attached)*

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING****Community Liaisons**

After four years of conducting outreach and receiving community feedback regarding the Fund, we have identified barriers. Other common barriers identified by community members include the challenges related to our procurement and contracting processes and the use of formal and complex contractual language.

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

To address these barriers, and to align with the SKCCIF principles to prioritize community input and implement Port equity policies and practices, External Relations engaged a group of Community Liaisons. Led by Alma Villegas Consulting, the liaisons represented South King County's diverse population which includes: Latinx, African American, Korean, Somali, Filipino, Bhutanese, Pacific Islander, and Congolese communities. The liaisons chosen are trusted community leaders with deep connections to their communities.

Early in 2020, the Port team began training the first round of liaisons about the mission of the Port of Seattle, its role and limitations as a "special purpose government," and the history of the South King County Community Impact Fund. Next, the team went through a series of brainstorming exercises aimed at developing potential project ideas. The liaisons would then replicate this brainstorming activity with their communities. This served as an important foundation, equipping the liaisons with the tools and knowledge they needed to conduct community outreach. We have successfully work with ten community liaisons over the last three years and onboarded three new liaisons in the Summer 2023.

In addition to this incredible community engagement work, the liaisons have been instrumental in the development of outreach messages, supporting grant materials, and training Port staff on multi-cultural engagement. An early suggestion from the group was to include a "sample application" in the supporting materials. This would give first time applicants the level of detail required in the written application. The sample application has also been translated into the top languages spoken in South King County, including Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Russian. We also work with ethnic media partners to share information about the program.

Central Procurement Office (CPO) and the Community Engagement team worked in collaboration to create the content, structure, and delivery of presentations for the public information sessions. Port staff prepared a draft presentation and delivered it to the liaisons before delivering it to the general public. The liaisons gave feedback in real time on format, word choice, and graphic depictions of information. To increase language accessibility, Port staff members were also asked to use simple words and slow down the pace of the presentation. This feedback was incorporated in the presentation materials and how Port staff delivered the presentation.

### **Community reviewers**

Community reviewers are used in both the economic recovery and environmental programs competitive RFP process. Two community reviewers are recruited and serve on the application review pane to determine the best candidates for funding. They participate with two other Port employees that have specialization in the Port specific areas of aviation, maritime, construction and green jobs. The project manager and the contract manager also participate on the panel. The process is competitive, so community reviewers provide a critical level of community input perspective and accountability. The process to work with community to inform decision-making is new to the Port but is standard practice in community grant-making. The inclusion of

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

community reviewers helps to normalize this practice in Port procurement processes and is consistent with procurement and selection processes implemented through the Duwamish Valley Community Equity Program. Community Reviewers are provided a stipend of between \$2,500 - \$3,500 depending on the number of applications.

### **Green City Partnership**

The Green City Partnership, a program with Forterra, was completed in April 2022. This partnership recognized that neighboring communities that experience more impacts from airport operations should also experience more benefits, the Port Commission adopted the Airport Community Ecology (ACE) Fund in 2016, dedicating \$1 million to support environmental stewardship in Burien, SeaTac, and Des Moines. This funding included \$550,000 for a Small Matching Grants Program, which allowed local community organizations to apply to receive funding for stewardship projects. The Port also awarded the remaining \$450,000 to Forterra to support long-term urban forestry efforts through the development of new Green Cities Partnerships in Burien, SeaTac, and Des Moines.

These Partnerships created and implemented community-based models that ensure ongoing restoration and stewardship of these vital outdoor spaces through their adopted green city plans. Below are the key metrics from the partnership between 2017-2022:

#### *Key Metrics*

- 2,765 Plants and Trees Planted, including 982 Trees
- 836 Volunteers
- 2,113 Volunteer Hours (valued at \$67,040)
- 78 Volunteer Events
- 475 Yard Trees Distributed
- 11 Parks in Restoration
- 14 Forest Stewards
- 26 City Council and Community Meetings
- 4,339 Paid Youth Crew Hours (valued at \$134,459)

### **Community Capacity Building Consultant**

In Summer 2022, Port staff brought on Siliana Consulting LLC (Siliana) to support the Community Capacity Building and outreach efforts with organizational partners in both Economic Recovery and Environmental. Siliana is continuing to lead the community liaison program, outreach to community reviewers, conduct workshops to support community-based organizations, and support media and outreach opportunities for the SKCCIF. Furthermore, they provide wrap-around services, like food, transportation, childcare, stipends, and other needs for our community partners when conducting Port related events and programming.

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

Both the Economic Recovery Program and the Environmental Grants Program hold information sessions before the Request for Proposal is launched. These sessions are open to potential applicants through invitations, press releases, the Port website, and direct outreach with the Siliana team.

### **South King County Community Engagement**

- The local city engagement efforts, specifically with the six near airport cities of Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Normandy Park, SeaTac, and Tukwila, have allowed greater partnership building to support our organizational partners. As an example, the SKCCIF team presented to the Highline Forum in September providing an update on the projects funded and an update on the open Cycle 4 Environmental RFP. We also have cultivated relationships with City parks and recreation department teams to ensure we are working together to increase awareness of SKCCIF. City Council Presentation tours are also another way for local cities to engage with the Port.

### **Environment and Jobs Symposium**

In 2020 and 2022, the Port hosted the annual Environmental Symposium and in 2023, we hosted the first South King County Environmental and Jobs Symposium, which focused on building partnerships with both community members and partners in economic recovery and environmental. Through great outreach, speaker presentations, and tabling we were able to attract almost 130 attendees and partner organizations to learn about exciting and innovative projects happening in the surrounding communities. The event featured speakers from youth-led projects, immigrant and refugee led programs, city and county partners, and Port staff presenting on current Port programs.

### **ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST**

- 1) Findings and Recommendations
- 2) Presentation

### **PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

- 1) November 16, 2021- Order 2021-12 to rename the South King County fund and to direct the Executive Director to review the Port's South King County Fund grant program prior to the end of the program to assess the programs impacts; to develop recommendations on the future of the program and possible extension.
- 2) November 9, 2021- Multi-year program authorization increase request for the South King County Fund
- 3) July 27, 2021 – The Commission authorized \$2 million for the South King County Fund for 2021.



Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

- 4) April 28, 2020 – The Commission approved Motion 2020-10 to add economic development to the permissible uses for the South King County Fund, in support of local recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5) June 25, 2019 – The Commission approved Motion 2019-10, adopting principals to guide outreach and development of the South King County policy.
- 6) November 27, 2018 – The Commission approved Motion 2018-14, establishing the South King County Fund.

**PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

April 28, 2020 | Motion 2020-10

The Commission to add economic development to the permissible uses for the South King County Fund, in support of local recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

June 25, 2019 | Motion 2019-10

The Commission adopting principals to guide outreach and development of the South King County policy.

November 27, 2018 | Motion 2018-14

The Commission directing the Executive Director to .... designate funding in the 2019-2023 plan of finance for South King County communities.

November 22, 2016 | Motion 2016-5

The Port Commission directing the creation of an Airport Community Ecology Fund to support projects and programs in Sea-Tac Airport-area communities to improve ecological and environmental attributes in airport-area communities.