

CITY OF KENT

Racial Equity Plan Public Engagement Summary

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**CITY OF KENT
RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
SUMMARY REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2021**

INTRODUCTION

In early 2021, under the leadership of its Race & Equity Manager, the City of Kent began the process of developing its first racial equity plan. To ensure the plan is centered on elevating the lived experiences of its most diverse residents often left off decision-making processes, the City contracted with AV Consulting to gather community input through targeted outreach and a variety of data collection methodologies. The consulting team was given a four-month window to develop its tools, plan, conduct outreach, execute the data collection, and produce a summary report.

Understanding the unique challenges presented due to Covid-19 and the difficulty in engaging the community during the summer months, the consulting team recommended an emphasis on robust conversations applying a values-based approach. An approach that centers on race and is focused on the distinction between equity vs. equality.

What is and why apply a values-based approach?

Traditional methods for gathering input typically involve asking questions about barriers, needs and community members' ability to access city-sponsored programs and resources. While this approach is appreciated, it is often a 'check the box' approach that can be superficial and repetitive often leading to community fatigue and dissatisfaction especially when change is slow and minimal. For this reason, AV Consulting recommended that other than asking the same tired questions, the city consider initiating dialogues by asking each community group about their understanding and definition of racial equity. This set the framework for identifying specific community values and their vision for how to achieve an inclusive and just relationship with the city. This approach allowed the consulting team to identify opportunities where unity exists within diverse populations while at the same time honoring unique needs and nuisances in culture and tradition. While questions about accessing public services were included, the facilitators and tools applied aimed at grounding all responses through the lens of racial equity and inclusion.

Input Gathering Methodology

The consulting team worked with Uriel Varela, Race & Equity Manager to design tools that would include a list of questions to be applied to three data gathering methods. To ensure consistency in the input collected, the questions were similar across methodologies while at the same time adaptable and flexible. Once the tools were developed, the consulting team began the data collection process. The methods used included:

- Community interviews in English and Spanish conducted in partnership with the city's interns during the City of Kent's co-sponsored Health Fair in July.
- Five community listening sessions in English, Spanish, Kurdish, and Arabic in partnership with community-based organizations (CBOs) and,
- One-on-one CBO partner interviews.

Please refer to each section below for more detail on the questions asked.

Public Engagement Process & Barriers

The public engagement process began in June and was completed in mid-September. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic resulted in limited access not only to the general population but more specifically to the CBOs who were very busy during the summer running their programs and meeting community needs.

In response to input received from several community partners, priority was given to CBOs based in Kent as opposed to organizations that although support programming inside the city limits, their base locations are either in Seattle or a neighboring city. These locally based CBOs represented the vast diversity of Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) populations residing in the city.

Sadly, despite multiple attempts and prior relationships the consulting team had with these Kent-based CBOs, several partners either did not respond or declined to take part in interviews and/or host listening sessions with their resident participants. Their apprehension resulting from a lack of trust and feelings of tokenism with city staff after years of being asked their perspectives with limited results. In some cases, the only reason why some individuals *did* choose to take part in this engagement effort was primarily due to the trust with the consultants as opposed to wanting to engage directly with the city.

Some interviewees stated that although they felt strongly their diverse communities needed to play a significant role in helping draft the plan's design, before engaging further with the city, they wished to see concrete actions taken to directly address barriers caused by years of past harm and neglect.

Despite these setbacks, the team was able to conduct a total of 6 community partner interviews, 5 community listening sessions, and 55 community interviews. Please note that the names of those contacted will not be shared as several participants requested confidentiality stating past experiences of retaliation by city staff when providing candid and transparent feedback regarding their experiences engaging with the city.

Given partner hesitancy, AV Consulting has recommended to Mr. Varela that he, along with the City's Race & Equity Core Team analyze the results of this summary report and work with the consulting team to identify high-value, short-term actionable priorities to repair past harm and work toward rebuilding these relationships.

It is also important to note, that these results are only the tip of the iceberg. They in no way represent all the BIPOC communities or community partners located in the City of Kent.

COMMUNITY VALUES

AV Consulting recommends that the below community-identified values be integrated into the development of a racial equity tool that can be applied to the City's Strategic and Racial Equity Plans to once and for all eliminate traditional systemic white supremacist policies and practices. The process for developing this tool should include direct engagement with the community and not be finalized until it is vetted and approved by them.



KEY THEMES

Below is a list of combined high-level key themes generated through the public engagement efforts. While they are not representative of all responses nor all the diverse communities living in Kent, they lay the foundation for the work that lies ahead for the city. Individual results for each effort will follow below.

<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically, communication between the city and its diverse residents has been very poor. Information is not accessible, and the city needs to invest in providing and receiving information in multiple ways not just electronically but in person (calls, emails, flyers, texting, home visits, community dialogues, etc.). • Go <i>to</i> the community – do not expect them to come to you. • Establish regular community forums to share information in the locations where the community frequents.
<p>In-Language & Cultural Relevancy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Kent has a great diversity of BIPOC communities, languages, and cultures. The BIPOC community seeks a more robust relationship with the City to influence the policies and decisions that impact their daily lives. The city needs to adjust its westernized practices and invest in supporting community members to become more civically engaged. • The development of this plan is an excellent opportunity to advocate for system changes in partnership with all communities experiencing discrimination and racism. • Information needs to be made available in a variety of languages and social services available that are culturally and linguistically responsive to the needs of the community. • Not all communities are the same. Approaches and information need to be adapted to meet individual community needs. Accommodating different styles of learning and processing information by working directly with community partners and residents to understand what works best for <i>them</i>.
<p>Racial Equity & Equitable Representation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments in racial equity need to go beyond a plan. City staff is encouraged to walk the talk not just through training but through humility, acknowledgment of past harm, and action. • Provide anti-bias training for city staff and invest time in meeting with different community groups to understand their lived experiences with racism and discrimination connected to city interactions. • Increase representation through the hiring of more diverse staff, adaptability of city employment processes to make them accessible to diverse residents and provide in-language and cultural ambassadors. • Funding – honor local diverse community partners by increasing and funding them directly. If CBO partners lack the internal capacity to manage federal and state funding, invest in capacity building. Avoid using CBOs that are established outside of the city to funnel funding.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not tokenize, use community, or check the box. Engage through power-sharing and decision-making opportunities.

Ongoing & Real Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to engage in similar public engagement efforts regularly and consistently. Don't stop at these listening sessions/interviews but expand and enhance. • Provide workshops for a better understanding of city processes and concrete ways for how the community can continue to be involved. • Acknowledge the value of community partners and compensate them for their time and expertise. • Repair past harm by making bold changes that meet community needs in response to the various pain points outlined in this report.
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COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

Mercedes Cordova-Hakim led outreach and facilitation efforts for five virtual listening sessions including one session with youth. Collaborators included partnerships with Centro Rendu/St. Vincent de Paul, Mujer al Volante, and Qaydar Ali, a current staffer with Open Doors. Listening sessions were conducted in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Kurdish.

The below table demonstrates a summary of responses from all five listening sessions. The numbers in () indicate the total number of participants who replied with the same or similar responses. While there were nuances between communities, most responses were consistent across the board with all communities reflecting similar barriers and concerns. Responses that are unique and reflective of a particular population are reference accordingly.

To allow flexibility and increased access, some listening sessions were split into small groups and/or conducted via 1x1 interviews and phone calls. Attempts were made to maintain consistency in the content of the questions posed, however, some community groups required deeper descriptions and explanations especially relating to the distinction between equity and equality. A total of 33 Kent residents were engaged in these interactions with priority given to the qualitative as opposed to the quantitative.

Q1. Have you or, a member of your family participated in any conversations in the past where RACIAL EQUITY was discussed?

- 14 out of 15 have heard the term racial equity – Multilingual group.
- 7 out of 11 have heard the term racial equity – Adult Latinx group.
- 1 out of 7 has heard the term racial equity – Youth group.

1 a) What does racial equity mean to you?

- All residents are treated equally, regardless of race, equity, economic status (*all participants*).
- Equal access without fear of discrimination and retaliation.
- People of all races should be given the same opportunity and resources equitably, e.g., a family of a Caucasian origin should receive the same resources as a family of African, Middle Eastern, Asian origins.
- Nobody should feel excluded.
- Have the support from the police the same as everyone else.
- Equal access to public programs.
- No matter what language they speak.
- I don't know... I'm not sure. We don't talk about this at school.
- Justice

- Social justice among all communities living in a certain geographical region.
- “Racial Equality” means giving all races the same resource, whereas “Racial Equity” means giving people the same resource plus compensation for what they were deprived of in the past.
- Racial equity is an integral part of human rights, as it is one of the fundamentals and components of a properly rising society.
- Everyone has the right to equal protection, and everyone has the right to be treated and respected.

1 b) What does it mean to your community?

- No difference regardless of race, language, religion, and customs (all participants).
- Feeling comfortable and building trust in your community.
- Hope, respect, appreciation.
- Eliminating fear so we can engage with the city.
- Equity and inclusion in all public programs.
- The city needs to integrate itself into the community.
- Offer us the same opportunities, education, health.
- In my Kent community, people are looking for justice, equality, and equity. However, there are still people who are prejudiced and biased and mistreat other people based on race.
- The term “race” has a lot of negative connotations, color, language, language accent, facial characteristics, etc.
- To live in safety and peace.
- Creating an environment suitable for living and without feeling fear.
- Discrimination between societies is one of the biggest societal challenges. I faced a problem previously through racial discrimination because I was affiliated with the Arab community. My wife and children were attacked- because of race.
- Resources in my community have been equally distributed and have not been determined or predicted by race, identity, and demographics.

Q2. Share a value (examples: trust, respect, etc.) that come to mind when you think of what this means to your community?

- Respect (26)
- Trust (24)
- Justice (22)
- Fairness (16)
- Community (14)
- Value – BIPOC voices (12)
- Freedom (11)
- Opportunity (10)
- Support (8)
- Transparency (7)
- Empathy (6)
- Access (5)
- Integrity (5)

- Understanding (5)
- Non-judgmental (5)
- Listening (4)
- Culture (4)
- Inclusion (3)
- Safety (3)
- Communication (2)
- Assistance
- Connections
- Ethics
- Exchanging opinions
- Good life
- Human
- Humility
- Integration
- Relationship

- Religion
- Repair
- Shared – decision making

- Solidarity
- Unity

Q3. In what ways, would you like to see the City of Kent include these values to better serve you and your community? Growth opportunities?

- In-language information and services - Social services that are culturally and linguistically representative of the needs of the community. **(28)**
- Creating awareness about what the city has available for the community. Create consistent opportunities to bring more people together to have conversations about city programs and resources (calls, emails, flyers, do not rely only on online communication). Share information in the locations where the community frequents. **(26)**
- Develop educational workshops to share information about how the city processes and supports. **(18)**
- Anti-bias training for city staff – support the community by understanding their experiences with racism and discrimination connected to city interactions **(14)**
- Be aware of the community’s religious holidays and celebrations **(7)**
- Invite community and organizations to advise the city through committee work **(6)**
- Accommodate different community learning styles **(6)**
- Support the community through English classes (perhaps through zoom) **(5)**
- More employment opportunities **(5)**
- Through culture and the integration of all communities **(4)**
- More resources for youth **(4)**
- Fight poverty through a strong economy and joint social lectures to enhance confidence, share opinions, and educate families **(4)**
- Home visits to educate and connect to the community **(4)**
- Address the community’s fear **(3)**
- Invest in listening to the community - Include our opinions in your decisions **(3)**
- Include the list of community values in the equity plan **(3)**
- Supporting local organizations **(3)**
- Establish an Office of Social Justice to address issues of discrimination and to report violations of social justice, especially since the city has residents from different religious and cultural backgrounds. **(3)**
- Increased awareness/knowledge about all communities of all races and having open minds **(2)**
- Address parking and transportation barriers in local parks – Lake Meridian Park. **(2)**
- Revitalize downtown **(2)**
- Help communities have one standard of living
- Provide domestic violence support to women.
- Share resources to the community to combat violence (anti-bullying).
- Address socio-emotional issues for children and youth during the post-pandemic life.
- Need to expand to all neighborhoods (neighborhood centers)
- The recruitment and job application process are very discriminatory. There is favoritism in the approval of employment and a lack of training on how the process works.

Q4. What are the barriers and/or challenges that get in the way of feeling that you live in a city that is committed to RACIAL EQUITY?

- The biggest barrier is language **(28)**
- Safety – gangs, robberies, etc. **(24)**
- Investments to address the homeless **(22)**
- More diverse staff and leaders who represent BIPOC communities and speak their language **(11)**
- High rent, food, water, electricity **(8)**
- Lack of affordable health and childcare **(8)**
- Racism – how people look and treat us **(7- youth)**
- Lack of funding for youth programs **(7-youth)**
- Garbage **(6)**
- In language resources that are promoted and accessible **(6)**
- 70% of interpreters are not very good
- From youth – “A car hit a man and they just left him there on the side of the road.”
- Don’t know what type of programs are available

Q5. How do you think the city can help meet these barriers?

- More diverse staff, in-language information, awareness - In-language community representatives with each department (police, fire, internal services)**(28)**
- Continue these dialogues with consistency **(11)**
- Provide workshops for a better understanding of city processes **(9)**
- Higher paying jobs in Kent **(8)**
- Ongoing community research – adjustments to changing community needs **(7)**
- Acknowledge that many city residents do not trust the Mayor and city officials **(7-youth)**
- Mayor needs to get out and talk to the community **(7-youth)**
- Help with the reduction of overcrowded classrooms in schools **(7 - youth)**
- Provide school supplies for everybody in school **(7-youth)**
- More attention to youth – “We are the future of the City of Kent **(7-youth)**
- Include conversations about equity/systemic racism in school curriculum **(12 / 7-youth)**
- More opportunities to create and support youth leadership/city internships **(7- youth)**
- Be intentional about addressing community fears of discrimination **(7)**
- Address hostile work environment for diverse employees **(7)**
- Create more cultural festivals **(6)**
- Investment in youth – fundings & pathways to college **(5-youth)**
- Train youth on how to hold conversations about equity in the community **(8 + 5 - youth)**
- Websites have too much information and is not in language.
- Improve communication through television, radio, and flyers in the community.
- Organize community-specific committees to communicate directly with the city.
- Zoom meetings to introduce community members to city departments.
- Provide education specific to the undocumented community to help eliminate their fear of accessing city resources. Let them know that immigration status won’t be asked, build trust.
- Encourage CBOs, churches, businesses to support city projects.
- Show us how our input will be incorporated.

Q6. What would be a possible role for you and/or members of your community to help the city eliminate these barriers?

- Conduct webinars educating the city council on “racial equity.” Webinars should be targeted to meet the needs of each community **(14)**

- Provide opportunities for us to engage. Organizing educational courses so the community knows how to interact with the city and the city learns from the community. This includes more engagement with the police – only see them when there are problems - Neighborhood events with police **(13)**
- Create a plan and ask the community to vote for multiple-choice questions for more immediate information **(13)**
- Provide funding to organizations with connections to the community **(8)**
- Build a relationship with the community. Come to our apartment buildings and bring information. Earn trust with the community **(6)**
- Use phone and personal visits for people who can't use zoom **(4)**

Q7. What should be the areas of focus for the City of Kent when it comes to eliminating racial inequities?

- Jobs – **(18)**
 - Provide better salaries. Start a Casa Latina in Kent or a place where workers can go and get connected to job opportunities
- Housing - **(18)**
 - Lack of affordable housing
 - Slum lords – need more accountability and enforcement
 - Address the rent disparity. Rents are expensive and often the locations are scary **(12)**
- Homeless – **(12)** - compassion and safety
- Education **(11)**
 - English classes so we can navigate things better (4 out of 10 chose this option)
 - Policy and decision-making process training for community
- Safety – **(10)**
 - More patrols by police
 - Opportunities for the community to build trust with the police
 - Criminal Justice
 - Require apartments and mobile property owners to have security
- Oversight of city-owned trees – a tree fell and almost hit my house. Nobody ever came to check, and I didn't know where to go
- Health /Dental Services **(8)**
- Funding for youth programs **(6)**
- Economic Development
- Lots of racism and lack of language access

Other Comments

- Provide in-person listening sessions limited participation to those without access to technology.
- Latinx participants request that the city provide access to English classes so they may participate in city processes.
- Latinx participants requested the formation of consistent and collaborative table discussions with city representatives
- I sent a letter in March 2020 to the City of Kent about founding a community college in Kent. I stated my willingness and readiness to support the city with this milestone. I have not gotten any response yet for my suggestion.

- The unavailability of affordable housing is a big issue. Landlords and complex owners keep increasing the renting prices without any limitations causing homelessness, social issues, trespassing, etc.
- It is sad that the city must use external support to communicate with the community. Provide an outlet to receive requests and inquiries in different languages.
- We would like to see each nationality and language in Kent be represented within the City's council, police, and schools and on the official City of Kent website.
- More affordable programs. The YMCA is too expensive for families!
- We need a more involved and better-informed community.
- Kent families need meaningful partnerships with local health systems and community organizations.
- Providing culturally congruent education and supports to the multi-ethnic community in Kent.

Youth Comments

- More opportunities for mentoring of youth for future employment opportunities with the city.
- The city is depressing, too much garbage.
- The homeless situation makes it very scary for youth.
- Transportation needs to be provided to youth.
- The city needs to invest in youth programs – our program at Rendu has 40+ students with limited city resources and grants. We need more prevention programs & more mentors.
- Youth are very stressed due to the current conditions at their schools.
- Interested in learning more & participating in the development of the plan.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION – PARTNER INTERVIEWS

A total of 13 local organizations currently serving Black, Latinx, East and West African, Middle Eastern, Indian, Burmese, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other mixed-race communities were asked to participate in 60-minute interviews and asked the below eight questions. Six organizations accepted an interview, three declined and the remaining did not respond. The numbers in () indicate the total number of interviewees who replied with the same response.

Q1. Have you or your organization participated in any conversations with the City of Kent in the past where RACIAL EQUITY was discussed? If yes – How was racial equity defined?

- There is a huge disconnect between the city and immigrant and refugee groups. The city has not truly defined equity from a community perspective. It's all lip service **(4)**
- Frustration with being asked to participate in these conversations when the city has not valued feedback in the past. **(6)**
- A significant communication gap exists with the city doing minimal outreach **(6)**
- The city mostly funding large organizations that are not located in the city **(6)**

- The plan development process lacks an equitable approach. Don't just interview us, engage us in a meaningful and consistent way **(2)**
- The current grant process needs to change. It is not accessible nor equitable to smaller organizations **(2)**
- As CBO leaders, we give up our time constantly. Our input is not valued, and we see no results.
- A plan cannot be pushed on our community. We need to be part of its development.
- While I've had conversations with the police department about safety, fairness, and racism. I have yet to see any changes.
- The engagement has been limited to Human Services.
- The city needs to change its strategies especially outreaching to BIPOC communities.

Q2. Describe what RACIAL EQUITY means to YOU? to YOUR community?

- Historically, the city has not been equitable with BIPOC-serving organizations **(4)**
- The city's definition of a community is not reflective of how we define it **(3)**
- We achieve racial equity with a redistribution of resources to provide fair opportunity **(2)**
- Racial equity is disparities based on race in education, health, access to resources, and information. With the city, it's an inefficiency in how information is shared and the inability to do it in a way that the community can understand it. In every discussion and decision, the city must make it relevant and specific to each community's needs. For example, the mayor's newsletters and messages are ineffective. They do not reach the community. Mostly, because many people don't read, speak English, or have access to technology. The way the city communicates is very white. Every decision needs to be focused on the most vulnerable, not the most affluent.
- The authority of city leadership cannot outweigh the authority of the people.
- Require a path to racial equity with different approaches for each community.
- Distinguish between *African* communities and African American communities.

Q3. Share a value (*examples: trust, respect, etc.*) that come to mind when you think of what this means to your community?

- **Respect (4)** - For heritage, culture, and tradition.
- **Access (3)**
- **Trust (3)**
- **Understanding (3)** – structural and traditions of community
- **Fairness (2)**
- **Investing in (BIPOC) communities** - City-generated taxes should be given back to the community and informed by the community.
- **Transparency** - Share data about % of funding going to BIPOC businesses, orgs, and community projects.
- **Deep connections** - Not token gestures.
- **Responsive** - Be responsive to the community. Seek their permission and guidance. Don't just ask what they want, give them what they need. Work with them in a genuine and non-token way. Don't just look for photo ops. Do not exploit.

- **Lead with Empathy** - Understand that each community is different and must be reached differently.
- **Family** - Understand the variance as to how different communities define family especially elders.
- **Unique**
- **Unity**
- **Acceptance**
- **Hierarchy** – clan-based cultures.
- **Redistribution**
- **Not asking community organizations to have to fit into a language used by non-BIPOC/WS system**
- **Caring**
- **Love**
- **Justice**
- **Connection**
- **Culture**
- **Relationship-building**

Q4. In what ways, would you like to see the City of Kent include these values to better serve you and your community? Opportunities for growth?

- Consistently go **to** the community. Do not expect them to come to you **(5)**
- Demonstrate a genuine commitment to the community through action. **(3)**
- Engage in deep learning about structural racism and put training into practice **(3)**
- Increased focus on immigrant and refugee communities. **(2)**
- Hire change-makers rather than keeping staff who are comfortable with the status quo **(2)**
- Currently, nothing from the city is geared toward BIPOC. Transform the way you communicate.
- Invest in community leadership.
- Don't tokenize CBOs but support them by enhancing their efforts.
- Respecting boundaries set by our community.
- Respect the differences between African communities.
- Create dialogues to better understand our culture and traditions.
- The government needs to have a mindset and commitment to "equity".
- Break down institutions that have kept BIPOC out.
- Invest in youth and community.
- Hold strong conversations with the community and act based on learnings.
- Policy and decision-makers need to learn about the different cultural groups that live in the city.
- Share more information with community groups.

Q5. What are the barriers and/or challenges that get in the way of feeling that you live in a city that is committed to RACIAL EQUITY?

- Too much bias from staff. Need to hold them accountable for their learning **(3)**
- Lack of value from city leadership of their cultural communities. There is too much focus on the affluent and those that are moving down here from Seattle **(2)**
- The city does not understand that *each* community processes information differently. Translation is not enough.
- The city is not in alignment with the demographic changes.
- Business alignment is not reflective of demographic changes.

- The city maintains a structure of white supremacy.
- Too used to checking the box.
- Lack of connection with the community.

Q6. How can the city address these barriers?

- Stop checking the box **(6)**
- Create a community committee w/ decision-making power. Allow the community to help guide and inform institutional changes. **(6)**
- Invest in local CBOs and not large CBOs coming down from Seattle **(6)**
- Hire staff that accurately reflect the city’s demographics **(4)**
- Staff needs to understand how to value community. Not just CBO leaders but all community members **(3)**.
- Prioritize BIPOC **(3)** - currently, we are not a priority
- Reach out. Go “to” community and share space with us **(2)**
- Change culture of lack of communication with the community **(2)**
- Embody values when developing the plan and planning for services.
- Place a focus on food access. Ensure local food is culturally appropriate.
- Invest in data collection that is specific to BIPOC.
- Understand what community groups are doing and leverage resources.
- Transform the way grassroots community groups get compensated. Provide grantmaking/contracting workshops in language and easy for the community to apply.
- Create programs that are led by BIPOC.
- Hold other public institutions accountable – Green River CC, School district.
- Stop making decisions based on the tradition of white supremacy / western culture.
- Acknowledge and work toward eliminating the disconnect with the community.
- Take your time – don’t rush and make space to engage the community equitably.
- Racial Equity Plan is a living document and needs to have a constant evaluation by the community. Do NOT take the plan to the council until approved by the community.
- Do not erase and listen to “our stories”.
- Break down the system of only taking input and engage/act. Embrace community knowledge.
- Accept that current policies and practices prevent change.
- Demonstrate a will to change and learn.
- Keep us updated, informed -regularly.

Q7. What would be a possible role for you and/or members of your community to help the city address these barriers and be more equitable?

- Create a community accountability council with decision-making authority – holds city accountable for the plan and measures progress **(4)**
- Partner in plan design don’t just come to us for input. Compensate and engage us in your processes and decisions. **(2)**
- Integrate our voices more than just opinions.
- Help with policy writing.

Q8. What should be the areas of focus for the City of Kent when it comes to eliminating racial inequities?

- **Communication (5)** - Non-existent for non-English speakers. Press releases and newsletters are not effective. Sit and meet with the community regularly.

- **Housing (4)** - our community is all about family. Housing is key to maintaining stability and a sense of belonging.
- Education.
- Health.
- Criminal justice.
- Early learning.
- Legal assistance

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS – KENT HEALTH FAIR – JULY 2021

In July of 2021, the City of Kent in partnership with the King County Promoters Network, King County Public Health, and Latinos Promoting Good Health sponsored a health fair at the Kent YMCA. The event generated over 200 participants presenting an excellent opportunity to identify multilingual and bicultural Kent residents who were asked to participate in one-one interviews with city interns and community promoters. The purpose of the interviews was to gather input on their experiences with racism and discrimination, their vision for an equitable, inclusive, and safe Kent community, and how the city can improve its supports for its diverse communities.

A total of 55 responses were collected. Participants were asked to share their perspectives and received a \$25 gift card for their participation.

Most of the responses were anonymous with 23 participants sharing their contact information to engage in follow-up discussions

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Language

40% of the surveys were responded to in Spanish (22 responses) and 60% in English. 53 participants indicated the language spoken at home. Language breakdown (# of responses):

Arabic	19
English	10
Nepali	1
Spanish	23
Vietnamese	1

Race/Ethnicity

53 responses indicated race/ethnicity of participants (# responses):

Asian	4
Black or African American	2
Hispanic/Latino	25
White non-Hispanic	20
Do not wish to identify	2

Two participants who indicated speaking Arabic at home identified themselves as Middle Eastern and did not select any of the provided options on race/ethnicity.

None of the participants identified themselves as Native Hawaiian, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Other Pacific Islander. Recommend that this community be prioritized in future public engagement efforts.

Age

Most of the participants (55%) indicated being in the age range 31-50 years old. Age breakdown (# participants):

18 or younger	1
19-30 yrs	6
31-50 yrs	30
51-65 yrs	10
66-80 yrs	8

Zip Codes

Participants indicated living under Zip codes 98030, 98031, and 98032 (# participants):

98030	23 (42%)
98031	13 (24%)
98032	19 (35%)

Years Living in Kent

Participant’s responses ranged between 2 months and 42 years living in the city of Kent

Years	Count
Less than 1 year	3
1-5	18
6-10	19
11-20	12
Over 20 years	3

10 out of 23 people who speak Spanish at home have lived in Kent for less than 5 years, and one has lived for less than 1 year.

6 out of 19 who speak Arabic have lived less than 5 years, and one has lived for less than 1 year.

City of Kent’s Sponsored Programs or Services

64% of the participants indicated that they have used City’s programs or services. When looking at the breakdown by language: among participants who speak Spanish at home (23 responses), 40% have used city’s

programs. Among participants who speak Arabic at home (19 responses), 84% have used the city's programs. Nine participants out of 10 (90%), who indicated that language spoken at home was English, have used the city's programs or services. These results must be considered with caution as while they indicate differences in responses, we cannot conclude solely on these results that those who speak Spanish are less aware than other demographics.

The programs and services used by participants included:

- Library
- Food events/programs & Food banks
- Parks. Music in the park. Summer Park programs for kids
- Senior Center
- Kent Family and Youth Center
- Youth & Children programs, Programs for kids with disabilities
- Community centers
- Health fair
- Kent Cornucopia
- Community sponsored events
- EASL learning programs
- WIC
- Open Doors programs
- Nami walk-multiple sclerosis
- Utilities
- Clinics
- Sports
- Education to the Iraqi community

On the other side, 37% of participants have indicated that they have not used programs or services mainly because of the lack of information (are not aware of what programs or services are offered). Other comments included:

- Language barrier
- Because the community has not been involved
- Participants are new arrivals

Most of the participants (73%) indicated **not being aware that the City of Kent does not provide direct services** to Kent's residents but instead partners with community-based organizations to do so.

When asked about **how the city can make sure that the community is getting the programs and services it needs**, most of the participants indicated that the communications must improve with more information, particularly to people of color and in language.

Additional comments included how the city can improve communication:

- Promote through social media (Facebook), via Flyers- flyers distributed in markets, churches, and schools- Emails, Mail, and word of mouth, Radio programs, TV, internet
- Host Community events & meetings, Zoom virtual meetings (in different languages)
- Condo association meetings
- Promote through more organizations
- Not getting denied by providers

- Host in-language meetings (in Arabic, in Spanish)
- Give more information on disabilities
- Listening to the community
- By conducting surveys
- Boards and commissions
- Having events tapping into public health

Participants were asked how they feel **about living in the City of Kent**. The table below lists the options selected by participants:

47 participants (87%) indicated that **compared to other cities, the City of Kent is a great place to live**.

Connection with members of the community

65% of responses indicated that participants feel connected*

Option	Count	%
I feel connected to members of my community in Kent	35	65%
I do not feel connected to members of my community in Kent	19	35%

**One participant did not check any option on this topic*

Breakdown by Language:

48% of participants speaking Spanish feel connected*

90% of participants speaking Arabic feel connected

70% of participants speaking English feel connected

Safety

Most of the participants feel safe living in Kent (73%)

Option	Count	%
I and my family feel safe living in this city	40	73%
My family and I do not feel safe	15	27%

Access to Information & Resources

60% of responses indicate that participants think that it is easy to find and access City of Kent resources**

Option	Count	%
Finding and accessing City of Kent resources is easy.	32	60%
It is not easy finding and accessing city information	21	40%

***Two participants did not check any option on this topic. One participant who indicated that it is not easy finding and access info commented that the access has been limited and only provided online.*

Equitable Treatment

67% of participants (37) indicated that they feel treated equitably when connecting with the city. One participant that did not mark this option, commented that they do not feel treated equally, another participant commented that have not had communication with the city.

Feelings of Inclusion

65% of participants (36) responded that they would like the city to be more inclusive in the way it serves its residents.

Ways City Can Be More Inclusive

Communication/Language access

- Communicating/educating people about programs/city's organizations.
- Better communication.
- Information office. Phone number for general questions and communication.
- Use all languages and ways to communicate help/support. Translators at community events.
- Awareness about available programs and services.
- More support to Hispanics. More bilingual staff.
- More communications when it comes to changes in buildings/neighborhoods.
- Ask them [*residents*].
- Treating everyone the same.
- More programs for children and youth.
- More outreach. More flyers. Promotion through Facebook, Radio, and TV.
- Communication in different media.
- Tech gap: They [*the city*] want to do everything through computers, the web, virtually.

Community engagement & involvement in the decision process

- Residents are not involved with the city's decision process.
- Various events that center on all.
- Supporting community organizations better.
- Members of my family are special needs. The city needs to provide opportunities for them to participate in the decision-making process.
- Being included in the community.

City's staff/leaders

- City's employees coming to visit communities and answer questions.
- Have leaders present directly **to** the community (major and council).
- Better and diverse leadership.

Equity, Equal opportunity, culturally responsiveness & Anti-Racism

- Having equal access to jobs.
- Accepting other cultures.
- Everyone treats everybody equally.

- Have classes about people with disabilities. Making sure the apartment complex has parking for disabilities and their caregivers.
- More diverse representation for the city’s employees.
- Better housing options.
- Activities are available for all.
- We must have equal opportunity for all. Connect people. No racism. Good communication.
- Community bonding events. More multicultural events.
- Having outreach events. Being language inclusive. Translators. Culturally relevant food.
- Lower taxes. Homelessness.
- Eliminate racism.
- Be patient with each other.
- Treated equally by police, without racism.
- No discrimination based on color or language.
- Let everybody know that everyone is equal.
- More values, more respect, no racism.
- Approach people.
- This is a good beginning!
- I don't feel treated equally because of the language barrier.
- Include all cultures to improve communication and live without racism.
- There is equality and public spaces.
- No discrimination. Inclusion. Being treated equally.

Access to In Language Information

Most responses (74%) indicate that the city needs to improve the way it provides information in other languages***

Option	Count	%
The city does a good job of providing me with information in my language.	35	26%
The city needs to improve the way it provides information to residents in other languages.	12	74%

*** Eight participants did not check any option on this topic

- More information and support in Spanish and other languages are needed.
- Hard to access information in Arabic.
- It has been harder to access resources during Covid.
- More information in other languages, especially on emergency/power outages, etc.
- More health and cultural events, and more information.

City of Kent – Living & Safety

- I like the city and its nature
- Crime response is slow
- Kent station needs to have more patrol/ security for safety
- Homelessness. High taxes. Slow Police times.
- Give more care to parks.

Positive feelings

- Peaceful. A great place to live.
- Live comfortably, a place where you are always treated well.
- It's very important.
- I feel comfortable.
- It's good when you feel there is no racism.
- It's something nice because you feel respected.
- It feels good if it is considered *[about inclusion]*.

Eliminating racial inequities, participants indicated that the city should focus on Housing (30), Jobs (19) & Education (19), and Criminal Justice (14), in that order, from the most voted to the less voted.

Other inequities: Transportation, Health, Racism, Leader's selection process, Being more inclusive of BIPOC.

Only one participant did not respond to this question, commenting that she/he/they don't see inequities.

- Lack of programs: Education has been difficult. We need summer programs and after-school activities.
- More programs for kids/ affordable housing.
- Access: Transportation accessibility
- Other:
 - Housing
 - Discrimination from people/leaders
 - Ignorance of other people's needs
 - How the community is treated fairly
 - A limited number of opportunities for most in need residents
 - Downtown is a bit dirty. People don't keep it clean. Parking is another issue
 - Security.