

Front and Centered

2017 Community Listening Sessions:

Pollution, Climate Change, and the Puget Sound





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Introduction

Front and Centered is a statewide, community-driven coalition working to achieve environmental justice by asserting policy solutions that center equity. Our members are the leadership of communities first and worst hit by environmental and climate impacts – communities of color and indigenous communities. Together, we are working to build the power and capacity of a statewide movement for racial, economic, and environmental justice. We do this by growing our member’s leadership and power to change laws, reverse destruction of the environment and our communities, rebalance the economy and political power, and build up healthy communities.

Esther Min, MPH, CPH, is a graduate student in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences at the University of Washington in the School of Public Health. Her experience includes working with communities on environmental justice issues such as affordability and access to safe drinking water in California. She continues her environmental justice work through her graduate studies reducing environmental health disparities through community engagement and community-academic partnerships. Esther Min attended many of the listening sessions and was contracted by Front and Centered to conduct the analysis for this report.

Purpose of this project

- Listen to concerns of communities of color across Washington.
- To help prioritize concerns and identify community driven solutions.
 - Develop and advocate for equitable strategies.

Funding

The community listening sessions were funded through The Russell Family Foundation, the Rose Foundation, and the Seattle Foundation (climate change section). Esther Min’s participation in listening sessions were possible through donations from Ms. Crystal Dou.

Who was involved

Front and Centered worked with community organizations across Washington to identify opportunities for listening session. The primary targets for engagement were communities across Washington who the literature indicates are likely to be identified as disproportionately vulnerable to cumulative environmental burdens, particularly:

- Communities of color
- Households with lower incomes
- Immigrants and refugees
- Linguistically isolated groups.

Community listening sessions took place in geographically diverse areas throughout the state.

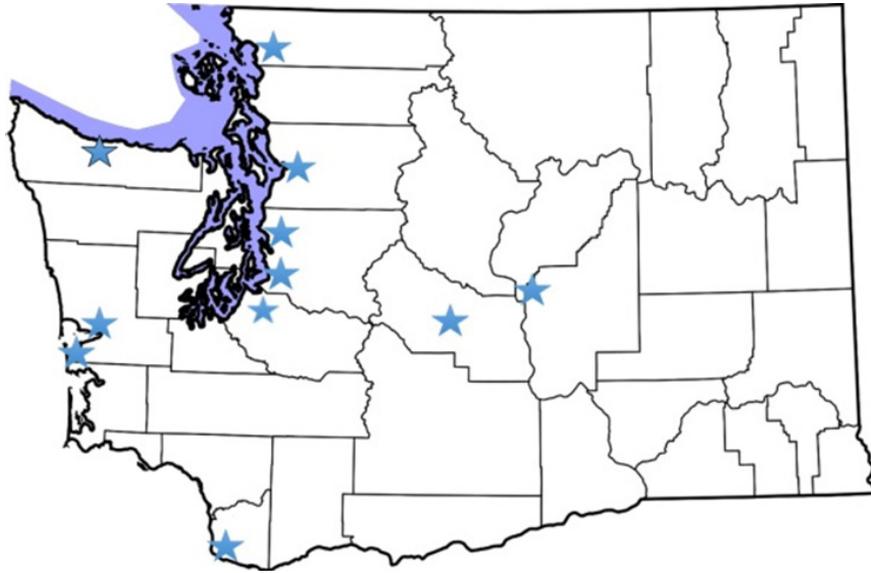


Figure 1. Locations of the eleven community listening sessions with 178 participants in Washington from July to November 2017.



Organization	Date	Location	Participant Information	Participant Count	Language	Issues
OneAmerica	7/31/2017	Vancouver	Latinx from Fruit Valley and surrounding neighborhoods	20	Spanish/English	Pollution, Climate, Puget Sound
Chaplains on the Harbor	8/15/2017 8/20/2017	Westport & Aberdeen	Homeless, Incarcerated, Native, Latinx, from Grays Harbor County	9	English	Pollution, Climate, Puget Sound
Community to Community	8/17/2017	Bellingham	Farm Workers, Latinx, Youth from Whatcom and Skagit County.	15	Spanish	Pollution, Climate, Puget Sound
Latino Community Fund	8/18/2017	Ellensburg	Latinx youth, from central Washington	29	Spanish/English	Pollution, Climate, Puget Sound
Entre Hermanos	8/23/2017	Seattle	Latinx from Seattle metropolitan area	12	Spanish	Pollution, Climate, Puget Sound
Na'ah Illahee Fund	8/25/2017 9/7/2017	Port Angeles & Yakima	Native, from Peninsula, central and eastern Washington	7	Various/English	Pollution, Climate, Puget Sound
Mother Africa	8/25/2017	Kent	North African / Arab from south King County	12	Arabic/English	Pollution, Climate
NAACP Snohomish	9/9/2017	Everett	African American, various from Snohomish County	10	English	Pollution, Climate
Asian Pacific Cultural Center	11/13/2017	Pierce County	Asian Pacific Islanders from Pierce County	44	Korean/English	Pollution, Climate, Puget Sound

Host Organizations

Asian Pacific Cultural Center

Pierce County

Asia Pacific Cultural Center (APCC) serves as an interactive cultural crossroads between local and international communities. In Washington, 10.6% of the population or 731,000 people are of Asia Pacific descent. And each year this number continues to grow. Asia Pacific Cultural Center (APCC) represents 47 different countries and has the experience and reach among the Asian and Pacific Islander communities, especially in the Greater Puget Sound.

"In Tacoma, APCC hosted a listening session in both English and Korean with 44 elders from the Korean community. The Korean community is health conscious so the effect of the environment on people is a very important matter to the Korean community."

Chaplains on the Harbor

Grays Harbor County

Chaplains on the Harbor is a faith-based center providing the community with resources and leadership development in Grays Harbor, Washington. Chaplains on the Harbor hosted two listening sessions with 21 total participants in Westport and Aberdeen, including the homeless people, incarcerated people, and tribal members of their community. Both sessions were in English.

"The listening sessions were conducted after a routine meal program at a church in Aberdeen. The majority of the people we work with are poor white people, but about ¼ of who we visit in prison and serve on the street are Indigenous. Most of them belong to the Quinault Nation, and some from various Alaskan tribes. In a listening session, we prioritized the participation of our Quinault members."

Community to Community Development

Whatcom County

Community to Community Development (C2C) is a women-led grassroots organization dedicated to food sovereignty and immigrant rights. C2C is located on Turtle Island on the lands of the Coast Salish people, specifically Lummi Nation. C2C hosted a Spanish listening session in Bellingham. The 15 participants included Latinix young adults, parents, farm workers, and students from the community.

"Our beliefs are based on the notion that society should arrange its relationships so that everyone has equitable access to the fundamental democratic processes affecting their everyday lives. C2C is led by women of color that have lived the reality that U.S. history reveals; that people of color, women, and poor and low-income communities have been excluded from the promise of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" so eloquently expressed in our great country's Declaration of Independence."

Entre Hermanos

Seattle

The mission of Entre Hermanos is to promote the health and wellbeing of the Latino gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning community in a culturally appropriate environment through disease prevention, education, support services, advocacy and community building. Entre Hermanos hosted a listening session in both Spanish and English with twelve Latinix individuals between ages 25 to 60.

“Our mission statement goes hand in hand with your objective; committed to the direct engagement and input from communities of color on environmental issues disproportionately impacting them. We have served as a center for resources for our community and we have continued to combat injustices that Hispanics and LGBTQ members face.”

Mother Africa

Kent

The mission of Mother Africa is to assist African refugee and immigrant women and their children to reach their highest potential. Mother Africa achieves this mission through multicultural group and individual counseling, survival skills training, African cultural awareness education, cultural competence training for caregivers and the African population itself, referrals and consultation. Mother Africa hosted a listening session in both Arabic and English with twelve women from North Africa / Arabic cultural backgrounds.

“We are committed to building leadership, advocacy and community action capacity to reduce barriers to health, education, safety and economic independence while fostering an empowering environment that celebrates cultural diversity, families and socioeconomic growth.”

NAACP Snohomish

Everett

The Snohomish County Branch (SCB) NAACP currently serves all communities between South Snohomish County and the Canadian Border. The community listening session took place in Everett, including participants from Edmonds, Everett, and Lynnwood. The ten participants represented various backgrounds and ethnicities.

“The SCB NAACP’s community network consists of a range of individuals of different ethnic make-up. Although we do serve the larger Snohomish County Community our efforts focus on underrepresented communities subjected to disparate impacts of economic, social, political, and educational institutions.”

The Latino Community Fund

Central Washington

The Latino Community Fund (LCF) cultivates new leaders, supports cultural and community based non-profit organizations, and improves the quality of life for all Washingtonians. To achieve its mission and address the needs of Latinos, LCF programs create a vibrant community through civic engagement, healthy families, arts and culture. In Ellensburg, LCF engaged 29 Latinx youth to participate in the listening session, in both English and Spanish.

“Our vision is a vibrant and civically engaged Latino community in Washington. Latino Community Fund of Washington identifies, shares and advocates for what is working in the Latino community. Healthy and educated Latino families build vibrant local communities and economies in Washington State.”

OneAmerica,

Vancouver

OneAmerica is Washington’s largest immigrant and refugee organizing, advocacy and civic engagement organization. Our mission is to build the power of immigrant and refugee communities to advance fundamental principles of justice and democracy at the local, state and national level, with key allies. OneAmerica hosted listening session in Vancouver in both English and Spanish. Twenty community members, mainly Latinx, participated in the meeting.

“While working at the state level on climate justice advocacy and organizing, OneAmerica has been building our environmental and climate justice work in local communities in Washington State. Founded as Hate Free Zone as a community response to the backlash against Muslim, immigrant and refugee communities in the wake of 9/11, today OneAmerica is a statewide leader organizing immigrant and refugee communities to shape the policies, practices and institutions that impact their communities, families and lives.”

Na’ah Illahee Fund,

Olympic Peninsula and Yakama Nation (statewide participants)

The mission of Na’ah Illahee Fund is to support and promote the leadership of indigenous women and girls in the ongoing regeneration of indigenous communities. Na’ah Illahee Fund hosted two listening sessions as part of the tribal community meetings: one in Yakama Nation with 15 people Native people from Snake and Columbia Rivers and another in Lower Elwha.

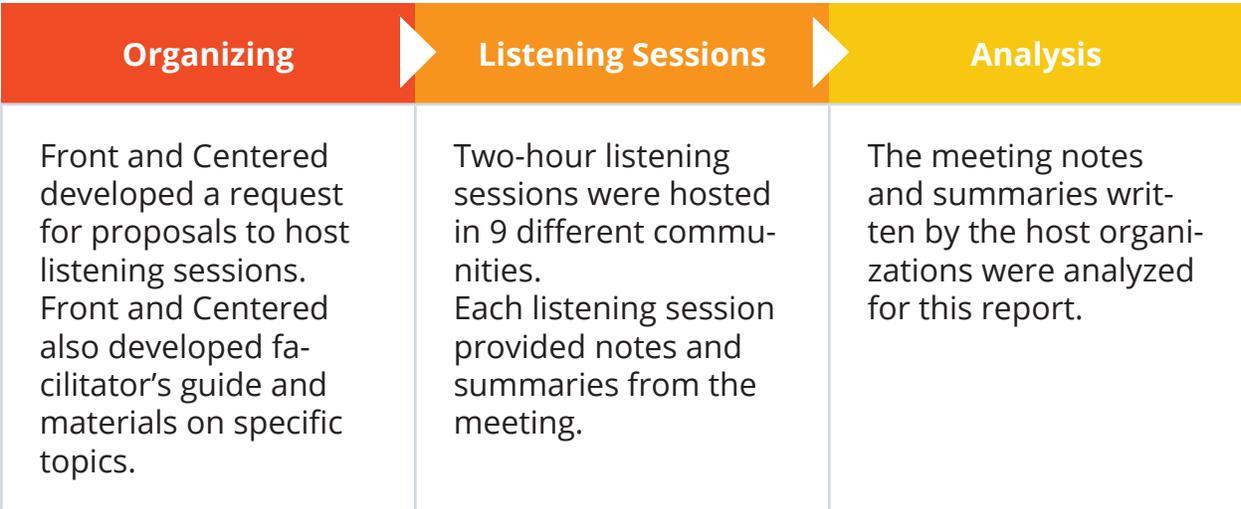
“We believe that Native women are at the heart of Indigenous communities and that the vision, the initiatives and perseverance of Indigenous women should be supported with resources. We seek transformative change at the community level by supporting Indigenous women’s traditional models of leadership and organizing. We believe that stronger Indigenous women leaders can determine their own priorities for the future and can protect our Mother Earth more effectively.”

Listening Session Methodology

Front and Centered issued a request for proposals (RFP) from community-based organizations across the state to host listening sessions, including circulation among more than 60 coalition members. The RFP offered financial support at a based level and additional funding depending on the need for childcare or translation. Front and Centered developed a facilitator’s guide and accompanying materials, including a sign-in sheet with zip codes, a note taking template, a summary template for facilitators, and a request for photos to be returned within two weeks of the meetings. Community-based organizations responded to the request with a description of their communities and their plan for implementing a listening session. Community leaders from host organizations facilitated the sessions, took individual notes, and summarized each of their meetings. In addition, Esther Min attended many of the listening sessions. The two-hour community listening sessions were hosted between July - November 2017. Food, beverages, childcare, and interpreter were available when appropriate.

Detailed meeting minutes from all the listening sessions were used to identify common themes. The transcript analysis was conducted using QSR-NVivo 11 Pro, based on grounded theory.

After the analysis, the draft findings were reported back to the host organizations by email with a request for comments. In addition, the findings were presented in webinar and circulated by email to ensure results aligned with the host organizations’ experience.



Findings

Findings for each section are summarized with overall results followed by regional highlights and select quotes.

Pollution, Community Health, and Wellbeing

The following questions were asked to determine the pollution burdens and impact on communities.

Pollution
What kinds of pollution, if any, are impacting your life or work and that of your family and community?

Pollution outcome and sensitivity
What factors best show if your community is healthy or doing well compared to other communities?

Answers regarding pollution, community health, and wellbeing will be used to inform an environmental justice mapping project.

The following themes were addressed throughout the different community listening sessions to varying degrees: water, pollution, housing, air, food, health, children, and community.



Figure 1. Word cloud of most frequently mentioned words for the environmental justice section.



Figure 2. Map of the variety of topics brought up in context of water.

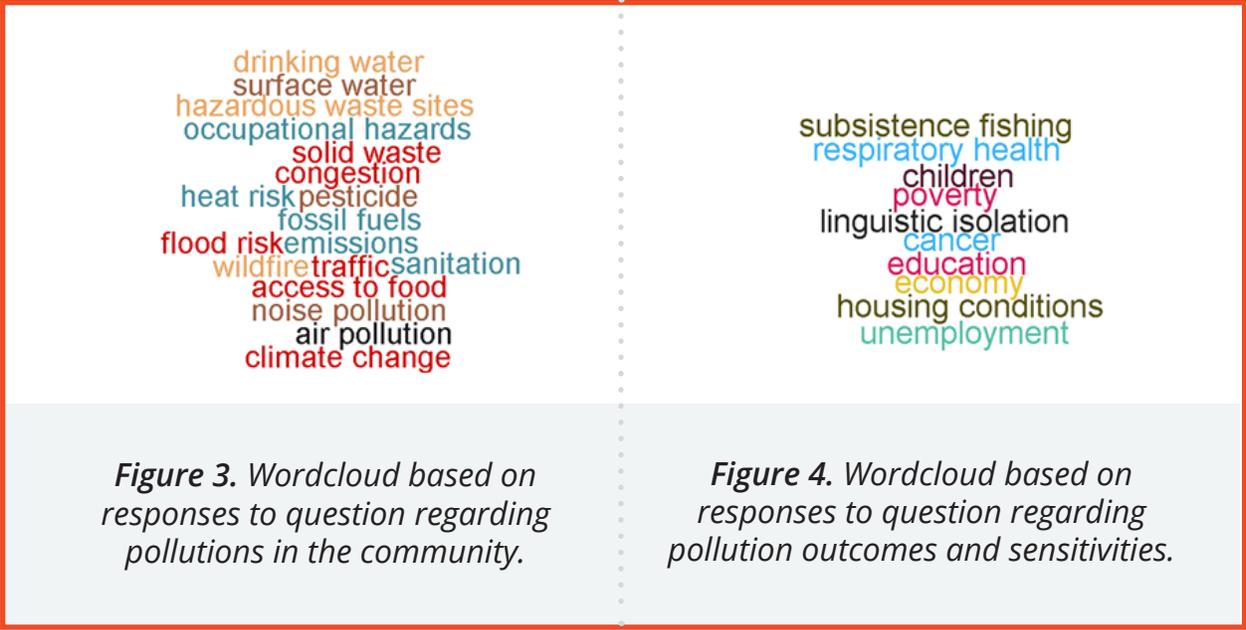
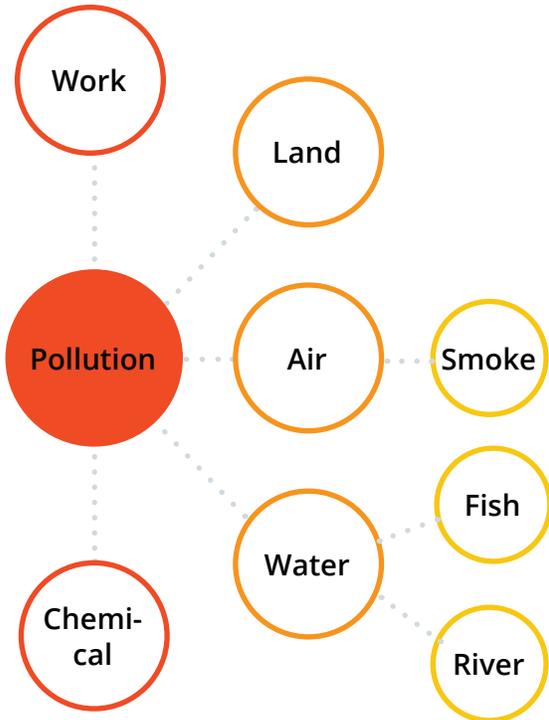


Figure 3. Wordcloud based on responses to question regarding pollutions in the community.

Figure 4. Wordcloud based on responses to question regarding pollution outcomes and sensitivities.



Water

Water was one of the most prominent themes identified. Contaminants in drinking water and surface water, accessibility of water for both consumption and recreation, cost of drinking water, changing climate affecting surface water, and water affecting subsistence fishing were noted as concerns.

Community Highlights

A community meeting in Seattle had concerns over water pollution. The meeting in Ellensburg had concerns over pollution in water and how it affects recreation. The Kent meeting identified contaminants in drinking water as a concern. Contaminants in the surface water affecting wildlife and drinking

water contaminants were two issues identified at the meeting in Everett. The meeting in Vancouver discussed contaminants in bodies of water, water shortage (both due to extreme weather and changes to groundwater table) as prominent issues. The meet-

ing with the tribal communities on the Snake and Columbia Rivers stated concerns of contaminants affecting drinking water and native fish population. This affects the traditional practices and food for the tribal communities. Community meetings of Westport and Aberdeen had concerns over the contamination of their drinking water. This concern was also voiced when talking about the availability of clean water in order to consume and fish in the community. The meeting in Bellingham had concerns over water contamination and water availability. Lower Elwha community meeting was most concerned with contamination in water affecting traditional practices, native fish population, and subsistence / commercial fishing. Lack of access to clean drinking water was also a concern. Cost of bottled water was also brought up as an issue when dealing with contaminants in the local water sources. The meeting in Tacoma noted contaminants in drinking water and surface water as pollutants affecting their communities.

[T]here is the red tides that definitely affect our fish and shellfish.	Lower Elwha
...I think we should have more access and effort to get more clean and healthy food and water.	Lower Elwha
Algae is starting to bloom more and more every year, we can see the river change and it is impacting fishing.	Snake/ Columbia River

Health

Industrial drift	Pesticide drift	Air traffic	Gas leaf blowers	Repatriation
Illegal dumping	Mutation of native species	Secondhand smoking	Noise pollution	Smoke/ pollutants from wildfires
Ventilation	Extreme heat	Housing condition	Drinking water contamination	Pesticide runoff

Pollution



Several communities were concerned with pollution affecting their health and that of their communities. Some stated pollution in general while others were more specific. Pesticide, chemicals, traffic, fossil fuels, runoff, and radiation were among those participants specifically named. Three communities identified noise pollution as a pollution impacting their communities (Seattle, Ellensburg, and Everett).

Pesticides are in the fields, workers are sick, wildfires, workers becoming more exposed to chemicals.	Bellingham
Gas makes pollution because the car does not filter out the carbon dioxide out.	Kent
The freeway is a bottleneck in this area.	Vancouver
There isn't anything we can do when it comes from Hanford, just support the clean up.	Snake/ Columbia River
Government need better regulations for quality water, air, and control pollution.	Tacoma

Air & Asthma

The impact of air pollution on individual's and community's health was brought up in multiple meetings. Participants across the state identified asthma as a health concern from air pollution (Westport, Aberdeen, Bellingham, Ellensburg, Kent, Everett, Tacoma, and Lower Elwha). Smoke and air pollution from wildfires over the summer of 2017 were also raised as concerns across communities.

Pesticide exposure related illness	Pesticide drift	AIR	Gas leaf blowers	Air traffic
Industrial drift	Coal	Secondhand smoking	Traffic and vehicle emission	Smoke/pollutants from wildfires
Ventilation	Extreme heat	Commercial development	Deforestation	Desertification
Drought	Heating/cooling	 Air traffic	Housing condition	Mold in homes

My mom has asthma and she works in the fields. Chemicals affect her. When there was smoke in the air last week, it affected her, going to work.	Ellensburg
I have asthma. The whole summer it's been hard. I box, and getting into that training plans I have to go through, it's been hard to go on runs because of how bad the smoke's been in the valley.	Ellensburg
There is a concern about asthma, especially when moving into a rented house or apartment poorly maintained.	Vancouver
There is a lot of asthma in the younger generations because of the pesticides and chemical sprays from the orchards.	Snake/ Columbia River

Food

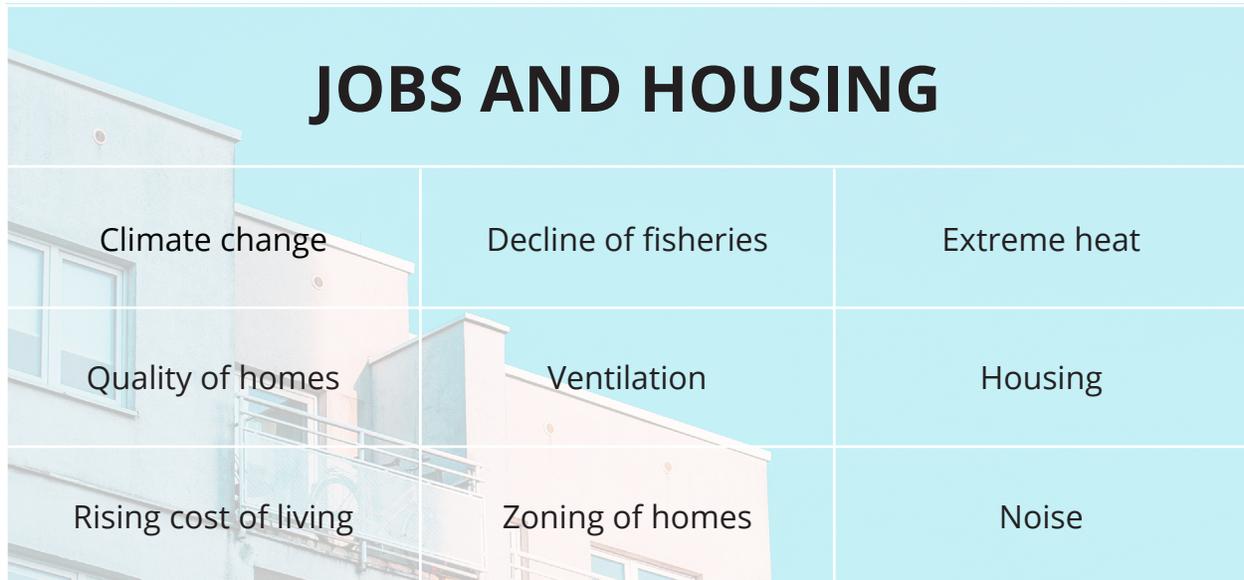
Many communities stated food as an important factor that impacts their lives. Concern over food security was brought up in various contexts. Access to fresh food and traditional diets were the most frequently raised concern. Concerns over the affordability and accessibility to healthy food options compared to high caloric food were also raised.

Community Highlights

The meeting in Westport voiced the need of fresh affordable options for food in their own community. Many members stated having to travel to a neighboring community to access fresh produce. The community meeting in Bellingham felt access to affordable healthy food was an important factor to a healthy resilient community. The meeting in Kent expressed concern of the potential chemical or pesticide residues on food. For the community meeting in Everett, "safe access to food within walking distance" was one of the factors contributing to a community's health. Food availability was a concern for the communities in Vancouver. The tribal community meeting along the Snake and Columbia Rivers felt the availability of traditional food was important to their community's health. Similar concerns were voiced in the community meeting of Lower Elwha.

We want fresh vegetables, maybe a farmers' market.	Westport
I think we should have more access and effort to get more clean and healthy food and water.	Lower Elwha
I really hope to see us get back out again to gather and hunting areas.	Lower Elwha

Jobs & Housing



Unemployment or job availability impacted several communities. Multiple communities raised the interconnectedness of employment and housing as important actors in the resilience of their community. Housing conditions came up as a concern, especially for those that rented their apartment or home. With issues such as lack of ventilation, deteriorating conditions, or mold, renters felt there was a lack of control of their own home environment that often-exacerbated health issues such as asthma.

Community highlights

The meeting in Grays Harbor identified employment as one of their biggest concern and expressed the importance of steady jobs and infrastructure to support jobs and housing. The community meeting in Kent raised job opportunities as a factor for a community's health and resilience. Both communities in Kent and Vancouver raised concerns with their home environment and lack of power to act on issues when affordable housing is only available in less desirable areas or with poor home environments.



Everyone is out of work – it’s like a rotation – if you don’t have an address, you can’t get a job, and if you don’t have a job, you can’t get a house.	Westport
[T]here’s pollution inside of the apartment which comes from the carpet and mold on the wall. The manager will not change it for you, and cleaning makes it worse. And the air pollution such as smoking cigarettes, smoking marijuana, etc. We did ask people to stop smoking near our house, but they do not listen.	Kent
When we go to the manager, the manager says the people who lived before you didn’t care for them, so we should be fine with it.	Kent
Low-income families, such as Fruit Valley, are clustered by the train tracks and industrial centers.	Vancouver
Areas with more pollution are more affordable for low-income families. Schools in areas with more pollution tend to be more neglected and have more issues compared to schools in more affluent schools. In this neglected schools, children with family problems (including having two parents working all day to support family) often feel neglected or have lack of attention from teachers or administrators.	Vancouver
To bridge communities and generations through arts, culture, education and business.	Tacoma

Economic Impact of EH Concerns

Chronic disease	Solid waste cleanup	Nuclear contamination (Hanford)	Superfund sites
Brownfields	Quality of homes	Zoning of homes	Rising cost of living
Loss of biodiversity	Harvest time	Rising cost of energy	Climate change migration
Heating/cooling	Housing condition	Drinking water contamination	Heat related illness
Industrial contamination	Commercial development	Ventilation	Mold in homes

Vulnerable population: Children & Seniors

Multiple communities identified children as a vulnerable population to various pollution in their communities. In addition, people stated that children and youth were the future of their communities and emphasized the importance of environmental stewardship for children. Senior citizens were brought up as another group of vulnerable population.

The playground is also polluted because it has a lot of chemicals such as the paint coming off from the handle, which kids can put in their mouth and make them sick.	Kent
Life would be longer if there is less pollution. There will be healthy kids, more production of people if they are healthy in terms of work.	Kent
The children knowing where the areas are and plants are. Our community has a connection as a family, kids go as a group or family to go and gather in these places.	Snake/ Columbia River
Senior citizens are really hurting here. Every month my bills are going up, electricity is going up.	Westport

Occupational health

Occupational health was brought up in several communities. Lack of practices to protect the workers was raised as a concern, especially in vulnerable communities.

In the Bellingham meeting, community members were worried of occupational exposure to pesticide and extreme working conditions such as extreme heat. The community had experienced recent illnesses and death due to prolonged heat exposure and poor working conditions. Participants of the Westport meeting also voiced the occupational risk their community members face working in local industries. One participant from Ellensburg expressed occupational risk to unhealthy air pollution and chemicals. The community of Kent noted the mental health of workers was important to preserve the health of the community.

Workers don't have a safety net anymore. If you're not part of a union, you're screwed. It boils down to management a lot, and no protections left. If they don't like you, they can make you go.	Westport
My mom has asthma and she works in the fields. Chemicals affect her. When there was smoke in the air last week, it affected her, going to work.	Ellensburg

Access to tradition



Two communities raised concerns of preserving and accessing traditional practices and cultures. Some stated being unable to hunt, fish, and gather in their traditional ways, following ancient gathering and trading routes due to pollution and recreational activities. People attributed many of the concerns in the figure above as causes.

Community resources and assets

Many communities stated community resources and assets as important components to build a resilient and healthy community. Various employment opportunities, well-maintained affordable housing, responsive city representatives, access to education, respect towards traditional ways and cultures, and opportunities to improve the environment were seen as community assets.

A community that gives back to itself. If there's a bunch of kids in the community, you do something for them, not just for money.	Ellensburg
Good health and education for all, frequent events such as dialogues and meetings for the community.	Bellingham
Really responsive city council.	Everett
We have to make sure people understand history. We have to show kids the history of the land and ancestors.	Snake/ Columbia River
Change in natural environments impacted due to climate	Snake/ Columbia River

Health

Health was brought up in the following ways: drugs and alcohol use/abuse; mental health and stress; safe needle use; mold in homes; chronic diseases; public health; pesticide exposure related illness; and heat related illness.

Chronic	Contaminated	Asthma
Mold in homes	Pesticide exposure	Public health
Heat-related	Mental health	Safe needle use



Climate Change Impacts & Resilience



Figure 4. Wordcloud of most frequently mentioned words for the climate change related questions.

Impacts of Climate Change

In order to assess the impacts of climate change, the following question was asked. In what ways, if at all, do you think you, your family, your community might be impacted by global warming and climate change right now? How about in the future?

Jobs

Many communities noted concerns of employment and job conditions. There were concerns of changing work conditions for farmers due to the changing climate. For example, extreme weather would impact the length of harvest, loss of work hours, and prolonged exposure to extreme heat. Some communities were concerned of the impact of climate change on the fishing industry.

The algae from warming waters is impacting the fishing industry and fishing jobs.	Westport
Our fishing industry has been hurting.	Westport
What happens when extreme weather becomes more frequent? Laborers will lose work hours due to this, a valuable source of income.	Vancouver
Shorter harvesting periods is one of the biggest signs. In some areas you have a really short harvesting time and in some areas they are extended.	Snake/ Columbia River

Water & Food

Rising sea levels and its impact on communities were concerns in many communities including Aberdeen and Vancouver. Other communities were also worried about the availability of food (transportation, production, and access to food). Climate change would also compromise traditional food sources.

It would devastate everyone on the riverbank, let me tell ya. It would get us first.	Aberdeen
Rising sea levels displace people and with the water table dropping, there is less water available to use for daily purposes.	Vancouver

Health

Some communities noted the health impact. Many attributed the recent wildfires over the summer of 2017 as the result of climate change. Poor air quality as a result from frequent wildfires worsened many's asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

There are more diseases in the world. People are getting cancer.	Kent
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Children & Future

Concerns for children and the impact of climate change on their lives were noted in some communities. One community in Ellensburg was worried of how climate change would worsen over time.

Will kids even have an outside to go to? If things are getting bad now, what will they look like in 20, 30 years? We need to change our lifestyles.	Ellensburg
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As parents, we are concerned for the future of our children due to the consequences of global warming.	Vancouver
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Resilience & preparedness

Building resilience was emphasized in multiple communities. While some voiced not feeling the impact of climate change yet in their communities, they stressed the need to be prepared for the future impacts of climate change.

Extreme weather such as drought, frequent wildfire, unseasonably high temperatures are affecting our communities especially when some communities have less ability to respond and be resilient.	
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Because we have a moderate climate here, it won't impact us as much as compared to Eastern Washington or areas with tornados.	Everett
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It doesn't seem like it's affecting us right now, but in a few years or decades or generations we will see big changes. We will lose our forests in Washington and sea-level rise, the coast will be gone. We will lose our resources like Antarctica. We need to find a solution to stop global warming.	Ellensburg
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Resilience to Climate Change

Facilitators asked, "How might you be able to respond to those impacts and what barriers might you, your family, your community face in responding?"

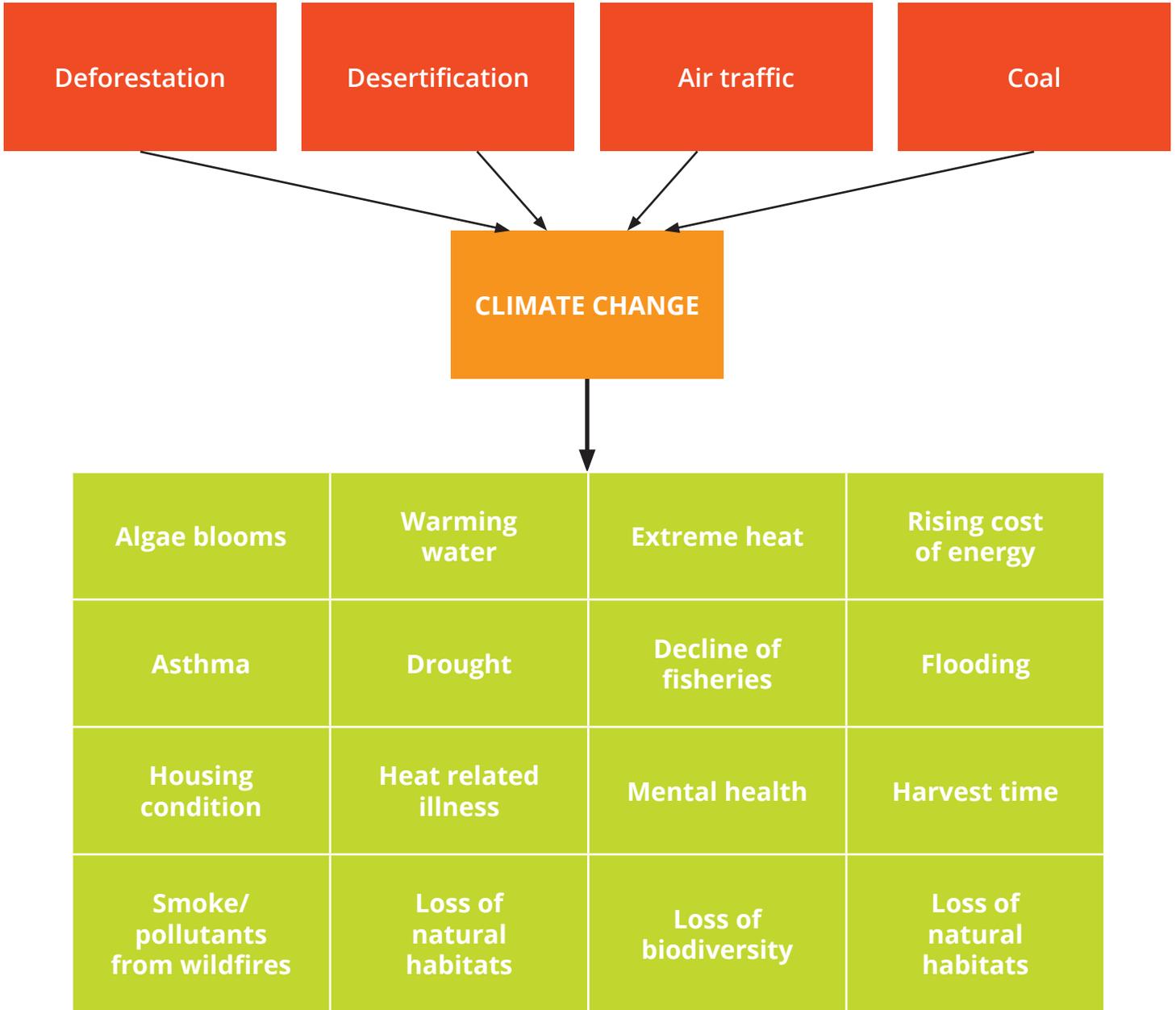
Many suggested limiting the production of carbon and waste through changing habits, creating economic incentives, and implementing policies to encourage preparedness. For example, many communities suggested working on issues such as policies to reduce carbon footprint together in order to empower those that have been demor-

alized and marginalized. Some noted needing support for cost of living in order for people to live healthier lifestyles and prepare their families and communities for climate change.

Prominent barriers to respond include lack of time, resources, access, and empowerment of marginalized groups to address these issues.

Lobbying our legislators to pass more eco-friendly laws to reduce our carbon footprint. A lot of people don't see what's going on, so they don't think it's affecting them. It's like the cooked frog syndrome where it's slowly dying, but it doesn't feel it until it's too late.	Ellensburg
The government needs to invest in the people so they can respond better to the climate change in a better way than how we are dealing with it now.	Kent
Lack of empowerment of marginalized groups.	Everett
The problem is so big individuals seem demoralized and unable to do anything.	Everett
The people and groups working on the issue are not working together.	Everett
At apartments, where they do not allow the use of air conditioners, parents do not know where to take their young children during hot weather.	Vancouver
There is a need to speak out for ourselves, our families, and friends. Especially helping those who cannot speak out because they cannot vote or for other reasons. Especially needed when the political climate attacks climate change and cuts funds to help environmental and climate change programs.	Vancouver





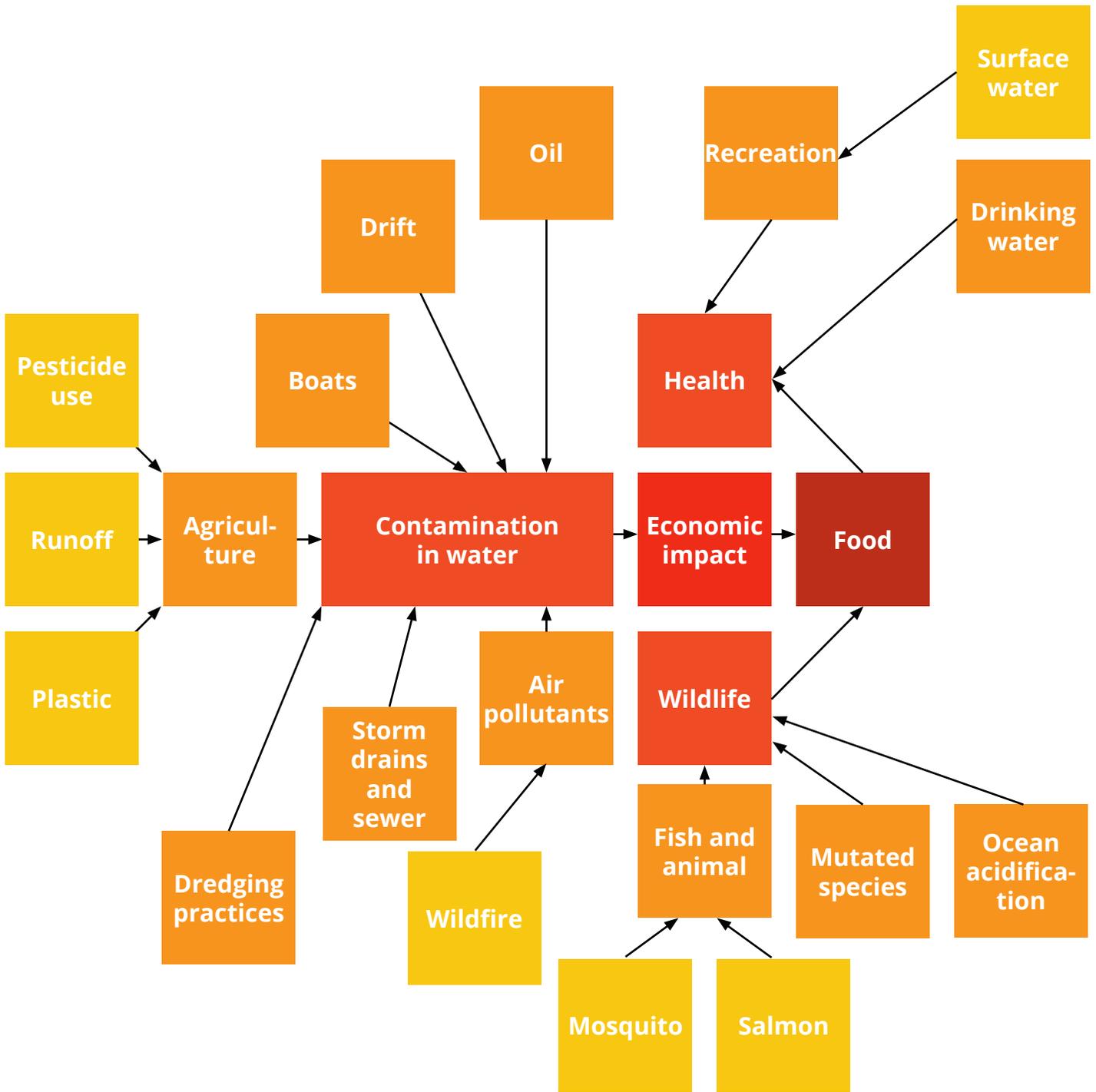


Figure 3. Concept map of topics raised for health of Puget Sound and its impact.

To begin the listening session facilitators began, “we need communities to identify how they are impacted by the health of Puget Sound and its watershed and what type of solutions could reduce disparities and create net benefits to communities of color.”

Health of Puget Sound

Community members were asked the following question: “In what ways, if at all, do you think your family, your community are impacted by the health of Puget Sound/ Salish Sea and the rivers and streams that lead to it?”

Many communities stated the health of Puget Sound impacts their family's and community's health. Some felt that due to the contaminants and worsening health of Puget Sound, clean drinking water is becoming more expensive to access, adding on an economic burden to already strained communities. Water contaminants affecting native animal population (salmon) and ecosystem were also brought up in several communities. A community member stated the potential for Puget Sound to harbor bacteria and other contaminants, increasing the risk of spreading diseases. Various communities noted seeing genetic defects in wildlife more commonly than before. Waste, such as garbage in the water and on shorelines, also affected communities. A participant in Everett stated both recreation and food are affected by the health of Puget Sound. A participant in tribal communities living along the Snake and Columbia Rivers stated how a clean Puget Sound benefits all Native people near the Puget Sound area. There was some confusion whether the water is contaminated or not, and how to know if the water was clean.

To test out the water, you just put water in a bottle and close it and then open it, if it smells like chlorine then it has chemicals.	Kent
Contaminated water affects health and water filters are expensive.	Bellingham
The water makes a great pollution, such as for animals. It can spread diseases from one place to another.	Kent
Recreation: If the river is polluted you can't go fishing. If the animals are gone the hike isn't as enjoyable. If the trees are hurt by climate change then more likely that they'll burn. Our food is affected by pollution.	Everett
The cleaning up of the Puget Sound benefits all Native people. We have to be concerned with Native communities near the Puget Sound and they should be concerned with what we are concerned about. You can't just clean up one spot and expect all things to be cleaned up, you have to work together. We have to be concerned with the Puget Sound as well. It is more beneficial to stand together than act as individual tribes.	Snake/ Columbia River
Can't do outdoor activities with kids when things look too polluted.	Everett

	Health	Drinking water	Waste and Contamination	Recreation	Food	Ecosystem/wildlife	Culture/tradition
Bellingham		✓	✓				
Seattle	✓		✓			✓	
Kent	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Lower Elwha	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Everett	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Snake/Columbia River	✓				✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Summary table of impact by health of Puget Sound.

Pollution to Puget Sound

The participants were asked the following question.

Now think about pollution that goes into Puget Sound / Salish Sea, especially pollution picked up by rainwater on roads and paved land on the way to sea. In what ways, if at all, do you think you, your family, your community might be impacted by that pollution?

Contaminants in drinking water and food (seafood particularly) were a concern for communities. Some stated pollution prevents their families and communities from recreational activities. The community meeting in Kent noted that pollution will affect the local economy more as pollution gets worse. Many stated the contaminants from chemicals, solid waste, and hazardous waste influencing their communities.

Lack of educational materials regarding pollution was mentioned as an issue in several meetings. These participants stressed the importance of having educational information accessible in languages other than English.

Some ways pollution impacts communities are expressed below in quotes.

People will be sick, water becomes unsafe to drink.	Bellingham
Helping communities keep clean because some are dirty, especially those communities that don't know Spanish (indigenous languages that are not usually provided), and don't know what to do.	Bellingham
It affects the economy, tourism... in the long term it will impact how much money it will bring into the state. If the water is polluted then nobody wants to come to Seattle.	Kent
Drinking water contaminants. Water is our most precious resource.	Kent
Bacterial growth impacting shellfish collection.	Everett
Can't do outdoor activities with kids when things look too polluted.	Everett

	Contaminants	Drinking water	Chemical, solid, hazardous waste	Economy	Recreation	Food	Wildlife/economy
Bellingham	✓ (cars, oil)		✓			✓	✓
Seattle		✓	✓				✓
Kent	✓		✓	✓			✓
Lower Elwha	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Everett	✓				✓		✓

Table 2: Summary table of impact by pollution of Puget Sound.

Puget Sound as a Priority

For this section, the following question was asked: Is preventing this pollution or cleaning-up Puget Sound something you think is important for your community to invest time and effort in? If so, how can we prevent pollution and/or clean up Puget Sound?

Communities generally agreed that clean Puget Sound is a priority to their communities. Outreach, education, and awareness were identified as important factors to make the Puget Sound free of pollution.

Suggestions for outreach included education in multiple languages to build awareness in communities and for volunteer clean-up and recycling opportunities. One suggestion was to integrate the pollution and clean-up of Puget Sound into local school programs and bring children to see how pollution can affect the Salish Sea and how youth can influence the clean-up. Others suggested coordinating clean up efforts with volunteers from the community, promoting recycling, and composting. Some participants were wary of the cost to clean up Puget Sound but stressed the importance of the investment to clean up contaminants affecting the Puget Sound area.

Some quotes are presented below.

Information about contamination in different languages and communities that are not normally reached out to.	Bellingham
Puget Sound clean is expensive — it's too big.	Seattle
Investment worth it- leads to better air, higher quality of life for family.	Seattle
The most important thing is bringing awareness to cleanliness. The government needs to bring a campaign to educate the community. The individuals need to also teach the kids how to take care of the Puget Sound.	Kent
Prioritize development of brownfields sites.	Everett

	Education in multiple languages for general public	Volunteer clean-up, including recycling awareness campaign	Awareness campaign	Prevention campaigns and incentives	Education in schools on contamination and prevention
Bellingham	✓	✓			✓
Seattle	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Kent	✓	✓	✓		✓
Everett	✓	✓	✓		✓

Table 3: Summary table of prevention and/or clean up of Puget Sound.