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August 15, 2016

Mayor Edward B. Murray
City of Seattle
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104
Sent via email to: ed.murray@seattle.gov

Kathy Nyland, Director
Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
Sent via email to: kathy.nyland@seattle.gov

RE: Executive Order 2016-06: Equitable Community Engagement

Dear Mayor Murray and Director Nyland:

Futurewise is a non-profit organization that works throughout Washington State to create livable, equitable communities, protect our working farmlands, forests, and waterways, and ensure a better quality of life for present and future generations. We work with communities to implement effective land use planning and policies that prevent waste and stop sprawl, provide efficient transportation choices, create affordable housing and strong local businesses, and ensure healthy natural systems.

We support Executive Order 2016-06 and commend your leadership in prioritizing equitable and accessible outreach and engagement practices across city departments. Equitable engagement will ensure that all Seattle voices are heard in City decision-making processes, in particular the voices of communities traditionally excluded from full engagement and participation, including communities of color, renters, low-income households, people experiencing homelessness, immigrants and refugees, persons with limited English proficiency, LGBTQ, youth, and seniors.

The *City of Seattle Health and Equity Assessment* enclosed and found at <http://futurewise.org/resources/publications/SeattleHEA.pdf> conducted by Futurewise and its partners shows that while Seattle as a whole may be thriving, not everyone is benefitting from the city's growth and prosperity. Seattle's most diverse, lowest income communities continue to experience lower rates of homeownership, lower access to resources like parks, recreational facilities and elementary schools, and worse health outcomes than the city as a whole.

At the same time, the assessment highlights that disparities are reduced when the City is intentional about increasing equity. For instance, through targeted investments, low-income communities, persons of color, and English Language Learners now have better access to parks and libraries than they did a decade ago. Equitable engagement and participation is the foundation of fair decision-making and resource allocation, and is critical to continuing this work.

Seattle is changing, and the future of our city is more diverse. The city's young people are more diverse than the city as a whole, and almost one in five Seattle residents was born outside the United States. Equitable community engagement that prioritizes accessible communication and opportunities for participation will lead to better outcomes for all Seattleites and a more equitable future for our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Wierzbicki', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher Wierzbicki, PE
Interim Executive Director

Enclosure