

# Strategic Plan Stakeholder Engagement Report

Prepared by:



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### **Executive Summary**

The City of Portland Environmental Services (BES) launched a strategic planning process in the summer of 2016. Bureau leadership and strategic plan steering committee members made it a priority to gather internal and external input in order to develop an informed and responsive 10-year strategic plan. To ensure an independent and confidential approach, BES engaged Portland-based Catalysis LLC to gather internal and external stakeholder input. Input was gathered from internal and external groups, including government and regulatory agencies, conservation and environmental groups, business and industry, and community organizations.

Internal stakeholder opportunities included numerous face-to-face engagements and an anonymous and confidential survey to all BES employees, which received an impressive 75% response rate. External input was gathered through a combination of interviews, focus groups and surveys. Participants were identified through a process of internal assessment and getting feedback from Portland leadership and community members on who might be asked to contribute to the process.

The stakeholder engagement process included several complementary data collection strategies to gather input from both internal and external groups. Our analysis and interpretation of data involved looking for patterns within stakeholder groups while also noting themes that emerged across the various groups engaged in the strategic planning process. While each data collection opportunity elucidated the key priorities and opportunities specific to each stakeholder group, there were also several broad patterns that emerged across the groups. Input from stakeholders informed early planning as well as the development of the final plan.

The stakeholder engagement process aimed to address the following key objectives:

- Establish criteria for identifying and prioritizing both internal and external stakeholder groups;
- Identify strategies for effectively engaging all stakeholder groups in the strategic planning process;
- Implement methods that incorporate multiple voices and perspectives, especially those from historically underserved groups in the community;
- Establish iterative cycles of stakeholder engagement by identifying opportunities for ongoing feedback;
- Encourage transparency by ensuring that as much as possible stakeholders are made aware of and informed about the strategic planning process.

The stakeholder engagement process was driven by the following guiding questions:

- What are the needs and concerns for each stakeholder group?
- How does each stakeholder group view BES's role in the broader Portland community?
- What does each stakeholder group identify as future priorities of BES?

This report outlines the broad themes that emerged from the stakeholder engagement process, as well as provides the more detailed internal and external stakeholder reports. It should be noted that BES has committed to increasing its ongoing stakeholder engagement strategies.

### Broad Themes Across Stakeholder Groups

The analysis and interpretation of data involved looking for patterns within stakeholder groups while also identifying themes that emerged across the various groups. The emerging themes, as well as specific recommendations, were key considerations for all aspects of the strategic plan development.

Several broad themes emerged, including:

- 1) Community responsiveness
- 2) Focus on equity and diversity
- 3) Collaborative partnerships
- 4) Workforce development
- 5) Infrastructure and disaster preparedness

These broad themes as well as the associated sub-themes and recommendations were integrated in to strategic plan as actionable strategies. Each broad, cross-cutting theme is further discussed below as well as the related sub-themes.

#### **Community Responsiveness**

A theme of community engagement emerged across the findings from the various stakeholder groups involved in the strategic planning process. The stakeholder groups' conception of community engagement included the following ideas: relationship building, education, and communication.

**Relationship Building.** The stakeholder groups noted a need to build relationships in the community, particularly in the historically underserved communities. Stakeholders recommended some initial strategies including meeting local leaders in the communities/neighborhoods, identifying ways to be involved in the community, and engaging communities in decision-making processes by gathering input (e.g., via surveys, focus groups in the community).

**Education**. The stakeholder groups also recommended education opportunities as a means to engage the community, particularly through outreach in local PK-12 schools as well as education opportunities in the community for adults and businesses. In particular, the community education events could cover topics such as water pollution, reduction of toxic materials, invasive species, and conservation education.

**Communication.** Finally, a key finding related to community engagement was the notion of improving communication. This was multifaceted and included a number of ideas and actionable strategies. For example, the stakeholders noted ratepayers and the broader public are unfamiliar with what the BES is, what services BES provides, and what their payments cover. Moreover, the stakeholders noted that the public often only hears about the BES when there are issues or when things go wrong. The recommendation was to be more proactive in getting positive messages to the public rather than reacting to issues that surface. Their comments included actionable strategies for addressing these perceived issues such as developing a communication and PR plan, hiring personnel with public relations (PR) and marketing expertise, defining and clarifying BES "core services", greater transparency to build trust and credibility among the public, address issues of importance in the community, updating methods to reach all audiences in the community (e.g., social media, translate materials), and improving customer service.

**Stewardship.** Be good stewards of ratepayer dollars. This theme included transparency, rate stabilization and judicious use of public funds.

#### **Focus on Equity & Diversity**

There was a theme of focusing on equity and diversity that was identified as a key need across the various stakeholder groups. Specifically, the stakeholder groups noted issues such as lack of a diverse workforce, providing equal access to resources, and reaching historically underserved audiences. The stakeholder groups mentioned the following key ideas and related recommendations:

**Equity Initiatives.** Stakeholder groups expressed a need to implement Bureau-wide equity initiatives, beginning with hiring someone with particular expertise in equity and engaging historically underserved communities. The equity initiatives would also include outreach in underserved communities, engagement with community members to understand how better to meet the needs of underserved communities, and ongoing relationships in underserved communities to gather feedback and input about BES and as new projects develop. And, finally, the stakeholders recommended new projects that meet the particular needs of underserved communities.

**Workforce and Contract Procurement.** Another sub-theme related to the notion of equity and diversity was diversifying personnel and "social equity contracting." To achieve these ideas, stakeholders suggested diversifying the BES workforce and implementing workforce development initiatives that focus on people of color. With regard to contracting, stakeholders recommended revisiting and revising procurement and contracting processes in order to encourage diversity and access to all providers.

**Grant Funding.** External stakeholder groups in particular suggested addressing issues of equity through the grant funding process. For instance, BES should consider translating all of the grant solicitation and funding applications to other languages so that they are accessible to all businesses and communities. Another suggestion was to offer guidance and "hand holding" to new applicants who may new to the grant funding process. And, finally, stakeholders recommended updated requirements for a greater percentage of funds to be allocated to programs and initiatives that address issues of equity.

#### **Collaborative Partnerships**

Collectively, the data from the various stakeholder groups also revealed collaborative partnerships as an emergent theme. Collaboration included fostering partnerships with other bureaus as well as developing new partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships in the community.

Collaboration between Bureaus. There is a perception across stakeholder groups that there is a lack of coordination between bureaus and at times, power struggles and bickering. Notably, this was mentioned not only by internal stakeholders on the employee survey, but also across the various external stakeholders engaged in the focus groups. Therefore, stakeholder groups felt that collaboration between BES and other city bureaus should be a priority in the strategic planning process. Moreover, they felt collaboration between city bureaus was imperative in order to address the rapid growth and new development in the city. The notion was that BES, along with other bureaus, should be engaged in discussions as "One City." To strengthen existing relationships between bureaus, the stakeholder suggested the following:

Evaluate city-wide structures and processes to eliminate practices and policies that limit partnering across bureaus;

- Review the mission statements across bureaus to identify synergies and potential areas for collaborative opportunities while also noting any discrepancies or conflicting statements;
- Build relationships at the leadership and management level through mutual training events such as a cooperative leadership institute;
- BES should include other bureaus in projects at the time of ideation and planning to ensure partnering throughout all stages of projects;
- Identify successful programs (e.g., Green Street program, Hamilton Stevens) and existing shared service models. Use the success of these programs as both a model and starting point for new collaborative opportunities.

Community Partnerships. While there are existing relationships in the community with BES, the stakeholders offered recommendations for strengthening these partnerships and building new partnerships. For example, external stakeholders requested that BES value the work of NGOs by seeking their input and expertise during decision-making and with new projects. They also suggested supporting well-established partnerships (e.g., Depave, Friends of Trees) with resources such as consistent funding through a tiered funding structure. The tiered funding structure would ensure that these partnerships have resources while also ensuring opportunities for new performers. The stakeholder groups also recommended leveraging these organizations as brokers in the community to spread positive messaging and to enhance community-based work.

#### **Workforce Development**

Workforce development was another theme that emerged across the stakeholder groups. This included training and education opportunities among BES personnel, facilitating career advancement for employees, and implementing strategies to ensure the transfer of institutional knowledge due to retirements. While overall workforce development emerged as a broad theme, the suggestions were nuanced based on the stakeholder group. Training and education was particularly noted by internal stakeholder groups. On the other hand, both internal and external stakeholders noted the need to be thoughtful about upcoming retirements and considering strategies to ease the transition and transfer institutional knowledge

Training and Education. Internal stakeholders especially noted the need for training and education opportunities. These opportunities included improving the on-boarding experience for new employees as well as training in areas such as technical skills, leadership and management, and communication. It is also important to establish a culture at BES that supports ongoing education and professional learning opportunities. This includes allowing employees time to participate in learning opportunities, reducing bureaucracy for attending professional development, allocating funds for training and education, and offering trainings that align with employees' professional learning needs. This likely would require engaging BES personnel in identifying training topics and their own professional learning needs.

**Career Advancement.** This was an additional sub-theme that emerged primarily from internal stakeholders' comments. Specifically, internal stakeholder noted a need to allow for upward movement at BES by: restructuring job classifications to allow for more workforce entry points, design career trajectories that allow for upward mobility, disseminate information about how to advance in careers at BES, offer career coaching, and discuss advancement strategies and opportunities during annual review meetings.

#### **Infrastructure and Disaster Preparedness**

A final cross-cutting theme was updating infrastructure and disaster preparedness. The internal and external stakeholders both noted current and future challenges for BES and these included responding to rapid growth and development in Portland, keeping up with technological advancements, changing political climate, and potential natural disasters (e.g., earthquake). A particular concern was the rapid growth in the city resulting in an overwhelming number of new construction projects and dramatic changes in the population density, both having a serious impact on the current and future work of the BES. The recommendation to update infrastructure and prepare for natural disasters was in response to these perceived future threats.

**Updating Infrastructure.** As detailed above, the stakeholder groups pointed out a number of current and potential future challenges that BES will have to address through updating infrastructure. They recommended the following:

- Collectively, with other city bureaus, fund updates to dated city infrastructure;
- Invest in green infrastructure;
- Update technological infrastructure (e.g., technology, software, capacity for managing data) to include digital records, electronic system for data tracking, asset management, and project tracking;
- Update the BES website.

**Disaster Preparedness.** There was concern among stakeholder groups about system resiliency in response to extreme weather events as well as preparing for natural disasters, especially earthquakes. Internal and external stakeholder groups suggested focused planning to ensure mechanisms are put in place in preparation for natural disasters.

#### **SUMMARY**

Collectively, the broad themes that surfaced across the various stakeholder groups point to areas of precedence in the strategic planning process. In particular, throughout the strategic planning process, BES should consider prioritizing: community engagement, focus on equity and diversity, collaborative partnerships, workforce development, and infrastructure and disaster preparedness. Moreover, across the various stakeholder groups, there were a number of specific recommendations that provided actionable strategies. These were considered throughout the planning process. These were considered carefully by the strategic plan steering committee and informed both the overall strategies and action items in the plan.

## Stakeholder Participants

Stakeholders Methods of Engage				
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	<ul> <li>All BES Employees</li> <li>Bureau Leadership Team (BLT)</li> <li>Bureau Management Team (BMT)</li> <li>Workplace Excellence &amp; Committee on Equity &amp; Diversity</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Survey</li> <li>Multiple "Roadshows"</li> <li>Email and in-person updates</li> <li>Website and opportunities for specific document review</li> </ul>		
EXTERNAL	Commissioner's Office – Nick Fish and staff	Interviews		
STAKEHOLDERS	City Council & Mayor	Meetings		
• City	Portland Utility Board	Regular presentations at meetings.     Opportunity for comment		
Leadership	Citizen Utility Board	Interviews		
Cavaramant	Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS)	Interview		
Government	City Budget Office (CBO)	Interview		
& Regulatory	Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)	Interview		
	Multnomah County Drainage District	Interview		
	Office of Equity & Human Rights (OEHR)	Interview		
	Office of Budget and Finance (OMF)	Interview		
	Port of Portland	Interview		
	Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)	Interview		
	Portland Parks and Recreation	Interview		
	Portland Water Bureau	Interview		
Environmental &	Audubon	Interview & Focus Group		
Conservation	Columbia Riverkeepers	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Columbia Slough Watershed Council	Invited to focus group and survey		
Groups	DePave	Interview & Focus Group		
	East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Forest Park Conservancy	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Friends of Trees	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Friends of Smith and Bybee Lakes	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Greenworks	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Human Access Project	Interview		
	Intertwine	Interview & Focus Group		
	Johnson Creek Watershed Council	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Northwest Environmental Advocates	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Southwest Community Center Watershed Resource Center	Invited to focus group and survey		
	West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Tryon Creek Watershed Council	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Urban Greenspaces Institute	The state of the s		
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	• Verde	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Wetland Conservancy	Invited to focus group and survey		
	Willamette Riverkeepers	Invited to focus group and survey		

	Stakeholders	Methods of Engagement
Community 8	Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon	Invited to focus group and survey
Community & Customers	Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish     Commission/Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde	Invited to focus group and survey
	East Portland Neighborhood Office	Invited to focus group and survey
	East Portland Action Plan	Invited to focus group and survey
	Family Care Health CCO	Invited to focus group and survey
	Green Lents	Invited to focus group and survey
	Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)	Invited to focus group and survey
	Main Street Alliance	Invited to focus group and survey
	Mecha Statewide	Invited to focus group and survey
	Multicultural Collaborative	Invited to focus group and survey
	• NAYA	Invited to focus group and survey
	Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods	Invited to focus group and survey
	Russian Speaking Network	Invited to focus group and survey
	SW Trails	Invited to focus group and survey
	SWNI (Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc)	Invited to focus group and survey
	Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA)	Invited to focus group and survey
Business & Industry	Columbia Corridor Association	Interviewed and provided survey
·	Columbia Pacific Building Trades Union & Labor Organizations (Willie Meyers)  AFSCME COPPEA IBEW Laborers Local 483	Invited to focus group and survey
	Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs (OAME)	Invited to focus group and survey
	National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)	Invited to focus group and survey
	Northwest Utility Contractors Association (NWUCA)	Invited to focus group and survey
	Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association	Invited to focus group and survey
	Portland Business Alliance	Invited to focus group and survey
	Portland Independent Chamber of Commerce	Invited to focus group and survey
	Regulated Industrial and Commercial Customers  AOI  BOMA  NEBC  Venture Portland	Invited to focus group and survey
Education	Portland Public School District (PPSD)	Survey
	Portland State University (PSU)	Survey
	Portland Community College (PCC)	Survey
	Oregon State University (OSU)	Survey
	Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU)	Survey

# Internal Stakeholders Summary of Findings

## Internal Stakeholder Summary of Findings

Throughout the strategic planning process, employees were provided numerous opportunities for review and input on the developing plan. In addition to interactive meetings held at various work sites, Catalysis LLC conducted an online survey for BES employees. The survey was made available to employees from December 5 through December 19, 2016. The survey was confidential and anonymous, and results were compiled and analyzed by Catalysis consultants.

#### **Internal Stakeholder Survey Overview**

There were 441 responses, a 75% response rate. This is considered a very high response rate (average for internal surveys tends to be 30-40%). Below is the response by workgroup. This was a relatively balanced sample, although slightly over-sampled for Engineering Services and slightly under-sampled for Pollution Prevention.

The survey covered three main areas: BES Now, Future Opportunities and Challenges, and Supporting Our Employees. Broad patterns emerged across all three question areas: Desire for a unified BES: "one BES" or "reduce siloes"

- Be proactive rather than reactive in approach
- Improved communication internally and across a variety of sectors and stakeholders
- Focus on equity, diversity, and engaging ALL communities especially those historically underserved
- A need to critically evaluate and prioritize structures, procedures, processes, resources for:
  - o Efficiency, staffing needs, meeting CIP goals and timelines
  - System preparedness and resiliency, addressing future challenges
  - o Involving and engaging the community
  - o Employee retention, education, training, mentoring, and career advancement

#### Who responded to the BES employee survey?

- In total, there were 441 responses to the BES Employee Survey which is roughly 75% response rate:
- Response by work groups:

Business Services	n=37	74% response rate
Director's Office	n=18	75% response rate
<b>Engineering Services</b>	n=153	84% response rate
Pollution Prevention	n=54	58% response rate
Wastewater Group	n=127	74% response rate
Watershed Services	n=49	71% response rate

• Overall, a relatively balanced sample although slightly over-sampled for Engineering Services and slightly under-sampled for Pollution Prevention. This suggests there might be a slight bias and findings should be interpreted with this minor limitation in mind (e.g., Engineering Services might have a particular reason they want their voices to be heard).

#### **Survey Response Summary**

## A. How effective is BES in providing "core services" and what could be done to improve delivery of core services?

In your opinion, how effective is BES in providing the following core services on a scale from 1 to 5 where "1" is "not at all effective" and "5" is "very effective." (n=409)		
Item Response Count Mean		
Watershed, river and stream protection and restoration	n=408	3.9
Pollution prevention/source control	n=409	3.9
Sewage collection and pumping	n=407	4.2
Sewage treatment	n=406	4.4
Stormwater management	n=400	3.7
System development/development services	n=405	3.6
System resiliency and response	n=404	3.3
Education, public involvement and stewardship	n=406	3.6

<sup>&</sup>quot;Sewage Treatment" and "Sewage Collection and pumping" were the most highly rated as effective by respondents while "System resiliency and response" was rated the lowest.

#### **Open-Ended Themes**

Additionally, the following themes emerged when survey respondents were prompted to elaborate. These fell into the following broad categories, with more detailed comments in each to follow:

- Improve communication with public, other bureaus and within BES
- Public engagement and outreach
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Critically evaluate BES and assess structure, processes, and resources
- Work culture and professional support
- Update and innovate
- Prioritize a focus on Equity/Diversity

#### Improve communication

- To public/rate payers very strong opinion among respondents that the public/rate payers do not know what BES is, what services BES provides, or what they are paying for:
  - 1. Use updated methods to reach ALL audiences (e.g., social media, online messaging). By using hard copy mailings, only reaching a particular demographic
  - 2. Branding and PR
    - Develop a PR plan
    - Hire someone with PR/Marketing expertise
  - 3. Define & clarify "core services"
  - 4. Transparency
  - 5. Be proactive rather than reactive all public hears about now are issues and when things go wrong
  - 6. Improve and increase capacity for better customer service to rate payers

#### o Between bureaus

- 1. Improved communication would eliminate inefficiencies (e.g., multiple bureaus completing similar tasks) and streamline internal processes;
- 2. Also would help foster greater collaboration between bureaus
- With BES Employees/Other Work Groups
  - 1. Share successes and current issues/challenges
  - 2. Develop mechanisms for involving employees in decision-making processes (more of a bottoms-up approach)
  - 3. Updates on projects
  - 4. Define & clarify "core services"
  - 5. Transparency
  - 6. Improve understanding about the priorities of other work groups (rated the lowest on the survey)

#### Public engagement and outreach

- Educate the public
- Outreach in local schools
- o Engage the public in decision-making
- Involvement in community
- Relationship Building with communities, especially those historically underserved
- Align BES priorities with community/public priorities

#### Teamwork and Collaboration

- Within BES
  - 1. "ONE BES"
  - 2. Eliminate "silos"
  - 3. Foster collaboration and teamwork --- "ONE BES"
  - 4. Develop strategies for sharing information between work groups (e.g., develop work group mission statements, work group wikis)
  - 5. *Relationship Building* between work groups

- 6. Eliminate inefficiencies, duplication; Build on each groups' strengths and weaknesses
- 7. Collaboration will also help to understand potential gaps and overlaps in work to increase efficiency
- 8. Ensures all expertise and talent in BES working together on project, solving problems
- 9. *Trust* employees/empower employees (e.g., involve employees in brainstorming, identifying solutions to problems)
- 10. Reduce internal conflict, "squabbles," and "strange family feuds" between internal work groups. For example, address competing goals between work groups, which lead to "squabbles", lack of sharing information, and work groups being overly protective of their work.
- With other city Bureaus (e.g., PBOT, Water Bureau)
  - 1. Integrate services
  - 2. Eliminate inter-bureau "squabbles"
  - 3. Coordinate budget and planning efforts to eliminate wasteful spending and duplication/inefficiencies
  - 4. Work toward common city goals

#### Critically evaluate BES and assess structure, processes, and resources

- Shift away from top-down approach
- Reduce or eliminate excessive bureaucracy and procedures where they are unnecessary such as unnecessary paperwork
- Evaluation Plan: ongoing system of measurement for tracking progress of project, plans, etc.
- Asset inventory & resource mapping
- Prioritize goals and objectives to ensure quality over quantity/breadth over depth:
   "Avoid trying to do too much."
- Prioritization of project for funding and resource allocation
- Improve leadership and management especially middle management (e.g., less micromanagement, provide opportunities for employees to provide feedback regarding management/leadership)
- BES capacity determine if there is a need to hire more personnel
- o Hiring processes: decentralize from DHR and allow BES to hire
- Reassess the project delivery (e.g., 30-60-90 versus agile project delivery)
- o Reconsider structural job classifications to allow for career mobility and advancement

#### Work Culture and Professional Support

- Recognize successes
- o Ensure reasonable workload and address low morale
- Provide education & professional growth opportunities (and time to participate in them) that are targeted to the specific needs of various work groups and personnel (e.g., certifications)
- As part of employee review process:
  - 1. Supervisor and employee identify areas for continued education professional growth opportunities (with some BES support to pursue)

- 2. Identification of employees' successes
- 3. Gather employees' feedback (e.g., such as survey implemented for strategic review process) and assessment of management/leadership
- Allow for career growth and opportunities for advancement (currently some employees feel stymied and that there are limited opportunities for advancement)
  - 1. Mentoring program/professional guidance
  - 2. Resources to support advancement
- Innovate to be an "employer of choice" consider be more flexible and adaptive to "the way people work in the new millennium." Otherwise, BES will continue to struggle to recruit young employees and will suffer from employee attrition
  - 1. However, some pointed out there is a need to balance these flexibility options with project deadlines and demands
- Address "toxic management-staff" relationships in some work groups
  - 1. Foster in these work groups a culture of trust, empowerment, collaboration, and inclusiveness
  - 2. Ensure professionalism at all work group meetings (e.g., eliminate arguing, dismissive talk) and meet one-on-one when there are conflicts

#### Update and Innovate

- o BES technological infrastructure (e.g., technology, software, capacity for managing data)
  - 1. Electronic system for data tracking
  - 2. Digital records
  - 3. Asset management
  - 4. Project tracking
  - 5. Update BES website
- System updates and resiliency
  - 1. Greener system & infrastructure
  - 2. Resiliency to extreme weather events
- Prepare for Emergencies/Natural disasters especially earthquakes

#### Prioritize a focus on Equity/Diversity

- Hire someone specifically with this expertise
- Outreach in historically underserved communities
- Diversify personnel, hire more diverse staff
- Contracting process that encourages diversity/equity
- Engage these communities for providing input on projects, participating in decisionmaking
- o Gather feedback to understand how to better serve these communities
- Select projects and identify related project outcomes that address diversity/equity or that meet the need of underserved communities
- Workforce development projects, especially those that focus on people of color
- Translate communication/outreach materials to other languages

#### B. What are the challenges that BES will face and/or need to address in the next 10 years?

In your opinion, how important is each challenge for BES over the next 10 years? Please rank each of the following using a scale from 1 to 5 where "1" is "not a concern" and "5" is "major concern." (n=388)

Item	Response Count	Mean Score
New and/or additional regulations	n=384	3.4
Maintenance and stewardship of existing assets	n=385	4.3
Demands for additional infrastructure or greater levels of service	n=387	3.9
Technology and information management needs	n=385	3.7
Emergency preparedness	n=386	4.0
Employee turnover and retirements	n=384	3.5
Employee diversity	n=384	3.0
Employee satisfaction	n=385	3.8
Rate payer satisfaction	n=384	3.8
Relationships among Bureau workgroups	n=383	3.7
Relationships with regulators	n=383	3.3
Relationships with external partners (other Bureaus, etc.)	n=386	3.6

Survey respondents identified "Maintenance and stewardship of existing assets" as the most important concern over the next 10 years. "Employee diversity" was the rated as the lowest challenge, however, in response to open-ended items and follow-up prompts, respondents consistently acknowledged a need to recruit and support a more diverse workforce.

#### **Open-Ended Themes**

Additionally, respondents to the survey also identified the following potential challenges to the BES in the future:

- Changing political climate, especially related to recent presidential election and changes at the local and state level (such as election of new mayor)
- Advancements in Technology BES needs to update accordingly at the same rate
- Employee Retention & Loss of Institutional Knowledge (due to employee turnover and retirements) alongside challenges in attracting new talent
- Climate change & shifting weather patterns
- Population growth and increasing population density due to rapid growth of the city including overwhelming number of new construction projects
- Public distrust & Rate payer lawsuits
- Evolving regulations and permitting processes
- Diversity and Equity
- Instability in economic environment which causes threats to funding and resources
- Need to update system and infrastructure
- Potential consequences if BES is unable to accomplish CIP on schedule
- Increased pollution

## C. What are existing or potential opportunities (internal or external) that BES should leverage for improving success?

#### Open-Ended Themes

#### Build New Partnerships and Strengthen Existing Partnerships

- Local schools (K-12 and higher education)
- Other bureaus (e.g., PBOT, Water Bureau): collectively pursue and leverage funding/grants
- Community non-profits
- o PUB

#### City-wide & Regional Projects

- Portland Building Project: Project could prompt new thinking (e.g., work environment, innovative work spaces, flexible and alternative work schedules)
- HERON Project: Use project to foster bureau-wide coordination and as way to organize efforts with other bureaus
- Lents Stabilization Project: Continue to leverage partnership with Oregon Solution for opportunities to reach and engage with underserved communities

#### • Employee Retirements/Turnover

- Consider as opportunities to gain new ideas, try new things, shift BES culture, diversify skill sets
- Diversify BES workforce when filling upcoming open positions

#### COPPEA Contract Negotiation

 Contract negotiation process offers a chance to gather employee input, ensure employee satisfaction, discuss telecommute options

#### Leverage successes of other bureaus

- Evaluate structure, processes/procedures, leadership, communication mechanisms of other bureaus
- Use successes as models for potential change within BES (e.g., SOAKED onboarding program)

#### New local political climate (new mayor, commissioner)

- o Use as opportunity for transparency, educating on BES issues/challenges, and needs
- o Potential for new regulations (e.g., environmental protection regulations)

## D. What support and professional growth opportunities are needed to ensure the success of BES employees?

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. Use a scale from 1 to 5 where "1" is "strongly disagree" and "5" is "strongly agree." (n=383)			
Item	Response Count	Mean Score	
I understand the City/internal career paths available to me in my current position.	n=383	3.1	
I can easily reach out to co-workers in other Work Groups to solve problems.	n=383	3.6	
I understand the current priorities of BES.	n=383	3.2	
I can anticipate the challenges I will face in getting my job done.	n=382	3.7	
I understand the priorities of my immediate work team.	n=381	4.1	
I am familiar with the priorities of other Work Groups (not my own).	n=383	2.7	
I have the training and mentoring I need to be successful in my position.	n=381	3.4	
I have the resources and tools (data, data systems, technology) I need to be successful in my job.	n=383	3.4	
I have the flexibility I desire in my position.	n=382	3.5	

Findings from this item suggest that employees generally understand the priorities of their immediate work group. However, they have limited awareness of the priorities of other work groups. Employees provided generally neutral ratings on the following items: "I understand the City/internal career paths available to me in my current position" and "I understand the current priorities of BES" suggesting additional areas for consideration.

How important would these professional development opportunities be to you? Please use a scale from 1 to 5 where "1" is "not at all important" and "5" is "very important." You may also indicate if you already receive adequate training.

Item	Response Count	Mean Score
Leadership development	n=378	3.9
Change management training	n=377	3.4
Equity and diversity training	n=380	3.0
Project management training	n=380	3.6
Communication skills training	n=380	3.7
Risk management training	n=379	3.4
Team management training	n=379	3.7
Cross-training across Work Groups	n=377	3.8
Process improvement training	n=381	3.8

Employees rated the following as of the greatest importance to them: "Leadership development," "Cross-training across Work Groups," and "Process improvement training." Respondents indicated "Equity and diversity training" was the least important professional development opportunity (however recruiting a diverse workforce is identified as important in other questions).

E. How can the BES support individual employees?

#### Improve and Develop Better Mechanisms for Communication

- Improve communication from the top-down
- Foster two-way communication: more information and transparency from management but also listen to employees:
  - 1. Gather employee feedback (such as BES employee survey as part of the strategic planning process)
  - 2. involve employees in decision-making, get their input and expertise when making decisions

#### Offer More and Better Professional Learning Opportunities (education & training)

- o Provide better training when first hired by improving onboarding experience
- Provide training on the following topics:
  - Technical skill training
  - 2. Leadership & management training
  - 3. Communication training
- Create a supportive environment for training:
  - 1. Allow for time to complete training
  - 2. Offer trainings aligned with employees' specific needs rather than generic trainings
  - 3. Less bureaucracy to attend professional development (e.g., excessive and complicated paperwork)
  - 4. Allocate more funding and resources to education and professional learning
- Develop BES mentoring program

#### Provide More Career Advancement Opportunities and Better Dissemination of Information about these Opportunities:

- Consider one-on-one career coaching to providing information about opportunities for growth and advancement
- Clarify or codify pathways to leadership/management positions (e.g., documentation of suggested pathways to management positions, defined career trajectories)
- o Discussions of potential advancements and pathways during annual reviews
- Provide internal, upward mobility (e.g., where possible, promote some employees internally and fill lower positions externally rather than hiring from outside the bureau for higher positions)
- Improve procedures and processes around internal advancement within BES (e.g., ability to negotiate salary in new positions rather than limited by limitations around salary increases)
- Use expertise and internal promotion from within BES rather than hiring external consultants

### Improve Leadership and Management

- Among management, gain skills in:
  - 1. Delegating
  - 2. Avoiding micromanaging
  - 3. Empowering employees
  - 4. Listening

- 5. Coaching/mentoring
- 6. Conflict resolution
- Implement a management accountability process
  - 1. Gather feedback from their employees on how to improve
  - 2. Solicit input from employees on managers' performance
- "Empower" employees- show that employees are trusted
- Eliminate "toxic management"

#### Improve Work culture

- Create a cohesive environment: "we are all under the same umbrella"
- "Breakdown silos"
- Modify the work environment to encourage collaboration and team work (e.g., open work spaces versus closed off cubicles)
- Provide opportunities for "cross-training" across work groups
- Hire more staff to reduce excessive workload on current employees
- Alternative work schedule, telecommute options for more employees, more flex opportunities for more employees
- o Recognize accomplishments, celebrate achievements
- Host employee morale events
- Listen to staff and implement mechanisms to do so

#### F. What can BES do to support teams?

#### **Open-Ended Themes**

- Create a "culture of trust" across BES
- Annual team building activities (e.g., retreat), joint trainings, and shared social events:
  - Annual team retreats for:
    - 1. Reflection
    - 2. Improving communication among work group
    - 3. Identifying successes from previous year and areas for improvement for upcoming work
    - 4. Building morale
    - 5. Goal setting, team accountability, and defining annual success
- Value and empower employees, from both the BLT leadership level and from middle management:
  - Recognize employee successes and areas of expertise
  - Engage in joint decision-making processes by engaging all levels of the teams. Ensure transparency when decisions are made by leadership or management
  - Elicit input from all employees and team members
- Better training for management and leadership on fostering team work and collaboration
- · Facilitate more collaboration and cross-training among work groups and divisions
- Model collaboration from top-down:
  - o Eliminate "turf battles"
  - o Demonstrate a feeling of "One BES" and Bureau-wide unity

- Create working teams of managers and Bureaus leadership that cross boundaries and work groups
- Consider tangible supports for encouraging collaboration and teamwork
  - Work spaces designed for collaboration
  - Shared space or conference room for meetings
  - Computer and screen in conference rooms for working on shared documents
  - o Tablets for groups during off-site meetings, field trips, conferences

#### Using BES Employee Survey Results

The BES employee survey provides valuable information for the development the Strategic Plan. The level of detail and thoroughness of the respondents provides not only clear broad themes, but also is a wealth of specific, actionable suggestions. To ensure results and findings are considered, Catalysis LLC recommended the following approaches:

- 1) Make the findings available to all employees.
- 2) Facilitate and encourage employee discussion and consideration of results.
- 3) Consider the survey findings in all BES strategic planning meetings. Refer to employee survey results when developing strategic initiatives and implementation plans.
- 4) Update any strategic planning work conducted prior to the employee survey to ensure that themes from the employee survey findings are addressed.
- 5) If needed, Catalysis will provide more details on the recommendations provided by survey respondents, while maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality of employees.

# External Stakeholders Summary of Findings

### External Stakeholder Summary of Findings

External stakeholders participated in a variety of mechanisms to gather input: interviews, focus groups, and a survey. The first section of this report highlights the themes from the interviews and focus groups, followed by an analysis of the survey results.

#### **External Stakeholder Interview/Focus Groups Overview**

Actionable comments and strategies are organized here into the following broad themes and subthemes:

#### 1) Communication

Themes around improving communication through clearer communication plans, consistent messaging and active engagement with customers and community.

- Communication Plan
- Branding & Messaging
- Customer & Community Outreach

#### 2) Equity & Diversity

Comments and ideas on how to ensure more equitable distribution of services and resources, and increased capacity of underrepresented women and minorities.

- Equity Initiatives
- Grant Funding
- Contracting & Procurement

#### 3) Leadership

BES was frequently called upon to continue to provide leadership in citywide planning and proactive approaches to policy and regulation.

- Citywide Planning
- Policy & Regulation

#### 4) Partnership

Stakeholder participants identified ways to continue and improve partnerships with both city government and community partners.

- City Entities
- Community Partners

#### 5) Scope

A number of comments identified need for clarification of the scope of BES services, especially among city entities.

- Overall Scope
- Between Bureaus
- Within BES

#### 6) Workforce

External stakeholders, especially among city partners, identified the need to manage an aging workforce, knowledge retention and the ability to attract strong expertise.

• Workforce Development

Broad Theme Category	Sub-Themes	Comments and Actionable Strategies
	Communication Plan	<ol> <li>Develop a communication plan that includes significant community outreach.</li> <li>More public involvement on projects, planning and decisions.</li> <li>Coordinate with other Bureaus on outreach and community engagement efforts.</li> <li>Hire professional communication/marketing staff.</li> </ol>
Communication	Branding & Messaging	<ol> <li>BES has had initial successful at rebranding – no longer considered the "sewer bureau." BES goals are embraced by the public (green, clean water). Continue to build on this work and branding to expand the public's view of BES.</li> <li>Refrain from apologizing for past issues and instead look toward the future.</li> <li>Leverage positive messages that BES, CSO, Big Pipe, etc. are operating and performing as planned.</li> <li>Messaging that conveys transparency to the public when delivery goals change.</li> <li>The BES narrative should include "return on investment" messaging.</li> <li>Develop consistent messaging across Bureaus.</li> <li>Develop messaging that reaches all audiences, especially historically underserved communities (e.g., translate materials, address issues of pertinence in underserved communities).</li> <li>More rigor in communicating impacts of green infrastructure – science and benefits.</li> <li>Avoid overly bureaucratic language.</li> </ol>
	Customer & Community Outreach	<ol> <li>Establish trust and credibility with the public through clearer messaging and transparency.</li> <li>Work to prepare ratepayers on understanding projects.</li> <li>Help customers to understand how projects fit into broader City goals - important to know that the City has a "path."</li> <li>Address bill confusion – most charges not "water" usage.</li> <li>Increase awareness and utilization of ratepayer assistance.</li> </ol>

	Equity &	Equity Initiatives	<ol> <li>Equity should be a part of the strategic plan.</li> <li>Assess risks to ratepayers (overflows, flooding, urban heat islands) to determine if risks are carried more by communities of color. Can these be mapped and shared?</li> <li>Ensure the Committee on Equity &amp; Diversity members are in leadership roles and carry authority.</li> <li>Initiate projects that address social/environmental justice issues in the community. Be mindful of impacts on East Portland and communities of color.</li> <li>Increase awareness and utilization of ratepayer assistance among communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities.</li> <li>Hire an equity manager.</li> </ol>
	Diversity	Grant Funding	<ol> <li>Create a tiered funding structure to ensure that well-established partnerships have consistent funding while also encouraging new partners.</li> <li>"Hand holding" for new and smaller grant applicants to provide support during the process.</li> <li>Ensure equitability in funding process (e.g., translate application materials).</li> <li>Require a greater % of grant funds allocated to addressing equity.</li> </ol>
		Contracting & Procurement	<ol> <li>Revisit and revise procurement &amp; contracting processes to approach differently and in ways that ensure opportunities and access for all providers.</li> <li>Improve procurement to include more contracts that address broader equity challenges with workforce (e.g., minority and female firms).</li> </ol>

Leadership	Citywide Planning	<ol> <li>Numerous positive statements of current BES leadership and collaborative approach – leverage this goodwill and approach.</li> <li>BES setting a good example of working together with other City entities – continue.</li> <li>Lack of natural resource mitigation oversight in City – BES could serve a leadership role.</li> <li>Opportunity for BES to take a leadership role in waterfront clean-up.</li> <li>Opportunity to take leadership role in climate change resiliency for the City.</li> <li>BES could lead on technical and engineering analysis to support policy decisions – design standards.</li> <li>BES could serve as a leader, as a catalyst, for community understanding of the importance of infrastructure. Could be leader (among cities) in updating aging infrastructure.</li> <li>Work within existing City policy and goals on development, growth, housing, homelessness, etc.</li> <li>Address gaps in City leadership in planning (in light of no "City Manager").</li> <li>BES should continue to provide leadership and role modeling with PEAK program and asset management. Willingness to share expertise with other Bureaus is very helpful to the City.</li> <li>BES should take a leadership role in promoting river access.</li> </ol>
	Policy & Regulation	<ol> <li>Take the lead again nationwide in innovation, green infrastructure and green solutions (e.g., green roofs, new initiatives in conservation, sustainability). Portland was once the leader for innovation but this has stalled over the past few years.</li> <li>Leadership should take "political" risks, especially in innovation, making sustainable choices and setting pro-environment policies. Set a precedent from the top through strong leadership that establishes innovative programs.</li> <li>Stand firm on pro-environment positions and policies, despite changing national climate.</li> <li>Set higher standards as necessary and appropriate.</li> <li>Be clear on standards, but also support other City development and planning goals.</li> </ol>

Partnerships	Collaboration with Other City Entities	<ol> <li>Come to the table as "One City". How can Bureaus support missions that are larger than their own Bureau, but Citywide?</li> <li>Work with other Bureaus and DEQ to think about how to collectively look at environmental and pollution issues. Can no longer treat water, air and soil as separate.</li> <li>Evaluate structures and processes of City and Bureaus to eliminate practices and policies that prevent partnerships between Bureaus (e.g., funding and how money can be used).</li> <li>Improve and build relationships across through strategies such as a Cooperative Leadership Institution.</li> <li>Seek connection across Bureaus at the manager level.</li> <li>Include other Bureaus/entities in projects from the start (e.g., ideation, planning).</li> <li>Build upon successful programs (e.g., Green street program, Errol Heights, Hamilton Stevens) and existing shared service models. Use these as models for successful collaboration between Bureaus.</li> <li>Coordinate current planning efforts (seismic plans, projects, COOP plans, etc.) to identify ways to leverage funding, resources and timing with aging infrastructure (streets, pipes, etc.).</li> <li>Explore a project management system (IT solution) to coordinate workflow as well as integration of planning and process on large projects. Project management systems could also help track metrics such as project portfolio, progress and completion, location of projects, budgets, coordination of workflow between Bureaus (PWB, PBOT, BES).</li> <li>Consider providing funding for DEQ to assist when their involvement is critical to a project. DEQ cannot participate until funding is in place.</li> <li>Regular check-ins with other Bureaus/Entities to address specific issues:         <ul> <li>Coordination with DEQ on complaint management</li> <li>BES – Portland Parks "Think Tank" to identity and address overlap, look for synergy.</li> <li>Strengthen partnership with BPS around Environmental Zones<!--</th--></li></ul></li></ol>
	Community- based Partners	<ol> <li>Value the work of NGOs and CBOs by seeking their input and expertise.</li> <li>Reinstate Watershed and Stormwater Advisory Group (WSAG) or similar body.</li> <li>Partnerships with community-based partners can provide:         <ul> <li>Relationships with the community</li> <li>Greater return on investments</li> <li>"On the ground" positive messaging, better marketing</li> </ul> </li> <li>Support and fund well-established community partnerships:         <ul> <li>Start with smaller projects to develop positive working relationship</li> <li>Include Community Benefit Organizations (CBOs) in the business plan and budget and document ROIs</li> </ul> </li> <li>Connect with the new "New Portlanders Commission" and IRCO.</li> </ol>

Scope	Overall	<ol> <li>BES has come a long way from just the "sewer" Bureau – but now needs to define scope.</li> <li>Name of "Environmental Services" may be misleading, or may need to be embraced more fully. Which "environmental services" are included and which are excluded?</li> <li>Define and bound the work of the BES: clarify roles, responsibilities (e.g., what role will BES play in flood management, Portland Harbor), services and effectively communicate this to the public and other bureaus.</li> <li>Can climate adaptation be an overt part of BES' mission? BES has technical expertise that can be shared with the City.</li> </ol>
	Clarification Between Bureaus/Entities	<ol> <li>Review missions across Bureaus to identify and address discrepancies in values and goals.</li> <li>Clarify role between BPS and BES in planning. (Does BPS have a policy role, and BES a technical role? not always clear).</li> <li>Set customer service standards across Bureaus and communicate these to the public.</li> <li>Clarify how water source complaints are handled between BES and DEQ.</li> <li>Clarify jurisdiction on urban forestry planning with Portland Parks.</li> </ol>
	Clarification within BES	<ol> <li>Define and communicate desired service level delivery.</li> <li>Clarify role of BES Watershed Group on City projects – what is their scope, how integrated with other services, scientific rigor behind requirements, clearly communicate benefit to overall goals.</li> <li>Define roles of constructed and natural kinds of green infrastructure and develop common understanding of value, benefits and ROI - among BES employees.</li> </ol>

Workforce Workforce Development	<ol> <li>Thoughtful planning for upcoming retirements and the need to capture institutional knowledge.</li> <li>Restructure job classifications to allow for more workforce entry points (work with OMF on achieving greater flexibility).</li> <li>Identify and/or design career trajectories that allow for upward mobility within BES.</li> <li>Train staff to understand zoning and City development goals. Understand how to work within current policy.</li> <li>Increase staff awareness of priorities of other Bureaus, and how to work within a One City approach.</li> </ol>
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#### **External Stakeholder Survey Overview**

A survey was offered to a number of external stakeholders, including those invited to focus groups. Following is a summary of the findings.

## 1. In your opinion, how effective is BES in providing the following core services on a scale from 1 to 5 where "1" is "not at all effective" and "5" is "very effective"? (n=25)

	Mean Score
Watershed, river and stream protection and restoration	3.63
Pollution prevention and control	3.39
Sewage collection and pumping	3.81
Sewage treatment	3.80
Stormwater management	3.41
System resiliency and response	3.20
Education and public involvement	3.12
Ratepayer assistance programs	3.50
Customer service	3.00
Customer billing	3.71
Permitting and regulation for commercial customers	2.86

Interpretation: Overall, external stakeholders who completed the survey provided average ratings on all items regarding BES's effectiveness. Mean scores ranged from 2.86 to 3.81, suggesting respondents though BES was neither very effective nor not at all effective. Note, this is the feedback from 25 respondents and we did not ask an equivalent question in the interview/focus group protocol so these findings should be interpreted with caution but seem to suggest potential for BES improvement.

When prompted to indicate areas where BES could improve, most of the input resonated with the input gathered across the external stakeholder interviews and focus group. Specifically, the external stakeholders' comments aligned with the following themes from the interview and focus group data: community engagement, improved customer/rate payer service, partnering with other bureaus, partnering with community organizations, and addressing equity issues. While in general their input corroborated comments from the interview data, a few additional ideas emerged:

- With regard to community engagement, offer education programs (for adults and businesses, in addition to K-12) that address topics such as water pollution, reduction of toxic materials, and conservation education;
- Make an effort to be responsive and proactive rather than defensive and reactive (likely resulting from recent lawsuits). For instance, plan and implement initiatives that go beyond the minimum related to stormwater, pre-treatment, sewage treatment, pumping, pipe maintenance, etc.

2. In your opinion, how important is each challenge for Environmental Services over the next 10 years? Please rank each of the following using a scale from 1 to 5 where "1" is "not a concern" and "5" is "major concern." (n=21)

Answer Options	Rating Average
Aging infrastructure	4.48
Demands for additional infrastructure or greater levels of service	4.52
Climate change and changing weather patterns	3.95
Customer and ratepayer satisfaction	3.55
Emergency preparedness	4.40
Employee diversity	3.60
Equity and environmental justice	3.95
Maintenance and care of existing assets	4.24
Natural disasters (floods, earthquakes)	4.20
Portland growth	4.25
Relationships with other Bureaus in the City of Portland	4.19
Relationships with regulators	3.90

Overall, respondents rated each of the potential challenges relatively similar with scores ranging from 3.55 to 4.52. Demands for additional infrastructure or greater levels of service, emergency preparedness, aging infrastructure, Portland growth, and maintenance and care of existing assets were rated slightly higher as compared to the other items. However, the findings for this question should be interpreted with caution as almost half of respondents (n=14) skipped this question.

When prompted to indicate any additional challenges not represented in the list provided, respondents noted several issues that BES should consider. Several of these aligned with challenges previously noted in the interviews and focus groups such as changes in population density, workforce changes resulting from retirements, new development and city expansion, BES and city leadership, customer service, and reaching all Portland neighborhoods including the west side. Additionally, the survey respondents noted challenges not previously identified including: invasive species, homeless populations living in natural areas, and potential privatization of public water sources.

The survey prompted external stakeholders to identify strategies for addressing issues and future challenges. Many of the suggestions echoed earlier comments from the survey, focus groups, and interviews. For instance, survey respondents suggested hiring a diverse workforce, workforce developments through training/education, fostering community partnerships, working collaboratively with other bureaus, and disaster preparation. One respondent also suggested policy around toxic reduction and for new developments. New strategies to consider included: recycling of sewage materials, waste mining, and/or biodigesting.

#### 3. In what ways does Environmental Services currently partner with you or your organization? (n=21)

Answer Options	Response Percent
Providing sewage and stormwater collection and treatment services	28.6%
Technical expertise and knowledge	47.6%
Supporting watershed health	57.1%
Addressing environmental concerns	42.9%
Creating community partnerships on projects	38.1%
Providing guidance and oversight on regulations	38.1%
Addressing public health and safety concerns	23.8%
Responding to natural hazards	14.3%
Addressing equity concerns	14.3%
Providing grants or funding	28,6%
Providing lab services (materials, soil testing, etc.)	4.8%
I don't know	4.8%
Not relevant to me or my organization	23.8%

A question on the survey asked external stakeholders to indicate how their organization currently partners with BES. The table displays participants' respondents and in general, BES partners with organizations through supporting watershed health, providing technical expertise and knowledge, and addressing environmental concerns. Notable, almost a quarter of survey respondents (23.8%) indicated "not relevant to me or my organization" suggesting future opportunities for developing new partnerships with these stakeholders. As with findings from the previous questions, these data should be interpreted with caution as almost half of respondents skipped this question. In the "other" section of the question, some respondents (3) indicate that BES does not partner with their organization or partners in a way that impedes their work or efficiency.

External stakeholders were asked on the survey to provide recommendations for fostering partnerships with their organizations. The respondents offered numerous suggestions, many of which echoed those provided by participants of the focus groups and interviews. The following is a list of strategies recommended by the external stakeholders who completed the survey:

- Host meetings or events with external stakeholder groups;
- Support watershed councils;
- Develop a sustainable infrastructure;
- Identify and/or hire community liaisons to support work in the community and with partner organizations;
- Provide more resources for facilitating partnerships with community organizations;
- Engage in collaborative planning by seeking input and feedback from community organizations;
- Develop community education resources and make the resources easy for all to access;
- Partner with community organizations on education initiatives in the community.

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