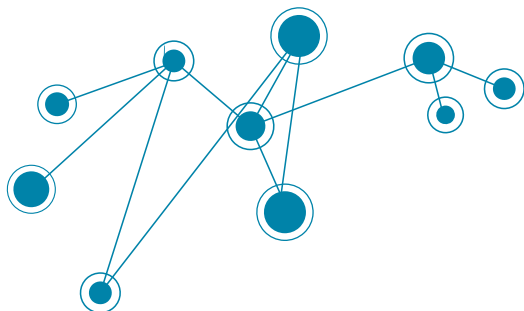# EQUITY IN SUSTAINABILITY

An Equity Scan Of Local Government Sustainability Programs

Researched and Written by Angela Park

USDN | urban sustainability directors network

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About the Publisher

The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) is a peer-to-peer network of local government professionals from cities across the United States and Canada dedicated to creating a healthier environment, economic prosperity, and increased social equity. Our dynamic network enables sustainability directors and staff to share best practices and accelerate the application of good ideas across North America.
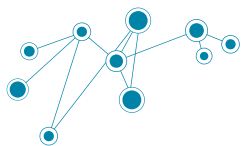
The connections fostered by USDN have become increasingly important as cities both large and small lead the way in developing the next generation of sustainable communities. USDN members collaborate to produce resources and tools to spur innovation and advance sustainable practices.

About the Author

Angela Park is an independent consultant, writer, and founder/executive director of Mission Critical (formerly Diversity Matters), a nonprofit organization dedicated to making equity and diversity hallmarks of progressive advocacy and policy making. She brings more than two decades of experience on sustainable development policy, environmental justice, equity and diversity, and organizational and leadership development to her partnerships with institutions across the nonprofit, government, philanthropic, and private sectors. She researched and wrote *Everybody's Movement: Environmental Justice and Climate Change* and her work has been published by *The Diversity Factor, Grist,* and Yale University and featured in *Audubon.* Angela has testified before Congress and state legislatures and lectures at colleges across the United States. Previously, she worked at The White House in both terms of the Clinton/Gore administration, managing sustainable communities policy and constituency engagement at the President's Council on Sustainable Development. She coordinated state-level sustainable development initiatives at the Center for Policy Alternatives and co-founded and served as deputy director of the Environmental Leadership Program.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Equity is emerging as a core component of sustainability. Leading cities and regions are now making equity central to their sustainability efforts—in name and in practice. To guide this report, the USDN Equity Scan Steering Committee agreed on this definition of equity:

> Equity in sustainability incorporates procedures, the distribution of benefits and burdens, structural accountability, and generational impact

> This includes:

> - Procedural Equity—inclusive, accessible, authentic engagement and representation in processes to develop or implement sustainability programs and policies
> - Distributional Equity—sustainability programs and policies result in fair distributions of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community, prioritizing those with highest need
> - Structural Equity—sustainability decision-makers institutionalize accountability; decisions are made with a recognition of the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that have routinely advantaged privileged groups in society and resulted in chronic, cumulative disadvantage for subordinated groups
> - Transgenerational Equity—sustainability decisions consider generational impacts and don't result in unfair burdens on future generations

Increasingly, there is an economic, political, and environmental case to be made for equity and targeted solutions that address the needs of the most disadvantaged can, in fact, benefit everyone. Local governments are promoting equity as sound fiscal and fiduciary investments in the long-term health of their communities. As demographic change sweeps the country, cities and metropolitan areas will serve populations that are majority people of color, if they do not already. For the sustainability field, the authentic integration of equity and economy—adhering to spirit of the Three Es and triple-bottom line—is a necessary step toward expanding the political constituency for sustainability, beyond environmentalists. Individuals who identify more closely with social justice and economic development and who consider social and economic issues high priorities are more likely to see the relevance of sustainability to their lives and work through a wider lens. The emerging political majority, the constituency for sustainability, will demand an authentic commitment to equity. It will test for credibility, seeking to make sure sustainability's promise isn't merely nicely-phrased words in plans, but results they can see, feel, touch, and enjoy in their neighborhoods, homes, family, and their lives.

SCANNING THE FIELD: GOOD PRACTICES TOWARD EQUITY

This report aims to shed light and provide guidance by sharing good practices that local governments can emulate to ingrain equity more fully in their sustainability efforts. There is a wealth of experience and expertise on which to draw. Cities are not implementing good practices one at a time, checking off a box as they go. Good practices intertwine. Progress in one area supports movement in another arena.

I. FRAMING AND COMMUNICATION: Integrate equity into framing and communication of sustainability

GOOD PRACTICE #1: Define sustainability proactively beyond "green," fully integrating equity and economy and a triple-bottom line approach

Cities signal their commitment to equity both by how they introduce the concept of sustainability to residents and in their ongoing reinforcement and framing. Because sustainability is perceived as synonymous with "green," environmental, and ecological issues, cities must be proactive in reframing the term to embrace broader social, economic, public health, and safety issues. Cities that are integrating equity successfully are painting a holistic picture of the purpose of their sustainability programs. They are tying sustainability to an interwoven array of issues connected to community vitality and prosperity. Importantly, in leading cities, sustainability isn't merely being defined in a holistic manner; it is also being framed by explicitly naming historic inequities, underserved and vulnerable populations, the desire for fairness, and the need to create equal opportunities for residents across neighborhoods.

> Examples:
> St. Louis, Missouri
> Washington, DC

GOOD PRACTICE #2: Connect the language and principles of environmental justice and public health to sustainability whenever possible

Public health and environmental justice are two specific opportunities for broadening the frame of sustainability and expanding how it is perceived. They are pathways for making equity more visible within sustainability and their increased prominence holds the potential to engage a more diverse mix of residents in sustainability efforts, including those who may perceive conservation and ecology as distant issues pertaining to others. Cities are beginning to lead with public health, making explicit ties to environmental and economic issues within a sustainability umbrella. Like equity, environmental justice expands the frame of sustainability. A few leading cities and counties have integrated the language and principles of environmental justice into policies, programs, and staffing, and, in rare instances, into the structure of environmental agencies as stand-alone programs. As cities explore their options for beginning or deepening the integration of equity into sustainability, public health and environmental justice are two high-potential opportunities for engaging residents and community leaders across sectors in this important work.

> Examples:
> Cleveland, Ohio   Richmond, California
> Ingham County, Michigan   San Diego County, California
> King County, Washington   San Francisco, California
> Newark, New Jersey   Seattle, Washington
> Portland, Oregon   Washington, DC

GOOD PRACTICE #3: Put demographics and equity implications front and center to educate community members

Easily-understood data about a city's historic and current reality are part of the necessary foundation for shared analysis and decision-making that engages community members. Data on disparities and information about their implications, both currently and for the future, need to be shared within the context of sustainability as part of the basic knowledge residents need to be engaged in community decisions. Proactive education on differences in key indicators across the community is an opportunity to build the case that equity is a core component of sustainability, shining a light on existing inequities so public priorities are shaped accordingly.

Examples:
Atlanta Metropolitan Region, Georgia
Denver, Colorado

Los Angeles County, California
Metro Portland Region, Portland, Oregon
Raleigh, North Carolina

II. DATA, METRICS, AND ANALYSIS: Use data, metrics, and analysis to set goals and build accountability for progress on equity

GOOD PRACTICE #4: Collect comprehensive sustainability data that fully integrate equity, then disaggregate that data to identify communities of concern

In addition to collecting sustainability data overall, distributional equity requires an analysis of the disbursal of benefits and burdens across key demographic groups and neighborhoods. Disaggregating data by demographics provides a fuller picture of environmental, economic, and social health, bringing to light disparities among groups within a community. As equity has become further embedded in sustainability, equity indicators and measures are becoming both more sophisticated and more widespread in their use.

Examples:
King County, Washington
San Diego County, California
San Francisco Bay Metropolitan Region, California

GOOD PRACTICE #5: Use indicators to inform the community on progress towards sustainability, including the reduction of disparities among demographic groups

While some cities have simply renamed environmental indicators as sustainability indicators, increasingly, health, social, economic, and equity issues are being integrated into an expanding set of measurements that more accurately reflect the complexity of sustainability. Tracking indicators over time enables cities to assess whether their programs and activities are accomplishing their intended positive impacts and to convey developments to residents and decision-makers alike. Adjustments can be made and goals may be enlarged, based on the direction of change and the pace of progress.

Examples:
Dubuque, Iowa
King County, Washington

Minneapolis, Minnesota
New York, New York

III. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND COLLABORATION:
Build sustainability efforts on a foundation of community engagement, ongoing capacity building, and collaboration

GOOD PRACTICE #6: Build sustainability programs on a foundation of authentic community engagement

Commitment to equity intensifies and broadens sustainability initiatives, bringing more people into dialogue and action. Successful community engagement lays the foundation for procedural equity—inclusive, accessible, authentic engagement and representation in processes to develop or implement programs and policies. Importantly, rather than expecting residents to come to the city, many sustainability programs are going out to meet people where they are, physically and virtually.

> Examples:
> Albany, New York
> Austin, Texas
> Calgary, Alberta
> Cleveland, Ohio
> King County, Washington
> Nashville, Tennessee
>
> Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
> Raleigh, North Carolina
> Richmond, California
> San Francisco, California
> Santa Fe, New Mexico
> Seattle, Washington
> Washington, DC

GOOD PRACTICE #7: Provide learning opportunities on the basics of planning and sustainability, including developing capacity and leadership in neighborhoods prioritized for engagement

Sustainability programs are creating new opportunities for learning and leadership and, in many cases, are focusing their efforts on constituents who have been least engaged, historically, in their efforts. This work is of critical importance because community processes can be accessible without being inclusive and authentic for those who lack familiarity with government processes or deep knowledge of specific issues. True engagement requires that community members are informed and knowledgeable about the basics of the issues under deliberation. It requires recognition of historic and cultural dynamics within communities that have embedded privilege and disadvantage creating the chronic, cumulative disadvantage at the heart of structural inequity. Capacity building, leadership development, and programs to bring all community residents up to speed on the fundamentals of sustainability are renewing interest and expanding a true sense of ownership and engagement.

> Examples:
> Cleveland, Ohio
> San Francisco, California

IV. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE:
Expand the capacity and infrastructure for equity in local government decision-making and operations

GOOD PRACTICE #8: Build an infrastructure of people and entities tasked with achieving progress on equity in sustainability and foster collaboration across agencies and beyond

As equity becomes a more prominent feature of sustainability, more local governments are creating offices and positions focused specifically on making equity-sustainability connections.

They are formalizing structures for interagency communication and coordination as they implement sustainability plans with detailed equity actions. They are being intentional about connecting a growing cadre of far-flung employees and departments with equity-related responsibilities. In addition to internal infrastructure, local governments are building substantial partnerships with local universities, community organizations, foundations, and the business community to create a team inside and outside of government to move their equity agendas.

Examples:

Calgary, Alberta	Richmond, California
King County, Washington	San Jose, California
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Seattle, Washington
Portland, Oregon	Washington, DC

GOOD PRACTICE #9: Provide professional development to cultivate the awareness, knowledge, and skills to effectively address equity within local government

Professional development is a nearly invisible component of equity, but its inclusion is at the heart of long-term, sustained progress. Equity is promoted or thwarted in the daily choices, big and small, of administrators and policy makers. The level of awareness and expertise they bring to these moments can be influenced by investments in their professional development. Intensive training has been a cornerstone of the most ambitious equity-focused initiatives in local government where the unwavering commitment of city leaders encouraged employees to wade through discomfort and emerge with revelations and new skills.

Examples:
Metropolitan Portland Region, Oregon
Portland, Oregon
Seattle, Washington

GOOD PRACTICE #10: Develop implementation tools and processes to institutionalize equity and increase accountability in decision-making, budgeting, and programs

Ultimately, integrating equity in sustainability requires institutionalizing equity throughout all facets of local government decision-making. A structure of explicit policies and processes to prioritize equity are necessary to leverage the knowledge, information, and skills cities develop and nurture in employees through professional development. A few cities and counties are mandating an equity lens, and in more places tools are being pioneered to create mechanisms to consistently consider equity in decision-making. Rather than allowing equity to remain an invisible, generalized intention, these tools make equity an explicit, deliberate consideration.

Examples:

King County, Washington	Portland, Oregon
Minneapolis, Minnesota	Seattle, Washington

RECOMMENDATIONS: NEXT STEPS FOR INCREASING THE IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY BY STRENGTHENING EQUITY

Local governments can build on the good practices described in this report to spur the growth of equity as a foundational component of sustainability by following up on these recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION #1: Spread what works by expanding opportunities for information sharing and peer learning on equity in sustainability

RECOMMENDATION #2: Multiply and deepen professional development opportunities

RECOMMENDATION #3: Expand the use of equity measures and support their increasing sophistication

RECOMMENDATION #4: Diversify the sustainability field

RECOMMENDATION #5: Strengthen community partnerships, across sectors, to accelerate progress on equity

RECOMMENDATION #6: Push the envelope on equity in sustainability to innovate on high impact strategies

FINAL THOUGHTS

By fully integrating equity, local governments are uniquely situated to make a substantial contribution to the sustainability field. Equity has been left out of the framing and content of sustainability for too long, but a new generation of local leaders is bringing it to the fore. With this evolution, the sustainability field has the opportunity to communicate and brand its work far beyond environmental, scientific, and seemingly wonky policy approaches that don't touch people's daily lives. Most importantly, many local sustainability leaders are rethinking and redesigning their work. They are using a structural equity lens to analyze access and opportunity to the determinants of a healthy, prosperous life. They are addressing distributional equity and uncovering the truths beneath community-wide data by identifying the groups who are the face of society's disparities and targeting their resources accordingly. They are building the capacity of the most disenfranchised groups in their communities to be true partners in democracy through their efforts to foster procedural equity. They are institutionalizing equity by making it an intentional, conscious part of their decision-making processes. In doing so, local government leaders are on the front lines of sustainability. Their lessons learned and cumulative efforts have much to teach those who are working on state, provincial, federal, and national sustainability policy and advocacy.

Equity is a key to maximizing the potential for sustainability to serve as a galvanizing, interconnected frame for creating a better world. Our collective future depends on making equity a priority.

Sustainability has the power to weave the strands that create hope and prosperity, health and wellness, community cohesion and true opportunity for all. A focus on equity is an opportunity for sustainability leaders to address some of the thorniest, most deep-seated issues in society and to reinforce the inextricable ties that bind us in one shared destiny as people on the planet. Local governments have important roles to play, momentum on their side, and a window of opportunity with their grasp. The benefits of sustainability must accrue to all, not just the privileged few.

PREFACE

The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) is a peer-to-peer network of local government professionals from cities across the United States and Canada, dedicated to creating a healthier environment, economic prosperity, and increased social equity. Although the field of sustainability is continually innovating new ways to realize this triple-bottom-line approach, sustainability directors often struggle with how best to weave equity into their day-to-day work.

Equity became a prominent issue among USDN members in 2013, and continues as a focus area of the network. Currently, eighteen USDN members participate in bimonthly calls of the USDN Equity and Access User Group—initially led by members in Newark, Albany, Cincinnati, and Denver—to share information and learn together about topics that include defining equity in sustainability, community outreach and engagement, metrics, and incorporating equity concerns into adaptation, transportation, and land use planning. USDN's fall 2013 annual meeting featured an equity workshop and plenary, and in January 2014, USDN sponsored a peer-to-peer exchange focused on equity tools for twenty staff from nine cities and counties.

These efforts have inspired members to strengthen their integration of equity in a variety of sustainability programs. This Equity Scan was commissioned by USDN to build on this work. Sustainability directors representing more than 30 cities across North America wanted to deepen their knowledge and learn tools to advance equity in their work, starting with learning from the practices underway in communities of all sizes, with starkly differing contexts. The Scan was designed to contribute information and resources to answer these questions:

- How are cities defining equity and how are they integrating equity in their sustainability programs, currently?
- What good practices, lessons learned, and tools are emerging from work already underway?
- What next steps are necessary to advance the field toward achieving equity outcomes throughout local government sustainability efforts?

A literature scan and interviews of a cross-section of leaders across North America were conducted to gather data in response to these questions.

A Steering Committee of USDN members guided the Scan since its inception:
- Stephanie Greenwood, Sustainability Director, Newark, NJ
- Yianice Hernandez, Director, Green Communities, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.
- Jenita McGowan, Chief of Sustainability, Cleveland, OH
- Doug Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer, San Antonio, TX
- Tom Osdoba, Vice President, Green Initiatives, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.
- Beth Strommen, Director, Office of Sustainability, Baltimore, MD
- Desiree Williams-Rajee, Equity Specialist, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability -Portland, OR
- Sarah Wu, Policy and Outreach Manager, Office of Sustainability, Philadelphia, PA
- Paul Young, Administrator, Office of Sustainability, Memphis, TN
- Jo Zientek, Deputy Director, Environmental Services Department, San Jose, CA

The project was made possible by the guidance of Julia Parzen and Nils Moe, in their consecutive roles as managing director of USDN, and funding from the Kresge Foundation with support from Lois DeBacker and Jessica Boehland of their Environment Program.

USDN will leverage the Scan's findings throughout its work and expand the capacity of its members to play leadership roles in ensuring sustainability benefits everyone in their communities. The Equity and Access User Group will continue to support members' progress in incorporating equity in decision-making processes to build on the Equity Scan and other resources. In addition, USDN will launch programs to develop a pipeline of emerging leaders to bring new perspectives and diversify the group of practitioners at the forefront of local government sustainability.

An increased focus on equity has the potential not only to expand and broaden a vibrant constituency for sustainability but also to make a transformational, lasting impact on the health and well-being of all in our communities. USDN is committed to expanding and evolving the sustainability field by making equity a core component of all facets of its work.

INTRODUCTION:
DEFINING EQUITY AND MAKING THE CASE

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Defining Equity In the Sustainability Context

Equity's visibility has increased as a core component of sustainability in recent years. Leading cities and regions are now making equity central to their sustainability efforts—in name and in practice.

Sustainability is commonly defined as the Three Es (environment, economy, and equity), the triple-bottom line (planet, people, and profit), and as a next-generation term for environmentalism. While The Three Es and the triple-bottom line have equity and a focus on the well-being, health, and livelihood of people embedded within them, sustainability is often framed with environmentalism as the primary focus. True integration of equity is emerging slowly; this work has continued and deepened over the last thirty years.

Historically, equity took a back seat in sustainability framing, discussion, and implementation. Despite its expansive definition, sustainability initiatives, policies, networks, and the movement's leadership have been dominated by environmentalists who have institutionalized, often unconsciously, a narrower, green-focused orientation. Consequently environmental justice activists and some leaders who bring a broader lens (like those in the fields of economic development and planning, for example) perceive that those who frame sustainability in purely environmental terms are either ignorant of or dismissive to equity considerations. This legacy has impacted the perception of local government sustainability departments. "I find few sustainability offices doing very much on equity," said one major city's planning director. "Equity is the forgotten E in the three Es of sustainability."

Tom Osdoba, of Enterprise Community Partners observes, "I start from the perspective that very little sustainability work initially aligned economic development and equity well. It's not surprising. Most urban sustainability efforts grew out of green and environmental activism. The networks built out that way. It's not a criticism, but sustainability came into cities at an oblique angle that caught the economic and equity communities off guard."

While the initial environmental focus reverberates, strong integration of equity—and economic issues—in sustainability, as an equal player to environmental concerns, is emerging. Equity is now

Defining Equity, The Third E

Equity in sustainability incorporates procedures, the distribution of benefits and burdens, generational impact, and structural accountability:

• Procedural Equity—inclusive, accessible, authentic engagement and representation in processes to develop or implement sustainability programs and policies

• Distributional Equity—sustainability programs and policies result in fair distributions of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community, prioritizing those with highest need

• Structural Equity—sustainability decision-makers institutionalize accountability; decisions are made with a recognition of the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that have routinely advantaged privileged groups in society and resulted in chronic, cumulative disadvantage for subordinated groups

• Transgenerational Equity—sustainability decisions consider generational impacts and don't result in unfair burdens on future generations

　　　　—USDN Equity Scan Steering Committee

appearing more frequently in the local sustainability plans that provide the structure and framework for activities underway in cities. More substantively, local governments are leading efforts to create decision-making tools and enact consistent guidance on how cities use an equity lens throughout their programs and operations.

Local governments define equity in numerous ways and, at times, do not use the term explicitly. A 2013 USDN member survey provided insight into the current expression of equity. According to the survey, "fair access" tops the list of the most popular terms and concepts. In order of frequency of use, survey respondents defined equity as:

1. Fair access
2. Opportunities for all, *sometimes being explicit that is this defined as opportunity regardless of group identity*
3. Cost and benefits of sustainability are fairly distributed
4. Full participation
5. Triple bottom line

The Equity Scan Steering Committee reviewed a host of equity definitions currently in use. While local circumstances will ultimately dictate the public definitions and framing of equity in sustainability, the Equity Scan Steering Committee recommends that the following components be considered and integrated into local sustainability approaches to equity. And, for the purposes of this report, the Steering Committee is using this definition:

Defining Equity: The Third E

Equity in sustainability incorporates procedures, the distribution of benefits and burdens, generational impact, and structural accountability:

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• Distributional Equity—sustainability programs and policies result in fair distributions of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community, prioritizing those with highest need

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• Transgenerational Equity—sustainability decisions consider generational impacts and don't result in unfair burdens on future generations

Civic leaders are answering a question posed by equity deliberations: equity for whom? For equity to have meaning, it must be connected to an analysis of how group identity impacts and shapes people's lives. In North America, and across the globe, cities are not only defining equity, they are identifying the specific constituencies within their community that need to be fully engaged and whose opportunities and access need to be improved.

Constituencies that have been identified by local governments as most impacted by community decision-making and whose life outcomes are disproportionately affected by structures in society include:
• People of color
• Poor and low-income residents
• Youth
• The elderly
• "New Americans" or recently-arrived immigrants
• Individuals with limited English proficiency
• People with disabilities
• The homeless

While demographics vary across the United States and Canada, racial disparities—on nearly every measure of life outcomes and opportunity—are among the most persistent. Even when class and income are factored out of analyses, race continues to be an inexorable fixture in society. Race continues to be a key determinant of disparity.

In most communities, a focus on equity requires acknowledgment and attention to race. The following definitions may help provide a common understanding of racial justice, institutional racism, and structural racism—all issues that local government sustainability officials confront on a regular basis.

> Racial justice as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.
>
> Institutional racism refers to the discriminatory treatment; unfair policies, practices and patterns; and inequitable opportunities and impacts in single public- and private-sector entities.
>
> Structural racism refers to the cumulative impact of the racism of multiple societal institutions over time. It encompasses: (1) history, which lies beneath the surface providing the foundation for white racial advantage in this country; (2) culture, which serves to normalize and replicate racist images and ideas; and (3) interconnected institutions and policies that perpetuate and reinforce racial power disparities.
>
> *— Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grantmaking Assessment*

These terms go beyond individual racism—"pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race"[1]—which is the most familiar form of racism and the only definition used by many. The city of Seattle provides these examples of racism at the individual, institutional, and structural levels, related to employment:

Example of individual racism: Individuals acting in a discriminatory manner based on race in the workplace.

Example of institutional racism: Job descriptions that put undue emphasis on college degrees over work experience. This may eliminate qualified candidates of color, who face institutional barriers to higher education. This practice can create racial inequity in the job market, even when that is not the intent.

Example of structural racism: Racial inequity in employment creates inequity in family wealth. Fewer household resources mean limited housing choices, which often go hand in hand with poorer schools and inadequate health care.
— *Racial Equity in Seattle: Race and Social Justice Initiative Three-Year Plan 2012-2014*

Cities fall across a communications spectrum. Some use equity, clearly defined, as an explicit guiding framework, while others employ equity concepts by using proxies for the term. In some cases, equity and its related terms are used as foundational concepts or values in cities' sustainability initiatives, but officials don't use the term publicly. In those cases, social, health, housing, education, and economic development fill in as proxies for equity in sustainability. Because many city leaders are struggling to make sustainability a resonant concept, potentially confusing, opaque definitions of equity may be perceived as further complication of their messaging challenges. Where equity is explicitly and effectively used, local leaders are intentional about avoiding jargon, providing real-life examples, and being as clear as possible in their wording.

Making the Case for Equity

Economists, politicians, researchers, and business leaders are calling attention to rising income inequality and growing disparities among demographic groups, especially based on race and class.

"From the inception of our country, government at the local, regional, state and federal level has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequity. Despite progress in addressing explicit discrimination, racial inequities continue to be deep, pervasive and persistent across the country. Racial inequities exist across all indicators for success, including in education, criminal justice, jobs, housing, public infrastructure and health, regardless of region."
— *Racial Equity Policy Brief: The Responsibility and Opportunity for Local Government,* Local Progress and the Center for Popular Democracy

"On every measure of well-being or distress—economic security, academic achievement, access to health care and fresh food, incarceration—communities of color suffer disproportionately."
— *All-In Nation,* Angela Glover Blackwell, Neera Tanden

"Our racial hierarchy is unsustainable—economically, politically, environmentally, and from any semblance of a humanitarian point of view."
— *Racing to Justice,* john powell

Equity Is The Winning Economic And Environmental Strategy and It Benefits Everyone

Increasingly, there is an economic and political case to be made for equity. In his influential book, *The Price of Inequality,* Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz wrote, "we are paying a high price for our inequality—an economic system that is less stable and less efficient, with less growth, and a democracy that has been put into peril."[2] His work is connected to a trend in economic and social research that makes the case for equity as sound economic policy. Metropolitan regions with higher levels of socioeconomic equity have been shown to thrive compared to those where disparities are rampant.[3] More and more, researchers are finding that inequality hampers economic growth.

According to Manuel Pastor of the University of Southern California, "equity as important to economic development" has "good logic, a growing empirical basis" and it "makes intuitive sense. Recent work suggests that equity can be good for the environment" and that inequality has negative environmental impacts for everyone, he said. Researchers at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, found a correlation between racial disparities in exposure to air toxics exposure and higher levels of air pollution in urban areas.

> "…we find that in urban areas with higher minority pollution-exposure discrepancies, average exposures tend to be higher for all population subgroups, including whites. In other words, improvements in environmental justice in the United States could benefit not only minorities but also whites."[4]

The collective benefit of equity is articulated in the policy brief, *Racial Equity: The Responsibility and Opportunity for Local Government:*

> "The goal must be beyond closing the gap; leaders must establish appropriate benchmarks that lift up all populations while paying close attention to those often excluded…Advancing equity means focusing on more than just disparities. Systems that are failing communities of color are actually failing all of us."[5]

An excellent example of action to address inequity that improves services for everyone is the story of streetlight repairs in Seattle told by Glenn Harris from Seattle's Office of Civil Rights. Like many cities, Seattle's public works departments repaired streetlights upon request. Residents phoned in complaints and city workers would show up and replace light bulbs. This process left poor neighborhoods in the dark. More streetlights in low-income neighborhoods were in a state of disrepair than other areas of the city. Because the life span of a streetlight's bulb is predictable, the city changed its process. Streetlights are now fixed on a regular schedule, addressing the inequity across neighborhoods and benefiting everyone, including wealthier residents who no longer have to call the city to make a complaint. By addressing the needs of the least well-served neighborhoods, everyone benefited. This principle is at the core of Targeted Universalism, the concept articulated by the University of California's john powell.[6]

Targeted solutions that address the needs of people of color and low-income residents can, in fact, benefit everyone. Yet, without a targeted strategy, oftentimes community-wide outcomes improve while leaving behind the most vulnerable populations.

Jurisdictions that are able to move beyond perceiving equity initiatives as social "welfare," "charity," or "goodwill" are finding the capacity to address community well-being more systemically. Local governments in Seattle and King County, Washington, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Portland, Oregon are

promoting equity as sound fiscal and fiduciary investments in the long-term health of their communities. As demographic change sweeps the country, cities and metropolitan areas will serve populations that are majority people of color, if they do not already. After decades of growth in the middle class, low-income households is now the burgeoning socioeconomic demographic. The framing of equity as sound policy creates the space to address root causes, not just symptoms of disparity or economic inequality, namely, institutional racism and the privileging of the white, educated, middle and upper class. Reversing the trend of increasing disparities impacting communities of color and economically struggling house-holds is essential for building a foundation of future prosperity.

Equity Is Intrinsic To Good Planning

In free societies that hold that all people are equal and justice for all is an attainable goal, planning is a collective exercise, an ongoing demonstration of democratic principles at the community level. Adherence to the following equity principles is core to good planning:

- Authentic engagement of all who are impacted by government decisions
- Inclusive processes that enable all members of a community to co-create the community's future
- Attention and intention to dismantle policies that exacerbate existing disparities based on race, income, gender, age, or physical disability
- Responsibility to hold the current generation of decision makers accountable for their actions, rather than inflicting the consequences on future generations
- Awareness of history and systemic factors that create cumulative advantage and disadvantage for groups in society

A commitment to equity is embedded in the ethics of professionals involved in local government planning efforts. While all sustainability professionals are not planners, there is significant overlap among the planners and sustainability leaders in local and regional government.

To be an effective planner is to integrate the mindset of equity. The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Code of Ethics includes principles specifically tied to equity:

> d) We shall provide timely, adequate, clear, and accurate information on planning issues to all affected persons and to governmental decision makers.
>
> e) We shall give people the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may affect them. Participation should be broad enough to include those who lack formal organization or influence.
>
> f) We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs.
>
> g) We shall promote excellence of design and endeavor to conserve and preserve the integrity and heritage of the natural and built environment.
>
> h) We shall deal fairly with all participants in the planning process. Those of us who are public officials or employees shall also deal evenhandedly with all planning process participants.
>
> — *AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct,* adopted March 19, 2005, American Planning Association

Equity and Diversity Are The Key To The Twenty-First Century's Political Constituency For Sustainability

For the sustainability field, the authentic integration of equity and economy—adhering to spirit of the Three Es and triple-bottom line—is a necessary step toward expanding the political constituency for sustainability, beyond environmentalists. To be true to its definitions, sustainability must comprise more than environmentalism. But even if sustainability focused exclusively on environmental issues, there is a compelling case for attracting a constituency for green causes that is more diverse by race, class, and gender.

There is a strong argument to be made that sustainability directors and leaders working to push a purely environmental agenda will be far more successful if they are intentional about making equity and social justice core components of their work. Individuals who identify more closely with social justice and economic development and who consider social and economic issues high priorities are more likely to see the relevance of sustainability to their lives and work through a wider lens.

Since 1990, studies and polling have consistently shown that people of color support environmental and climate-related causes at higher levels than whites.[7] While the stereotypical environmental constituency is often perceived as white, wealthy, and older, levels of political support belie that perception. Furthermore, environmental organizations at the national, regional, and local levels have awakened to these new political realities. They are putting unprecedented effort into diversifying their staff and board composition, creating more inclusive organizations, and building partnerships with environmental justice groups, communities of color, low-income communities, youth, women, military families, and faith communities. In many cases, they have been prodded by leaders in the environmental justice movement and allies who integrated the Three Es from the inception of their work on labor and economic development issues.

The Sierra Club, Earthjustice, Greenpeace, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Environmental Defense Fund are among the largest, most powerful organizations recognizing the new political landscape. Each of these groups have dedicated staff time and funds to focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion in recent years. The release of *The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations: Mainstream NGOs, Foundations & Government Agencies* in July 2014 contributed unprecedented statistical analysis of the environmental field's demographics.

The report's findings make it clear that there is much more work to do.

> Report Findings:
>
> 1. The Green Ceiling
>   Despite increasing racial diversity in the United States, the racial composition in environmental organizations and agencies has not broken the 12% to16% "green ceiling" that has been in place for decades.
>
> 2. Unconscious Bias, Discrimination, and Insular Recruiting
>   Confidential interviews with environmental professionals and survey data highlight alienation and "unconscious bias" as factors hampering recruitment and retention of talented people of color.

3. Lackluster Effort and Disinterest in Addressing Diversity
    Efforts to attract and retain talented people of color have been lackluster across
    the environmental movement.

The Result: An overwhelmingly white "Green Insiders' Club."

> — *The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations:*
> *Mainstream NGOs, Foundations & Government Agencies*

While USDN has not conducted a demographic analysis of sustainability directors or its membership, it is apparent to most that the demographic composition of local government sustainability offices and the USDN membership does not mirror the demographics of the communities they serve. Lack of racial diversity is the most visible data point. Diversity is not destiny; the message matters. But the demographics of sustainability messengers matter, too.

The emerging political majority, the constituency for sustainability, will demand an authentic commitment to equity. It will test for credibility, seeking to make sure sustainability's promise isn't merely nicely-phrased words in plans, but results they can see, feel, touch, and enjoy in their neighborhoods, homes, family, and their lives.

SCANNING THE FIELD: GOOD PRACTICES TOWARD EQUITY

SCANNING THE FIELD: GOOD PRACTICES TOWARD EQUITY

On the road to equity, there are no guarantees. The promise of a roadmap is seductive, but work on equity is complex and messy; simple, linear steps are often hard to find. This chapter aims to shed light and provide guidance on practices that local governments can implement to ingrain equity more fully in their sustainability efforts. Showcasing work underway and describing key factors that are making equity more prominent in local sustainability efforts are intended to inspire as well as inform. As the field has expanded and evolved, examples of true integration of equity within sustainability have grown in number and in variety. Within those examples, themes and patterns have emerged.

In many cases, cities with a strong focus on equity have responded to similar circumstances. There are many lessons to be learned from the distinctive approaches and actions they have taken. Two qualities emerged as nearly universal in interviews for this report: humility and the understanding that equity requires a systemic approach. Practitioners leading the charge on equity attest to a steep, ongoing learning curve, the desire to learn from and connect with others with shared goals, and the need to acknowledge imperfection in the results of their efforts, even when they see positive signs of change. They also acknowledge that their success in one good practice arena is often related to, if not dependent, on another. Issues and actions intersect in systemic fashion.

Given this complexity, the pursuit of equity in sustainability will demand actors in every sector and at all levels—local, regional, state/province, and federal/national. Equity is not solely in the purview of city government; often, there is very little cities can do to move equity indicators positively on their own. While this Scan focuses on the leadership of "local government," it defines "local" expansively to mean town, city, county, and metropolitan region, and often involves some combination of those entities furthering the cause of equity. Nonprofit organizations, foundations, and business leaders have played critically important roles and must be mentioned in any discussion of community leadership on equity as well.

The concept of best practices is popular because practitioners want to learn from related efforts. It's under-

> "Cities are not implementing good practices one at a time, checking off a box as they go. Good practices intertwine. Progress in one area supports movement in another arena. The synergy between good practices paves the way for further movement."

standable to seek guidance and hope to find a best way, the most effective way, to achieve a goal. And no one wants to reinvent the wheel. Unfortunately, in many arenas, there is no perfect, best, or standard approach. While the term best practice has migrated from the business world to other sectors, the complexity and systemic nature of equity challenges belie the simplicity that is often implied by naming actions as best.

According to leadership consultant, Mike Myatt, "There is no such thing as best practices. The reality is best practices are nothing more than disparate groups of methodologies, processes, rules, concepts and theories that attained a level of success in certain areas, and because of those successes, have been deemed as universal truths able to be applied anywhere and everywhere."[8] This is arguably even truer for a still-emerging and evolving arena like equity in sustainability, where new initiatives, tools, reports, and learning opportunities surface every few months.

The good news is that there is a wealth of experience and expertise on which to draw. In lieu of prescribing best practices, this chapter builds on lessons learned from leading cities to describe practices that have strengthened the visibility of equity. They have established supportive contexts and conditions as fertile ground for equity to take root in sustainability efforts. They have moved the dial on progress.

While these practices are categorized and numbered for ease of reference, moving the dial on equity is not a linear process. Cities are not implementing good practices one at a time, checking off a box as they go. Good practices intertwine. Progress in one area

supports movement in another arena. The synergy between good practices paves the way for further movement. Cities have built their efforts on equity from myriad starting points. What matters most is to get started, then dig more deeply and build on existing good practices to create a web that moves the system of local government toward equity.

No city, county, or region is using every approach and practice; the leaders highlighted in this report have used a mix of these approaches and practices based on unique histories, local circumstances, political will, funding, and capacity. The guidance in this chapter may not be one hundred percent feasible in every munici-pality, but implementing as many of these good practices, as possible, is an excellent place to start or renew equity-related work in local government.

This chapter describes ten Good Practices that have been organized into four categories:

I.   Framing and communication
II. Data, metrics, and analysis
III. Community engagement, capacity building, and collaboration
IV. Capacity and infrastructure for equity in city decision-making and operations

I. FRAMING AND COMMUNICATION
Integrate equity into framing and communication of sustainability

GOOD PRACTICE #1
Define sustainability proactively beyond "green," fully integrating equity and economy and a triple-bottom line approach

GOOD PRACTICE #2
Connect the language and principles of environmental justice and public health to sustainability whenever possible

GOOD PRACTICE #3
Put demographics and equity implications front and center to educate community members

GOOD PRACTICE #1 — Define sustainability proactively beyond "green," fully integrating equity and economy and a triple-bottom line approach

Cities signal their commitment to equity both by how they introduce the concept of sustainability to residents and in their ongoing reinforcement and framing. Because sustainability is perceived as synonymous with "green," environmental, and ecological issues, cities must be proactive in reframing the term to embrace broader social, economic, public health, and safety issues. While the specific language of the triple-bottom line approach of planet, people, and profit or the Three Es of environment, economy, and equity doesn't need to be used, necessarily, cities that are integrating equity successfully are painting a holistic picture of the purpose of their sustainability programs. They are tying sustainability to an interwoven array of issues connected to community vitality and prosperity.

Importantly, in leading cities, sustainability isn't merely being defined in a holistic manner; it is also being framed by explicitly naming historic inequities, underserved and vulnerable populations, the desire for fairness, and the need to create equal opportunities for residents across neighborhoods.

St. Louis, Missouri, and Washington, DC, are two cities that have been intentional and proactive in their framing and communication of sustainability in their most recent efforts. They have dedicated resources to ensuring that sustainability is being rebranded to resonate with an audience beyond environmentalists, with residents across race, class, age, and neighborhoods.

SPOTLIGHT — ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The city of St. Louis integrated social and equity issues throughout its 2013 Sustainability Plan, "an over-arching framework of sustainability opportunities." It is expansive in content—including the arts, health, public safety, education, affordable housing and transit, healthy local food, leadership development, and employability of residents—but also focuses on ensuring equal access to amenities and services and addressing the needs of disadvantaged populations.

Empowerment, Diversity & Equity is one of the Plan's seven functional categories. The corresponding chapter specifically names racial and ethnic disparities in poverty, unemployment, access to amenities and services, and political participation, and sets the following goal and objectives:

> Empowerment, Diversity & Equity Goal:
>
> The City of St. Louis aspires to empower its social and human capital by strengthening its social, cultural, and economic diversity and creating a higher level of respect and civic participation in order to attract, support, and facilitate dialogue, urban innovation, population, and jobs, in order to create an equitable, transparent and inclusive environment for those who live, work, learn, and play in the City.
>
> Objectives:
> - Embrace the value of diversity, aspire towards equity, and attract and retain a diverse population and culture
> - Encourage civic engagement, transparency, and leadership
> - Promote youth development, education, engagement, and empowerment
> - Promote senior civic involvement, empowerment, and intergenerational engagement
> - Reduce homelessness, and support low income families and the unemployed
> - Ensure equal access to amenities, business opportunities, transportation, and safe and healthy neighborhoods
>> — *City of St. Louis Sustainability Plan,* Adopted January 9, 2012, City of St. Louis Planning Commission

"St. Louis is a very diverse City, and we are proud of that but also challenged by it. Whether it is a focus on racial integration, including seniors, supporting youth needs, or allowing for choice of sexual orientation, we try to be proactive and progressive," said Catherine Werner, sustainability director. "There is still room to do much more, of course, but the whole plan was an effort to build on existing assets, strengths, and conditions to enhance the City's overall quality of life."

The office of Mayor Francis Slay was intentional about balancing and optimizing "economic, social, and environmental outcomes" to avoid the lopsided integration of the Three Es—focusing on the environment more than equity and economy. Notably, the St. Louis Plan is one of the few that specifically focuses on inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) residents and communities. One of the mayor's priorities is to maintain the city's 100% rating from the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index (MEI) on LGBTQ issues.

SPOTLIGHT — WASHINGTON, DC

A focus on equity is also explicit in *A Vision of a Sustainable DC*, the city's twenty-year sustainability plan. Mayor Vincent Gray's introduction states the city's commitment to ensuring sustainability benefits the most vulnerable and presents the wide array of related issues on which the plan focuses:

> As our population expands, we have an important decision to make. We can take decisive action now to ensure that our citizens—particularly the most vulnerable among us—benefit from increasing innovation and amenities, a broader tax base, a growing and diversified economy, and a wide range of new and accessible jobs. Or we can ignore this opportunity, and allow historic gaps in education, income, housing and access to transportation to further divide our city.
>
> The choice is clear. I believe we must plan for a city that is sustainable—not just environmentally, but economically and socially as well."
> — *A Vision of a Sustainable DC*

"We start from a position as a historic, eastern city with significant equity issues. We start with the baseline assumption that equity has to be dealt with—from our mayor, planning director, our director, the health director," said Brendan Shane, chief of the Office of Policy and Sustainability in the Department of the Environment.

A commitment to broad framing using clear language was also intentional from the start. The mayor insisted that sustainability had to be relevant to every resident, "broadening the message, ensuring it appealed to a wide variety of people across the city," said Shane. The city's Planning Department managed the community engagement process that created the plan in 2011-2012. City staff used simple and specific language in lieu of jargon. "We knew that people were confused by the term 'sustainability,' so we changed how we communicate, to talk specifically about issues," said Laine Cidlowski, urban sustainability planner at the DC Office of Planning. To spread the word about the plan, the city used icons focused on priorities issues identified through an intensive public and neighborhood engagement process. The list of key priorities leads with jobs, health, and the built environment.

"We had really strong participation throughout the process," said Shane. Equity was a clear priority. "We heard it from the community. We had the working group process and equity came up in every working group—waste, food, etc." he said. Children, low-income residents, and elderly households are prioritized throughout the plan and health disparities across wards of the city are named.

The plan repeatedly flags the economic benefits of the short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions it recommends, and equity is a focus of implementation. "In the final plan, equity and diversity are one of the four challenge areas," said Shane. They have "to be included in the solution areas for transportation, for food and waste and water, and such."

Connect the language and principles of environmental justice and public health to sustainability whenever possible

Sustainability has the potential to marshal a holistic vision of community vitality. Public health and environmental justice are two specific opportunities for broadening the frame of sustainability and expanding how it is perceived. They are pathways for making equity more visible within sustainability and their increased prominence holds the potential to engage a more diverse mix of residents in sustainability efforts, including those who may perceive conservation and ecology as distant issues pertaining to others.

Public health is a universal benefit of a clean environment. Clean air. Safe food and water. Surroundings free of toxins. But a green slant on sustainability coincides with long-held perceptions of environmental issues as being historically focused on pristine lands, wilderness, and faraway species. Cities are beginning to lead with public health, making explicit ties to environmental and economic issues within a sustainability umbrella. National efforts to apply the concepts of health in all policies and social determinants of health to local and regional governments are engaging sustainability leaders.

"Health is one of those very real indicators that can be used to support equity issues. It ends up being connected so much on outcomes. Without a job or good health, you're disadvantaged," said Susan Anderson, director of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. "My definition of sustainability for the last fifteen to twenty years has been economy and environment, social education and health."

"Health equity is compelling. It animates folks to see stark health outcomes, how they vary," said Richard Gelb, performance measures manager at the Department of Natural Resources and Parks in King County, Washington.

The city of Richmond, California, is a leader in the integration of public health, equity, and sustainability. They define key terms as follows:

> Social determinants of health are factors people are born with, live with, and grow with that influence your health. Social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities. Examples are race, ethnicity, gender, education, or income.

> Health equity is achieving the highest level of health for all people. Health equity entails focused societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities by equalizing the conditions for health for all groups, especially for those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage or historical injustices.

> Health inequities are preventable differences in the presence of disease, health outcomes, or access to health. They are the result of an uneven distribution of resources, services, wealth, etc. and are unnecessary, unjust, unfair, and avoidable.

> Health in All Policies or 'healthy public policy' is based on the idea that health starts with where people live, work, learn, and play and that individual and community health is influenced by more

> Sustainability has the potential to marshal a holistic vision of community vitality.

than just individual choices. One's physical and psychosocial environment, culture, government, etc. all play a role in influencing and determining both individual and population health. Health in All Policies (HiAP) is the integrated and comprehensive approach to bring health, well-being, and equity considerations into the development and implementation of policies, programs, and services of traditionally non-health related government systems or agencies.

> — City of Richmond, *Health in All Policies Toolkit*
> Updated 2013

In Cleveland, health impact assessments (HIAs) are being used to strengthen equity in sustainability. The tool has been used to assess plans on urban agriculture and transportation. "A health impact assessment is a series of methods and approaches for infusing health in policy decisions. It looks at health effects, highlights health disparities, and makes health impacts more explicit. The HIA process engages and empowers community. It recognizes lived experiences," said Freddy Collier, Cleveland's deputy planning director. HIAs are "a tool to advance the work of infusing health in all policy," he said.

Public health has been at the center of the environmental justice (EJ) movement's work from the outset, due to its origins in organizing low-income communities of color to fight toxic waste dumps. The EJ movement defines the environment broadly as "the places we live, work, play, and pray."[9] For more than 25 years, the movement has organized a new political constituency of low-income people, people of color, and indigenous communities for sustainability, environmental protection, and environmental health. Organizing one neighborhood and community at a time, the movement has affected corporations and government agencies at all levels, and influenced and expanded nonprofit and philanthropic approaches to environmental issues.

Originating in the United States, EJ is a global movement and expansive issue. It is defined as follows by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

> Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EPA has this goal for all communities and persons across this Nation. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.[10]
>
> — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

While *The Principles of Environmental Justice* is a formally adopted manifesto of the EJ movement and equity principles are broader, more conceptual, and sometimes up for interpretation, they complement each other in many respects. Like equity, environmental justice expands the frame of sustainability.

In the United States, environmental justice is a mandated feature of federal government due to the 1994 Executive Order signed by President Bill Clinton, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," and many states have passed EJ laws and created environmental justice departments. A few leading cities and counties have integrated the language and principles of environmental justice into policies, programs, and staffing, and, in rare instances, into the structure of environmental agencies as stand-alone programs. In addition to San Francisco's unique Environmental Justice Program, cities, counties, and public utility commissions have dedicated staff focused solely on environmental justice in far-flung places that include Ingham County, Michigan, Washington, DC, and Seattle, Washington, and San Diego County, California.

Newark, New Jersey, included environmental justice as one of seven principles to guide implementation of its *Sustainability Action Plan:*

> Environmental Justice: Policies will support the right of all members of the community to enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment, regardless of income, race, class, or location.

Everyone deserves to live, work, and play in a healthy environment, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, or place of origin. Sustainability initiatives will put a priority on addressing the environmental health needs of those who are most vulnerable or currently most disproportionately burdened with environmental health costs.

The city's commitment to environmental justice is integrated throughout its plan, including these specifics on food justice:

Healthy Food Access: One of the most basic measures of health and wellness in a community is the way that community nourishes itself. Food justice refers to the idea that everyone has the right to access healthy, affordable, safe, culturally appropriate food. A healthy food system celebrates the diversity of culinary traditions among community members, and enables them to meet their nutritional needs with dignity. The Action Items in this category put in motion the dynamics required to build a healthier, more just food system in Newark.

— *Sustainability Action Plan*, City of Newark, 2013

In the San Diego area, the regional plan, *San Diego Forward,* is also explicit in integrating equity and environmental justice into its vision for transportation:

Social Equity and Environmental Justice

Roads, freeways, and other transportation infrastructure can have a significant effect on the quality of life for a region's residents by shaping access to housing, jobs, services, and recreational opportunities. Achieving social equity and environmental justice in the context of creating a comprehensive plan for the region is a major goal of SANDAG. It requires making investments that provide all residents, regardless of age, race, color, national origin, income, or physical agility, with opportunities to work, shop, study, be healthy, and play. Without proper planning and development, transportation systems can degrade the quality of life in communities. In addition, the construction of roads, freeways, and rail transit systems has sometimes placed health burdens on many lower-income and minority communities. At times, new transportation projects have physically divided communities or impacted access to community services, resulting in long-lasting social and economic costs. It is important to understand the impacts of transportation and other infrastructure investments on our most vulnerable communities in order to better plan for the future. For these reasons, environmental justice principles and social equity goals will be an important consideration in the regional plan development process. Promoting social equity and environmental justice in regional planning efforts requires involvement from a wide variety of communities and stakeholders.

— *San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan*
Public Involvement Plan, February 2013

A common feature of health equity and environmental justice approaches is their recognition of the role of cumulative impact. Communities that suffer from environmental injustice are confronted with intersecting challenges from all sides. They may be the dumping ground for noxious facilities, underserved by city infrastructure and services like parks and street cleaning, suffer from high rates of asthma, or lack access to quality health care. Public health practitioners use the concept of cumulative stressors to describe similar phenomena. In Richmond, the HiAP Strategy describes cumulative stressors that may impact residents. "Chronic stress has known physical and mental impacts, from clogging arteries and heart disease, to overweight and diabetes, to chromosome damage and premature aging."[11] Among the cumulative stressors the HiAP Strategy names are racial profiling, residential segregation, economic insecurity, and violence.

An explicit focus on environmental justice may not be politically feasible in every jurisdiction. It is an unfamiliar concept to some community leaders and may not resonate in communities that shy away from social justice language. But in cities embracing EJ, sustainability leaders are seeing the benefit of synergy with their efforts to engrain equity. As cities explore their options for beginning or deepening the integration of equity into sustainability, public health and environmental justice are two high-potential opportunities for engaging residents and community leaders across sectors in this important work.

SPOTLIGHT — RICHMOND, CA

The city of Richmond, California, is using public health as the fulcrum for integrating equity and sustainability. The city's work has resulted in two firsts: Richmond became "the first California jurisdiction to incorporate a Health and Wellness Element into its General Plan"[12] and the first in the United States to adopt both a Health in All Policies strategy and ordinance.

Richmond's Health and Wellness Element targets "the social, economic, physical, and environmental causes of health inequities and poor health outcomes." The state of California "requires every city and county to adopt a general plan that includes the following seven elements: Housing; Land Use; Circulation/ Traffic; Open Space; Noise; Public Safety; and Conservation."[13] The Community Health and Wellness Element is an unique formal addition to Richmond's *General Plan*, one of one eight elements the city added to what the state mandates.

Ten major areas were identified by the city under its Health and Wellness Element:
1. Improved access to parks, recreation, and open space
2. Expanded access to healthy food and nutrition choices
3. Improved access to medical services
4. Safe and convenient public transit and active transportation options
5. A range of quality and affordable housing
6. Expanded economic opportunity
7. Completeness of neighborhoods
8. Improved safety in neighborhoods and public spaces
9. Improved environmentalquality
10. Green and sustainable development and practices
    — *Data, Indicators, and Tracking Strategies for Implementation of the City of Richmond's Health and Wellness Element: An Assessment and Recommendations,* December 2011

Richmond's leadership on health equity is the result of many years of community engagement, data gathering, and relationship building across government, academia, and the philanthropic sector. The focus on health was triggered in 2005 by initial planning for the update to the city's General Plan. During that process, the city "identified a need to promote systems and policy changes that targeted social determinants of health."[14] Funding from the California Endowment enabled the city to create its Community Health and Wellness Element. Substantial community engagement resulted in a 2009 community health and wellness strategy; additional funding from the California Endowment supported its implementation. When the *Richmond General Plan 2030* was approved in April 2012, equity and sustainability were woven throughout and health equity was at the fore.

City Manager Bill Lindsay refers to Health in All Policies (HiAP) as the "prism" through which all city operations and services should operate. "The HiAP strategy sets a framework of collaboration within city departments as well as with community-based organizations and other government agencies to address community health, equity and sustainability in Richmond. Through this lens, Health in All Policies is both a practice and destination," states the city's website.

The city has published a toolkit to inform and engage community members and the HiAP Strategy provides guidance to all city employees. It is organized into six areas of intervention:

1. Governance & Leadership
2. Economic Development & Education
3. Full Service & Safe Communities
4. Residential/Built Environments
5. Environmental Health & Justice
6. Quality & Accessible Health Homes and Social Services

Each "Intervention Area" contains short-term, medium-term, and long-term actions based on the time frames of 1-2 years, within 5 years, and 5+ years.

The ongoing collaboration between the city, its school district, Contra Costa County, the California Endowment, and the University of California, Berkeley, has been a linchpin to the city's success on health equity. It was formalized in 2012 under the auspices of the Richmond Health Equity Partnership and individuals across these institutions continue to play pivotal roles in moving the city forward toward its expansive vision to achieve "the highest level of health for all Richmond residents."[15]

"HiAP was a strategy to bring together actors in local government that hadn't worked together, recognizing that no one government agency working alone could deliver on equity," said Jason Corburn, associate professor at the University of California, Berkeley. "We made structural racism a centerpiece of the HiAP work, acknowledging that local governments have been complicit implementing policies and following administrative procedures, many that they themselves did not write, that perpetuate privilege and did not attempt to dismantle ethnic, racial and gender discrimination."

The cultural shift within city government has been transformative. "We have managed to change the culture of local government around health equity from 'that's not my job' to 'health is what I aim to promote every day,' and 'I'm a community clinician,'" said Corburn.

SPOTLIGHT — SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The city of San Francisco has, arguably, the most expansive environmental justice programming in North America, born from a backdrop of homegrown activism and the unique opportunity created by the evolution of California's utility deregulation.

The city's integration of equity, public health, and environmental justice is announced, clearly, in this mission statement: "The San Francisco Department of the Environment (SF Environment)'s mission creates visionary policies and innovative programs that promote social equity, protect human health, and lead the way toward a sustainable future."[16] Environmental justice was a priority for residents who participated in the process that produced the city's Sustainability Plan that was approved in 1997. San Francisco has a "very long history of citizen involvement in city government. It's not just top-down," said Anne Eng, San Francisco's environmental justice program manager. Within the expansive community engagement that involved nearly 350 local institutions and individuals, an Environmental Justice subcommittee galvanized support that resulted in the integration of environmental justice in the Plan. Equity is prominent in the section entitled "Integrating Environmental, Economic, and Social Concerns."

When the Sustainability Plan was endorsed by the City and County of San Francisco, it served as a policy advisory document. During the final stages of developing the plan, a voter initiative approved

an amendment to the city charter to create the Department of the Environment, known as SF Environment. An Environment Code translated the Plan's goals and guidance into a range of municipal ordinances.

A seven-member Commission on the Environment establishes the department's policies and directives. "It started with two people and has really grown," said Eng, referring to the department's current tally of 120 employees. Eng, who previously served as an environmental commissioner, has led the city's Environmental Justice Program for the last decade. The Environmental Justice Program is a permanent program within the infrastructure of the department.

In addition to the substantial infrastructure from San Francisco's Sustainability Plan, Environment Code, and the establishment of an EJ Program, utility deregulation in California created an unexpected, large pool of funding to support the city's environmental justice efforts. In the 1990s, in the midst of state regulatory reform of electric utilities, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) was ordered by the Public Utilities Commission to sell off power plants to break up their monopoly. Two plants in the southeast corner of San Francisco, in the neighborhood of Bayview-Hunters Point, went up for sale as a result. Residents and city officials were alarmed by the possibility that a new owner would want to increase production resulting in additional pollution. The neighborhood, home to the city's largest African-American population, already suffered from violence, poor health outcomes, and high rates of poverty. In response to community organizing and negotiations with the city, PG&E sold only one power plant and decommissioned the other. In 1998, the state of California gave $13 million dollars to the city to mitigate environmental justice-related harm caused by the sale. "That money went to a grants program to address environmental health and energy concerns, over a ten-year period," said Eng.

Environmental justice grants were distributed to nonprofit organizations to build community gardens and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofits including the purchase of new appliances and installation of one hundred solar systems. Ninety-five percent of the original state grant has been disbursed, but the city has revenue streams from waste fees and ongoing, active fundraising efforts to sustain programs.

The impact on SF Environment has been powerful. "Environmental justice was a program, but it got the city to look at everything through an EJ lens," said Shawn Rosenmoss, fundraising and grants manager in the Department of the Environment.

<table>
<tr><td>GOOD PRACTICE #3</td><td>**Put demographics and equity implications front and center to educate community members**</td></tr>
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Planners in the city of Raleigh, North Carolina are very intentional about explaining their demographics. "It's about knowing our trends. This is where we are and where we are going as a city," said Mitchell Silver,[17] former Chief Planning & Development Officer and Planning Director. "We break it down on race, age, sexual orientation. Our vision and values are going to change."

Data on disparities and information about their implications, both currently and for the future, need to be shared within the context of sustainability as part of the basic knowledge residents need to be engaged in community decisions. Proactive education on differences in key indicators across the community is an opportunity to build the case that equity is a core component of sustainability, shining a light on existing inequities so public priorities are shaped accordingly.

Pioneered in 2007 in the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area, equity atlases have been created in regions across the country to present quality of life data in a visual format through a demographic lens. While local governments are not the originators of equity atlases, city and county officials are often involved in the collaborative efforts that have brought them to fruition. In the regions where equity atlases have been developed, local government officials now have a valuable information and tracking tool and a tangible opportunity to work closely with the nonprofit, academic, and philanthropic communities on equity.

Knowledgeable, open dialogue about a community's history, present circumstances, and future prospects depends on basic facts. The implications of significant demographic shifts are a necessary component of planning. Easily-understood data about a city's historic and current reality are part of the necessary foundation for shared analysis and decision-making that engages community members. The data should be clearly conveyed and discussed throughout the community.

SPOTLIGHT — EQUITY ATLASES

Because equity touches every facet of community life, equity atlases offer a wide lens that brings a rich mix of issues to light, regardless of the foci that vary from region to region. In Atlanta and Portland, the frame is broad, articulated as community well-being and livelihood; their equity atlases were created by broad community coalitions led by the nonprofit sector. In Denver and Los Angeles, transportation is the focus and local foundations led the efforts to create their equity atlases, engaging a range of partners. By making equity explicit in the data presentation, equity atlases delve into disparities, typically focusing on race, ethnicity, and income.

The goal of mapping sustainability data is well articulated in the LA County atlas: "To know where you want to go, you first need to understand where you are."[18] By emphasizing the interconnected nature of community vitality, equity atlases are a valuable tool in framing sustainability broadly and presenting a more holistic, intersectional view of issues that are often discussed in isolation.

This is well articulated in metropolitan Atlanta:

> "Each of the indicators represented in this equity atlas can be improved by a range of specific policy interventions but it is clear that they are all interconnected. Improving health outcomes will require taking action to locate homes, schools and jobs in healthy neighborhoods with access to nutritious foods, green space and primary care options. Reducing unemployment will mean taking action to improve elementary and middle school performance, supporting families in extending learning beyond the classroom and surrounding children with positive options for after school activities that push back against poverty and crime. Expanding transportation options so that more people have access to jobs and housing that does not disproportionately consume their paychecks will require political will, collaborative approaches and genuine community engagement."
>
> — *One Region, One Reality, One Future*
> 2012 report of the Metro Atlanta Equity Atlas

Currently, education is the primary use of equity atlases. They are being used to educate the public, policy makers, and leaders in the private, nonprofit, government, education, and philanthropic sectors, although funding varies across regions and therefore impacts the communications tools that organizers can develop and the degree to which they can dedicate hands-on time to outreach.

Ron Carley, the former executive director of Portland's Coalition for a Livable Future, played a pivotal role in the creation of the first equity atlas in the country. "The fundamental goal of the original equity atlas was to illuminate regional disparities with the ultimate objective of targeting public policy and investments to address them," he said. "It begins with education and there is just something about maps that resonates with decision-makers even when presenting information they may already know. The atlas format provides an innovative way to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the issues. In the case of the Portland metro region we had a significant impact on elevating the dialogue around equity to the point where the city of Portland now has an Office of Equity and our regional government, Metro, is in the process of developing a Regional Equity Strategy."

While equity atlas publications can make for compelling reading for those inclined to dig deeply into regional policy issues, many residents are unlikely to read reports that number over one hundred pages. Maps are compelling because they are visual, but many demographic maps are technical, using jargon and confusing those who aren't used to the mapping format of presenting data. Infographics and presentations tailored to specific audiences are positive outgrowths of equity atlases and are helping regions achieve the most fundamental goal of these projects: educating the broadest array of stakeholders in the region, especially those whose voices have historically been least heard in regional decision making.

This engagement is necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of equity atlases. "Atlases, like any analytical tool, are only as good as the change they foster and the inequities they address," said Carley. "One concern I have is that in the eyes of some public officials production of an equity atlas is an end unto itself. It's 'checking the equity box,' but if the atlas is the 'talk,' then policy change is the 'walk.'"

SMART GROWTH

What if we started building a healthy, livable Los Angeles for everyone, starting right now?

THE CHALLENGE

- 93 annual hours of traffic delay per traveler
- Highest air pollution of any city in the US
- 14% of Los Angeles children have asthma
- 53% of income spent on housing and transportation
- More than 80% of low-income jobs not well served by transit

THE OPPORTUNITY

- $40 billion in transit investment
- Double current transit system
- Sustainable Communities Act
- 374,000 new housing units near transit
- 400,000 new jobs

- High rent
- Core riders displaced

- Mixed income and rent
- Core riders included

Rising rents near transit can displace core riders

When core riders become drivers, their costs increase by $556/month and congestion increases

TOGETHER, WE CAN…

PLAN
Educate and empower all residents to engage in planning communities

LIVE
Include affordable housing options near transit.

WORK
Support expansion of small business and job opportunities connecting to transit.

In order for Smart Growth to work for all of us, it has to work for the lowest income Angelenos.

Average core metro rider earns $25,000

THE BENEFITS

- Reduce traffic congestion by 24%
- 13% reduction in greenhouse gasses
- Lower rates of asthma and other health problems
- More homes and jobs near quality transit
- Reduced housing and transportation costs
- Benefit to every LA household $3400/year

Smart Growth… for a better future for all of Los Angeles

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

www.calfund.org/smartgrowth

II. DATA, METRICS, AND ANALYSIS.
Use data, metrics, and analysis
to set goals and build accountability
for progress on equity

GOOD PRACTICE #4
Collect comprehensive sustainability data that fully integrate equity, then disaggregate that data to identify communities of concern

GOOD PRACTICE #5
Use indicators to inform the community on progress towards sustainability, including the reduction of disparities among demographic groups

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GOOD PRACTICE #4 — Collect comprehensive sustainability data that fully integrate equity, then disaggregate that data to identify communities of concern

Cities conduct research and compile information about a vast array of community issues on an ongoing basis and these data are used as a foundation of community planning. Communities prioritizing equity are collecting sustainability data and analyzing it through a demographic lens.

The collection of data on historic patterns and current conditions is a fundamental component of understanding emerging community needs and projecting future opportunities. While sustainability plans are rarely mandated, in most states and provinces a Comprehensive Plan or General Plan, in the United States, or an Official Community Plan or Municipal Development Plan, in Canada, is required by law. The compilation of local and regional data within a sustainability category has become a standard practice for cities and regions that have established sustainability offices and plans. The articulation of sustainability goals is increasingly matched by the commitment of local and regional government agencies to track progress and hold themselves accountable for achieving gains. Depending on how sustainability is framed and defined, the goals, and the subsequent data that needs to be tracked, have either integrated equity or ignored it altogether.

In addition to collecting sustainability data overall, distributional equity requires an analysis of the disbursal of benefits and burdens across key demographic groups and neighborhoods. Disaggregating data by demographics provides a fuller picture of environmental, economic, and social health, bringing to light disparities among groups within a community. In this way, local governments are identifying specific demographic groups as priorities for engagement and consideration when city resources are allocated or decisions are being made. Historically, these communities of concern have often been the least served by city services. They often suffer disproportionately from community harms, like asthma rates and air pollution from nearby highways and busy roads, to higher rates of infant mortality. They have the least access to goods and services—from neighborhood trees to sidewalks, from clean, safe streets to frequent transit service.

While people of color and indigenous communities, or First Nations, and low-income neighborhoods are identified, frequently if not nearly universally, as communities of concern across the United States and Canada, local demographics and circumstances determine the groups that need to be prioritized by each city.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments in Northern California is an example of how communities of concern are identified by assessing risk factors. They focus on the following groups:

- Low-income populations
- People of color and indigenous populations
- Limited English proficiency
- Zero-vehicle households
- Seniors 75 and over
- People with a disability
- Single parent families
- Cost burdened renters

Within their focus on transportation, they use communities of concern "to refer to communities in the Bay Area that face particular transportation challenges, either because of affordability, disability, or because of age-related mobility limitations."[19]

In San Diego, the regional plan has defined communities of concern more broadly:

> Promoting social equity and environmental justice in regional planning requires the proactive engagement of community members who have traditionally been underserved and underrepresented in the planning process. Cities and communities with high concentrations of low income residents and minority populations, as well as federally recognized Native American tribes, have been identified as communities of concern.
> — *San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan*

Cities face numerous challenges when collecting data on equity and sustainability. They must establish clear priorities to filter the sheer volume of available data. At a minimum, they have to clarify the boundaries of the complex, expansive scope of these issues and create baselines from which to measure progress. As equity has become further embedded in sustainability, equity indicators and measures are becoming both more sophisticated and more widespread in their use. Consequently, as local governments have identified their communities of concern, they have been able to target their data gathering and tracking resources accordingly. King County, Washington, is an excellent example of using deep and rigorous data analysis to increase equity.

SPOTLIGHT — KING COUNTY, WA

In Washington, the King County *Strategic Plan 2010-2014* and the subsequent equity and social justice Ordinance 16948 passed by its council built on existing racial justice and equity efforts in Seattle and the county and sparked additional transformational work within the region. "This ordinance establishes definitions and identifies the specific approaches necessary to implement and achieve the 'fair and just' principle that is embedded as a core element of the goals, objectives and strategies of the countywide strategic plan," states Ordinance 16948.

The ordinance defined key terms and its definitions are often referenced by sustainability leaders across North America, especially the one referring to equity:

> 'Equity' means all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential.

> 'Inequity' means differences in well-being that disadvantage one individual or group in favor of another. These differences are systematic, patterned and unfair and can be changed. Inequities are not random; they are caused by past and current decisions, systems of power and privilege, policies and the implementation of those policies.

> 'Social justice' means all aspects of justice, including legal, political and economic, and requires the fair distribution of public goods, institutional resources and life opportunities for all people.

> — *King County Signature Report,*
>   October 11, 2010, Ordinance 16948

Based on the ordinance, the county identified race, income, and English proficiency as priority communities of concern. The county must "consider equity and social justice impacts in all decision-making so that decisions increase fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency or, when decisions that have a negative impact on fairness and opportunity are unavoidable, steps are implemented that mitigate the negative impact."[20]

These priorities were also referenced in the ordinance's definition of determinants of equity:

'Determinants of equity' means the social, economic, geographic, political and physical environment conditions in which people in our county are born, grow, live, work and age that lead to the creation of a fair and just society. Access to the determinants of equity is necessary to have equity for all people regardless of race, class, gender or language spoken. Inequities are created when barriers exist that prevent individuals and communities from accessing these conditions and reaching their full potential. The determinants of equity are:

1. Community economic development that supports local ownership of assets, including homes and businesses, and assures fair access for all to business development and business retention opportunities;

2. Community and public safety that includes services such as fire, police, emergency medical services and code enforcement that are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe to live, work and play in any neighborhood of King County;

3. A law and justice system that provides equitable access and fair treatment for all;

4. Early childhood development that supports nurturing relationships, high-quality affordable child care and early learning opportunities that promote optimal early childhood development and school readiness for all children;

5. Education that is high quality and culturally appropriate and allows each student to reach his or her full learning and career potential;

6. Equity in county practices that eliminates all forms of discrimination in county activities in order to provide fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents and others who interact with King County;

7. Food systems that support local food production and provide access to affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods for all people;

8. Health and human services that are high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate and support the optimal well-being of all people;

9. Healthy built and natural environments for all people that include mixes of land use that support: jobs, housing, amenities and services; trees and forest canopy; and clean air, water, soil and sediment;

10. Housing for all people that is safe, affordable, high quality and healthy;

11. Job training and jobs that provide all residents with the knowledge and skills to compete in a diverse workforce and with the ability to make sufficient income for the purchase of basic necessities to support them and their families;

12. Neighborhoods that support all communities and individuals through strong social networks, trust among neighbors and the ability to work together to achieve common goals that improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhood;

13. Parks and natural resources that provide access for all people to safe, clean and quality outdoor spaces, facilities and activities that appeal to the interests of all communities; and

14. Transportation that provides everyone with safe, efficient, affordable, convenient and reliable mobility options including public transit, walking, car pooling and biking.

—*King County Signature Report,*
October 11, 2010, Ordinance 16948

The focus on race, income, and language "allows us to look across the landscape at human settlement and how it relates to opportunity. We know that we have racial structuralization based on race. We have lack of access to quality schools and differential health outcomes," said Richard Gelb, performance measures manager at the Department of Natural Resources and Parks in King County, Washington. "Different things are revealed by income, regardless of race. And, because ten percent of our population has arrived in the last twenty years and we have a lot of limited English proficiency, it bears on access to services and being linguistically disenfranchised and more removed from political processes." While the ordinance flagged gender, distributional equity and gender aren't particularly salient in the region. "Even though there may be concerns around gender, that doesn't typically play out in geographic considerations," said Gelb.

The ordinance committed King County to integrating equity and social justice in all county actions. To operationalize the focus on people of color, low-income communities, and people with limited English proficiency, research and tracking resources are allocated accordingly, to provide data to inform decisions. The county uses sophisticated mapping technologies and demographic analyses to identify quintiles that are the lowest performing to track progress and focus county programs.

Because King County is absolutely clear about its communities of concern, they are able to effectively focus their analyses and target their resources, substantially increasing the chances that their equity efforts will have tangible impacts on those who need it most.

| GOOD PRACTICE #5 | **Use indicators to inform the community on progress towards sustainability, including the reduction of disparities among demographic groups** |

Indicators play an important role in framing the concept of sustainability. While some cities have simply renamed environmental indicators as sustainability indicators, increasingly, health, social, economic, and equity issues are being integrated into an expanding set of measurements that more accurately reflect the complexity of sustainability. Tracking indicators over time enables cities to assess whether their programs and activities are accomplishing their intended positive impacts and to convey developments to residents and decision-makers alike. Adjustments can be made and goals may be enlarged, based on the direction of change and the pace of progress.

The city of Dubuque makes the case for the role of indicators:

> Sustainability as a concept can be abstract, and without ways to measure progress it is difficult for cities to truly understand how they are doing. By measuring and evaluating Dubuque's progress, the City, its residents, and its businesses can build off Dubuque's strengths and improve its weaknesses. Furthermore, by comparing Dubuque's progress to other similar communities—Ames, Iowa; Decatur, Illinois; Oshkosh, Wisconsin; and St. Cloud, Minnesota—Dubuque can gain a better understanding of what works and what doesn't, allowing the City to identify best practices and make strategic improvements.
> — *Sustainability Progress Report 2012,* Sustainable Dubuque and University of Iowa, School of Urban and Regional Planning

The commitment to regularly-scheduled reporting of sustainability indicators signals local officials' commitment to accountability for achieving sustainability goals. Reporting within city government is part of internal

accountability among the leaders and departments responsible for sustainability programs and the outcomes that result from them. Furthermore, indicators can build shared ownership beyond local government employees. They can demonstrate that residents, community leaders, and organizations across a city and region can take action to contribute to achieving tangible, measureable progress on sustainability.

Indicators are part of a broader planning, data collection, and community engagement process. Usage of the term ranges wildly across cities. For example, in the city of Dubuque, Iowa, "indicators" name a statistic, and consistent questions are matched with the indicator to provide a community snapshot. A contrasting example is the city of Minneapolis, where the term "indicator" names a topic area and uses "targets" to describe numerical goals and the projected timing for attaining them. Nonetheless, both Minneapolis and Dubuque have integrated equity and social issues throughout their indicators.

Minneapolis tracks progress on twenty-six sustainability indicators. In its 2012 update, the city named an indicator of "Lead Poisoning" with targets to "Test all 1- and 2-year-old children for lead by 2014" and to "Maintain inspections of all homes of children with elevated blood-lead levels (10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood) through 2014." [21] Lead poisoning is an excellent example of a sustainability indicator that integrates equity. The ailment is more likely to occur in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Two sources of lead are contaminated soils and peeling lead paint; they're often found in neighborhoods in close proximity to industrial facilities and in substandard housing.

In partnership with the University of Iowa, the city of Dubuque worked with residents to create eleven sustainability principles that are expressed in sixty indicators organized by themes. The indicators are expansive and their inclusion of gender is notable. While researchers have identified gender disparities in climate change impacts and other arenas of sustainability, gender is not typically included in community indicators. Dubuque's report is an example of how cities are using indicators to make the case for equity by translating statistics in a tangible way. The Regional Economy principle and Economic Development theme included this indicator and information:

> INDICATOR: Gender Wage Gap – Female earnings as a percentage of male earnings for full-time, year-round workers
>
> WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? In a sustainable city, income level does not depend upon gender. Across the U.S., however, the median female earnings were only 78.3% of the median male earnings in 2010. Although this statistic does not account for skills or job position, it reflects a variety of societal influences that contribute to pay disparity. These societal influences include cultural preconceptions on aptitudes based on gender, the cultural value of work traditionally performed by women, and unconscious bias about the capabilities of women. The lower median wage for females reduces equality and increases the vulnerability of single mothers and their families.
>
> HOW ARE WE DOING? The gender wage gap in Dubuque held constant from the 2005 –2007 time span to the 2008 –2010 time span. In 2005 –2007, female earnings were 71.6% of male earnings, and in 2008 –2010 female earnings rose to 76.5% of male earnings. However, this change is within the margin of error, and thus there has been no improvement in the gender wage gap.
>
> HOW DOES DUBUQUE COMPARE? The gender wage gap in Dubuque is similar to its peer cities. The confidence interval for each of the cities overlap with one another, and thus the data does not indicate whether Dubuque's performance is better or worse than its peers.
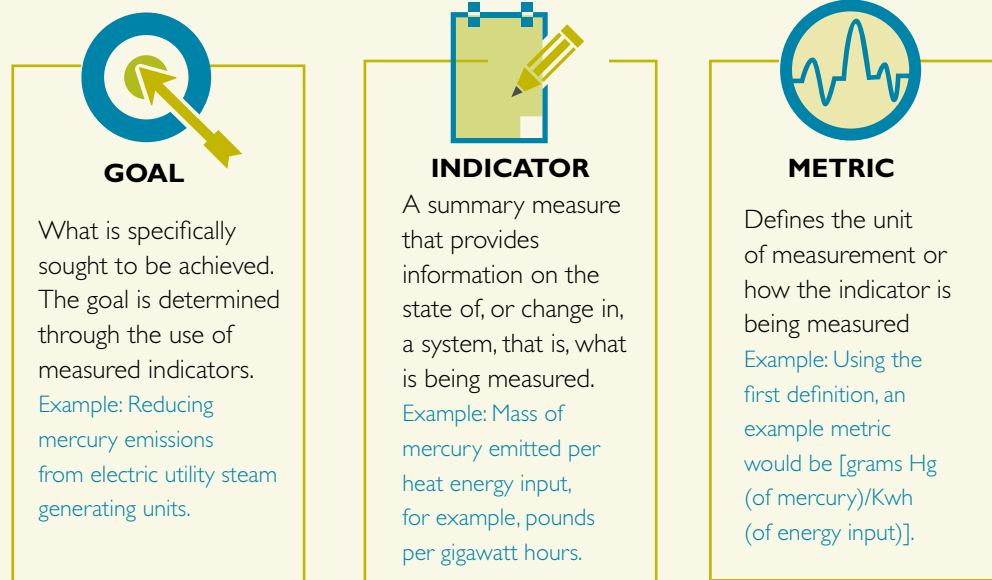>
> — *Sustainability Progress Report 2012,* Sustainable Dubuque and University of Iowa, School of Urban and Regional Planning

GENDER WAGE GAP 2010

In the United States, guidance from the National Research Council to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is an additional example of how indicators are being defined.

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL — GOAL, INDICATOR, AND METRIC

GOAL

What is specifically sought to be achieved. The goal is determined through the use of measured indicators.
Example: Reducing mercury emissions from electric utility steam generating units.

INDICATOR

A summary measure that provides information on the state of, or change in, a system, that is, what is being measured.
Example: Mass of mercury emitted per heat energy input, for example, pounds per gigawatt hours.

METRIC

Defines the unit of measurement or how the indicator is being measured
Example: Using the first definition, an example metric would be [grams Hg (of mercury)/Kwh (of energy input)].

— Sustainability and the U.S. EPA, Committee on Incorporating Sustainability in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Research Council 2011

Translating rigorous, technical data into easy-to-digest information that resonates with the full spectrum of community audiences is no easy task. Audiences for tracking indicators include community residents, local government employees, elected officials in city, county, and regional jurisdictions, business leaders, and funders. The degree of specificity and technicality versus ease of comprehension depends on the audience. In addition, due to the ongoing, cyclical nature of reporting sustainability indicators, they need to be easily updatable.

In metropolitan Portland, Oregon, the regional government, Metro, has prioritized equity in its work to preserve and enhance the region's quality of life for current and future generations. In 2010, Metro's council adopted equity as one of six desired outcomes for the region. "We have been charged as staff to develop a concerted strategy to make an impact in everything Metro has influence over to advance equity in the region," said Pietro Ferrari, Metro's equity program strategy manager. "We're currently in the middle of a three-year effort that will culminate in the equity strategy and action plan to be presented for adoption by Council early next summer. To this end, we are working on establishing a baseline of equity indicators that will inform the strategies we create and propose."

Metro's equity indicators are being created by a working group comprised of six community-based organizations who received funding for their participation based on an open request

GRAPHIC: Excerpt from the infographic, *Building Equity & Opportunity,* King County, Washington

INEQUITIES HURT EVERYONE.

WHEN PEOPLE LACK ACCESS TO THE DETERMINANTS OF EQUITY, THEY LACK OPPORTUNITY. THE RESULTING INEQUITIES IMPACT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

BARRIERS

DETERMINANTS OF EQUITY

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

HIGHER:
- HEALTH CARE COSTS
- HEALTH PROBLEMS
- CRIME
- UNFILLED HIGH-SKILLED JOBS
- INCARCERA-TION

LOWER:
- ON-TIME GRADUATION
- WAGES
- EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE
- QUALITY/ AFFORDABLE HOUSING

for proposals. They have worked for nearly a year to identify key equity indicators for all six of Metro's desired outcomes and to assess the benefits and burdens of Metro's policies which will the foundation of an Equity Baseline report to be completed in the fall of 2014.

Local governments are publishing more regular annual sustainability updates and many of them include tracking of indicators, similar to the efforts in Dubuque and Minneapolis. Some cities have local laws mandating public disclosure of specific sustainability data. For example, New York City's "Local Law 84 requires annual benchmarking and public disclosure about energy efficiency" for buildings over 50,000 square feet.[22]

While community indicators programs have existed for more than twenty years, the integration of equity is a relatively recent addition to data gathering and reporting under the sustainability agenda. Finally, efforts to publicize sustainability indicators are being impacted by the advent of infographics and the growing pressure to create brief snippets of data, including those that are easily shareable via social media. While the proliferation of decreasing attention spans is lamentable to many, this pressure is forcing cities, counties, and regions to up their game to create compelling visuals that convey sustainability data, quickly. In many ways, this is a good thing.

III. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND COLLABORATION:
Build sustainability efforts on a foundation of community engagement, ongoing capacity building, and collaboration

GOOD PRACTICE #6
Build sustainability programs on a foundation of authentic community engagement

GOOD PRACTICE #7
Provide learning opportunities on the basics of planning and sustainability, including developing capacity and leadership in neighborhoods prioritized for engagement

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GOOD PRACTICE #6   **Build sustainability programs on a foundation of authentic community engagement**

Cities are in the business of community engagement, but they haven't always lived up to the commitment of a government for all people, by all people. Equal participation is a core tenet of democracy and, arguably, local governments play the most tangible government role in people's lives. They manage public schools, provide clean drinking water, clear roadways, fight fires, inspect restaurants for cleanliness, and much more. Residents should be able to express their needs and shape the many decisions municipalities make in playing these roles. In addition, local government decision-makers live and work in their communities. Their workplaces are a municipal or regional building minutes away, not a capital hours away or across the country. That said, concrete roles and close proximity don't equate to substantive engagement. Two-minute public comment periods with a limited list of speakers are a far cry from a seat at the table setting the agenda for a community's priorities.

Sustainability holds great promise for innovation in community engagement. Commitment to equity intensifies and broadens sustainability initiatives, bringing more people into dialogue and action. Successful community engagement lays the foundation for procedural equity—inclusive, accessible, authentic engagement and representation in processes to develop or implement programs and policies. Many local sustainability programs were launched by community summits, planning charrettes, and city-wide visioning sessions. Residents are often asked to start with one question: What does a sustainable city mean to you?

In Cleveland, Ohio, the city sponsored an "I am Sustainable Cleveland" poster campaign to give voice to responses to that question. "Thirty-five people from across the city created posters on why they're sustainable," said Jenita McGowan, chief of sustainability. Responses demonstrated the breadth of residents' ownership of sustainability. "People said sustainability is 'when I host a block party' or 'teaching people to meditate is how I am Sustainable Cleveland.' They were all over the place" in a good way, she said.

Similar work took place in San Francisco. "We had listening campaigns with dozens of people. Just listening. Showing up at events and asking, 'what would a green San Francisco look like to you?'" said Anne Eng, environmental justice program manager.

To develop their sustainability plans, cities have built on community-wide meetings with hundreds of participants, including online surveys, focus groups, and door-to-door interviews. In cities like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC, sustainability programs are building off a tradition of neighborhood-based leadership. Importantly, rather than expecting residents to come to the city, many sustainability programs are going out to meet people where they are, physically and virtually. Technology-savvy cities are building more expansive websites, but also moving beyond them. They're posting reports and updates online, but more cities are creating Facebook pages and YouTube channels. They're tweeting, and posting photos on Instagram and Pinterest. They're using Foursquare and Tumblr. They're blogging.
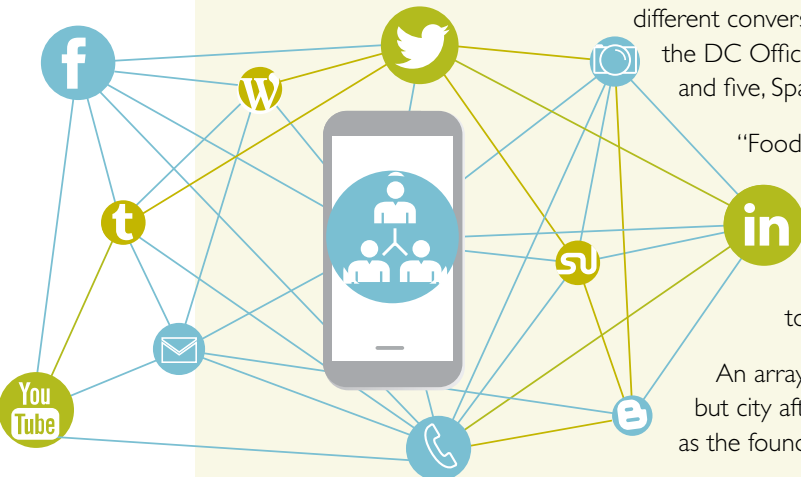
The work goes far beyond getting people to show up at hearings. Cities are tracking demographics of meeting participants to identify the constituents that require additional effort. In Nashville, Tennesee, planners not only tracked the demographics of participants, they shared the similarities and differences of the issues different groups prioritized. The community vision process, called NashvilleNext, tracked demographics by gender, age, neighborhood, household type, renter/owner, time in Nashville, birth country, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity.[23] In their report, the city mapped who was overrepresented and underrepresented to identify gaps the city could address.

Cities are showing up at schools, homeless shelters, farmers markets, and on doorsteps to engage those who aren't able to come to them. "We don't rely just on town hall meetings," said Mitchell formerly of Raleigh. "We go to people where they are." An example is the planning department's efforts to engage the African-American community, "We go to churches and community centers. Churches are great partners and there are well-known and historic black community centers." Raleigh is also one of the cities reaching out to Millennials through social media with dedicated staff. "Seventy percent of our population is forty-five and under. They stay informed via social media," said Silver.

Despite an expansive process including hundreds of residents engaged via working groups, Washington, DC, planners realized they "were not getting everyone. We needed targeted outreach and focus groups to have different conversations," said Laine Cidlowski, urban sustainability planner in the DC Office of Planning. "We held focus groups in wards seven, eight, and five, Spanish speakers, youth, and seniors."

"Food and kids are the secret ingredients. We know residents are engaged in schools at pick up and drop off," said Sasha Curl of the city of Richmond. The city hosts events and shares information at schools. "Some are interested in education, some free energy upgrades for their house. That translates to a meeting at City Hall," she said.

An array of activities to inform and engage residents is impressive, but city after city mentioned the need to adopt a new spirit of listening as the foundation of community engagement. "Lead by listening. Don't

ever swoop into a meeting or community with the answer. That sends the message that no one else has anything to offer in the decision-making," said McGowan of Cleveland. Staff in San Francisco agree. "This is a huge part of environmental justice. There is a big listening component, asking them about their immediate needs and finding ways to connect it to our mission as a department," said Anne Eng of San Francisco. "When we did the strategic plan in Bayview-Hunters Point, the top of their list was violence and trauma. We wanted to talk about toxics, energy efficiency, food security. But there is so much violence in poor urban environments. How do we address and talk with partners dedicated to violence prevention related to sustainability—better buildings and street lighting, energy efficiency as a way to help with security?"

The commitment of staff time is essential for doing community engagement well. True engagement "is extremely labor intensive. People don't want to know that. It's not a one-day meeting and 'yay, we engaged'," said Shawn Rosenmoss, fundraising and grants manager at the city of San Francisco.

"You have to look at who is engaged. It has to be a cross-section, not the usual suspects driving the conversation. We need to make an extra effort," said Silver.

SPOTLIGHT — ALBANY, NEW YORK

In Albany, New York, the city has tracked the demographics of participants in community planning sessions to identify constituents who require additional engagement. During the development of their comprehensive plan, planners collected standardized demographic data anonymously, using keypad polling. "People loved the technology," said Douglas Melnick , former director of planning and director of the Mayor's Office of Energy & Sustainability. The city gathered real-time data on "race, neighborhood, sex, how did you get here, and income," he said.

"Technology allowed for immediate feedback. People would gasp, 'Wow, we only have 4% African Americans here?' Then we would compare it to actual city demographics and got the same oh my god response. Same with income," said Melnick. "It is essential to track demographics. Without doing that, you're fooling yourself. You can't hold a public meeting and say the community has spoken because they haven't. It's a cop out."

The city identified the neighborhoods and groups they weren't reaching and created an altogether different plan for engagement. "We weren't getting seniors, African Americans, single mothers. We realized that it was obvious. Many had no ability or time to go to these meetings." Planners walked neighborhoods and went to a homeless shelter conducting mini-surveys. "We got face-to-face input consistent with a three-hour meeting in a fifteen-minute survey. It was really successful."

In addition to fulfilling its commitment to engagement of the entire community, the effort was an education for city staff, consultants, and the Comprehensive Plan board members, some of whom had never been in some of the focus neighborhoods. "It broke down barriers. People said, 'Wow, everyone wants the same thing. They want a safe community. A good future for their kids.'"

"There is no silver bullet," said Melnick. "It just requires staff time. You have to figure out how to get everyone. It's your responsibility." He acknowledges that this is hard, forever work. "We are not tapping into the diversity of the community all of the time. When we are keeping the lid on things on a daily basis, we are doing a fraction of engagement that we should be doing."

SPOTLIGHT — SERVICES AND OUTREACH TO LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY RESIDENTS

One tangible example of local government action to provide better service across languages is the fact that Seattle's boiler inspectors use translation cards during boiler inspections with small businesses.[25] Limited English proficiency is an obvious barrier to public participation because the vast majority of written and verbal communication with local government takes place in English. Federal legislation mandates and a growing number of state and municipal laws force local governments to provide meaningful access to individuals who speak little or no English. The city of Austin, Texas, provides this context in its Language Assistance Plan:

> Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a federal law that protects persons from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Title VI requires recipients of federal financial assistance to take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to programs and services by Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons. Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English maybe considered LEP persons.
>
> — *Language Assistance Plan*, City of Austin, Aviation Department, July 2013

Census data show this equity issue is growing in importance. Focusing on LEP constituents is all the more important because this community suffers from multiple points of disadvantage. "Education, employment status, poverty status, disability status, and health insurance coverage" are "correlated with English speaking ability. Seventy-three percent of Spanish-speakers with a bachelor's degree or more education spoke English 'very well,' compared with 71 percent of those who spoke a language other than Spanish for this same education level.[26]

Local governments are heeding to call to pay attention to this facet of community engagement. The city of Calgary, Alberta, has identified an engagement and empowerment objective in its sustainability plan with a target to ensure "the City communication and engagement opportunities are available in multiple formats, channels, and languages."[27] In Seattle, residents can request free language interpretation from any city department and all key service information has been translated in the city's six most commonly used languages. Seattle provides online information in thirty languages. "The Seattle Channel website offers videos in Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese on residential recycling, food and yard waste and how to recycle electronic equipment."[28] In San Francisco, the city's residents speak over fifty languages. "We have to be diverse and make our materials accessible," said Anne Eng. "Across the department, at one point, we did an assessment and ninety people spoke lots of other languages."

SF Environment collaborates with other departments on language accessibility including a logical partnership with every branch library. "The librarians have to speak all these languages," said Eng. The city provides grants to Chinese-speaking organizations to reach Mandarin and Cantonese speakers. Speakers of Spanish and Mandarin are regular members of the city's outreach team and partnerships with the Boys and Girls Club in the Mission and Chinatown neighborhoods engage young native speakers of those languages. "We've had to carve money out of the budget to translate and hold interviews in Spanish and Chinese. We have special meetings, focus groups, translation. It has become a large part of our work," said Eng.

King County, Washington's Translation Executive Order requires the following:

- Review printed materials for broad distribution for cultural and linguistic appropriateness
- All departments identify vital documents, and translate vital documents and Public Communication Materials
- Targeted materials (5% or more of population)
- Alternative forms of assistance, instead of translation, when effective
- Certified translators AND reviewer
- 20 languages in 3 tiers[29]

Local officials emphasize that translation without cultural knowledge can result in mishaps and, in some cases, create more harm than good. Effective translation—in person and for written materials—relies on translators who are familiar with cultural norms and understand the nuances of terms and language that go beyond the translation of words and phrases.

In Santa Fe, New Mexico, city employees noticed that public meetings drew only English-speaking participants. The numbers did not budge despite translation services and ads placed in Spanish. In 2011, the city hired a well-known activist who grew up in the city and also had strong ties to Mexico. He met with residents in their living rooms, inviting them to public meetings and encouraging them to commit to participate. His credibility and outreach resulted in a new 50/50 balance at public meetings with everything translated in English and Spanish. "People were talking for the first time, sharing their priorities on health, especially as it related to children," said Katherine Mortimer, Sustainable Santa Fe programs manager.

| GOOD PRACTICE #7 | **Provide learning opportunities on the basics of planning and sustainability, including developing capacity and leadership in neighborhoods prioritized for engagement** |

Sustainability programs are creating new opportunities for learning and leadership and, in many cases, are focusing their efforts on constituents who have been least engaged, historically, in their efforts. Cities are partnering across agencies and with nonprofit organizations to build the capacity of the least enfranchised and their identified communities of concern.

This work is of critical importance because community processes can be accessible without being inclusive and authentic for those who lack familiarity with government processes or deep knowledge of specific issues. Anyone who has attended a hearing where unexplained acronyms and undefined jargon made participants' eyes glaze over within minutes knows attendance does not equal engagement. True engagement requires that community members are informed and knowledgeable about the basics of the issues under deliberation. It requires recognition of historic and cultural dynamics within communities that have embedded privilege and disadvantage creating the chronic, cumulative disadvantage at the heart of structural inequity. For example, housing discrimination against people of color and indigenous communities locked them out as homebuyers for decades. As a result, homeowners are disproportionately white, in many communities. They are easier to reach and engage than renters, especially those with the lowest incomes who move regularly. These dynamics need to be acknowledged by local governments and factored into their actions.

Local governments are partnering with nonprofits and transforming outreach programs into deeper educational opportunities. They are building capacity by listening to the needs expressed by the very residents they are prioritizing for engagement. "Public housing residents told us they want jobs, to work

as navigators in public housing sites," said San Francisco's Anne Eng. "We worked with the Mayor's office on integrated pest management. We helped them reduce pest infestation without spraying pesticides, then we joined with service providers to train community navigators to help them access public health and mental health services."

Capacity building, leadership development, and programs to bring all community residents up to speed on the fundamentals of sustainability are renewing interest and expanding a true sense of ownership and engagement.

SPOTLIGHT — CLEVELAND, OHIO

"Equity is about fairness and offsetting privilege and being able to provide additional support to people who are inherently at a disadvantage," said Freddy Collier, deputy planning director of the city of Cleveland, Ohio. "The fundamentals of sustainability need to be understood by everyone, including those who are incarcerated, out of the labor force. We have to educate them on the fundamentals."

With support from the Cleveland Foundation, the city has partnered with Roots of Success, an environmental literacy and job readiness curriculum developed by Dr. Raquel Pinderhuges who was directly involved in the development of San Francisco's sustainability plan two decades ago. Roots of Success was developed to serve low-income youth and adults.

> "The curriculum works well for all students but was specifically designed for youth and adults who are struggling in school or have barriers to employment. Our pedagogical approach engages students, makes learning relevant, builds on previous knowledge and experiences, and connects what students are learning in the classroom to real world issues. The material is not simply presented to students as if they are open vessels ready to bank information, but as people who learn better when they engage with content that is relevant to their lives, and participate in rich conversations. Students are given opportunities to examine society's most pressing environmental problems, identify innovative solutions, and develop innovative and entrepreneurial responses to community problems and needs."
> —Roots of Success,
> "What We Do"[30]

"The curriculum provides a very detailed, digestible explanation of all aspects of sustainability—water, transportation, energy. The curriculum allows you to teach and add to it but not detract," said Collier. City employees have been certified to teach Roots of Success to "onboard, educate, and empower people to apply sustainability and take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities," said Collier.

"The bridge is equity. It's the one thing that is getting to the heart of sustainability," he said.

SPOTLIGHT — SAN FRANCISCO, CA

In San Francisco, sustainability staff recognize that civic involvement is essential and thus their partnerships run the gamut. They need "an engaged citizenship that understands the connection between issues," said Anne Eng, environmental justice program manager. "We are really committed to developing partnerships that may be more focused on workforce development, clean technology, environmental justice. We are working with businesses, working with Goodwill, the Boys and Girls Club, the interfaith community," she said.

In addition to these varied partnerships, the city has created an innovative environmental literacy and green careers program called Environment Now. The city's Human Services Agency created a Jobs Now program to train municipal workers for entry-level positions. Initially funded by the 2009 federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, top directors were so impressed with its results that they insisted on keeping the program to focus on outreach and provide job training.

Four years later, Environment Now is housed in the Department of Environment, known as SF Environment, and more than 100 people have participated in the two-year program, a new cohort every quarter. Most come from disadvantaged backgrounds, some from short-term workforce development programs. Participants are trained, mentored, and paid a salary; they are eligible for city benefits after a few months. The program "enables participants to have a regular paycheck and stability in their lives. We provide them with case management services because many of the applicants are dealing with multiple stressors. We have learned to have these services to make it work," said Eng.

Training includes ecological literacy and work with all programs across SF Environment, laying the foundation for the their role as city outreach workers, especially in "neighborhoods in need." They table at community events, walk door-to-door, and lead outreach on city programs on recycling, composting, energy efficiency, toxics, and food security. Environment Now participants play an important role in achieving the city's impressive rate of diverting 85% of its solid waste from landfills. The outreach message is both economic and environmental: "It's not only the environmental benefits of diversion but how they can save money in how they handle their materials," said Eng.

Three Environment Now graduates were hired as SF Environment Staff and a few more are employed by the local waste management company. Others have been hired as mentors for the program. "They are a vital component" of SF Environment," said Eng. "It's not just us helping them. They are an asset to the department. When we think about equity, it's how I speak to you. It's that I think you're going to give me as much as I'm going to give you."

The city is learning as it goes and staff push themselves to reach their entire constituency. "How do you reach people in a way that they can understand—who don't consider themselves environmentalists?" asked Eng.. "Do you use "public health messaging, or 'save a million dollars?' What is the sweet spot for anyone with whom I'm talking?" Environment Now is paving the way to create a new generation of sustainability leaders. "They become missionaries. They're not people who come from environmental backgrounds, but they do become environmentalists."

IV. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE:
Expand the capacity and infrastructure for equity in local government decision-making and operations

GOOD PRACTICE #8
Build an infrastructure of people and entities tasked with achieving progress on equity in sustainability and foster collaboration across agencies and beyond

GOOD PRACTICE #9
Provide professional development to cultivate the awareness, knowledge, and skills to effectively address equity within local government

GOOD PRACTICE #10
Develop implementation tools and processes to institutionalize equity and increase accountability in decision-making, budgeting, and programs

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GOOD PRACTICE #8 — Build an infrastructure of people and entities tasked with achieving progress on equity in sustainability and foster collaboration across agencies and beyond

As equity becomes a more prominent feature of sustainability, more local governments are creating offices and positions focused specifically on making equity-sustainability connections. As mentioned, in recent years, environmental justice responsibilities have been added to local government positions; now, equity and social justice roles are being added as well. In Albany, New York, the Common Council created a Sustainability Committee with a Social Equity Subcommittee to serve as community advisors. Among its roles, the subcommittee will work to ensure social equity is addressed across city operations. Portland, Oregon, boasts the first entirely equity-focused full-time position within a city sustainability department. The city also combined its sustainability and planning departments and prioritized equity by creating an entirely new bureau. "Merging sustainability and equity came from the Portland Plan. The base [of the plan] is a focus on equity and opportunity for all," said Susan Anderson, director of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability who created the equity specialist position.

Simultaneously, leading cities are expanding traditional civil rights, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Affirmative Action departments and offices that serve as liaisons to ethnic groups. They are taking on social justice, equity, inclusion, diversity, and human rights. In some cases new entities are being created around these issues or more specifically on racial justice, racial equity, women, or LGBTQ communities. For example, in 2011, a city ordinance created the Portland, Oregon, Office of Equity and Human Rights.

Equity requires leadership from the top, a clear articulation that it is the responsibility of every employee and department. While additional offices, staff, and resources for equity are a good thing, raising the bar for communication and coordination is a challenge. Crosscutting issues are often challenging to integrate in a world of silos. Bureaucracies that haven't always shared a vision need a culture shift to instill a more collaborative spirit among city departments. For commitment to flourish in all corners, someone needs to be on point to take the lead, provide support, and hold people accountable. People also need to push from within each entity, not just from the top.

> equity requires leadership from the top...

A downside of designating a person or department as the lead on a complex issue like sustainability, equity, or environmental justice is the risk that the issue will be easily marginalized or segregated from the core work. This conundrum is faced by cities every day. "Is it better to have staff everywhere or in one office? We decided on staff everywhere with core functions related to sustainability," said Laine Cidlowski of Washington, DC.

To address these challenges, local governments are formalizing structures for interagency communication and co-ordination as they implement sustainability plans with detailed equity actions. They are being intentional about connecting a growing cadre of far-flung employees and departments with equity-related responsibilities. And they are identifying existing policies and tools that can be leveraged to achieve equity goals. In Calgary, Alberta, their ten-year sustainability plan includes a community well-being goal with objectives and targets on equity, diversity, inclusiveness and creativity, healthy and active city, engagement and empowerment, and safety and resiliency. The plan specified components of the supportive infrastructure that be utilized to work toward the targets. They include the city's Fair Calgary Policy, Diversity Policy, Customer Care Framework, and Citizens Perceptions and Expectations Research, among others.[31]

In Washington, DC, Mayor Vincent Gray created a "Green Cabinet" and appointed the city administrator as its convener. It was essential to "getting the leadership and the staff bought in from the get go," said Cidlowski.

"It's extremely important," agreed Brendan Shane, chief of the District's Office of Policy and Sustainability in the Department of the Environment. Shane manages the office charged with managing implementation of DC's sustainability plan. "Staff coordination is really important, too. These are key structures." Funding was another valuable tool for the mayor. He allocated five million dollars to support a dozen initial sustainability projects, most of them focused on integrating equity. The funding to departments "was mostly focused on bringing their services to areas where we weren't able to serve," said Shane. It was an opportunity to be "creative about more parks or park-like gardens in every single ward, anti-idling police cars, targeted in areas with high asthma rates. It created goodwill and ownership" across city agencies. "It's now in the purview of their agencies. People are now excited about the initiatives in the plan, they see them as a way for their department to lead," said Cidlowski.

In an ideal world, equity is embedded into every job description, office, and department within local, county, and regional government, like a fractal's repeating pattern at every scale. In a few places, this is actually happening. Equity and social justice are priorities across the board in Richmond, California, and Seattle and King County, Washington.

To implement its Health in All Policies strategy, the city of Richmond, California, is infusing health equity into every facet of the culture and operations of city government. "Health equity has been morale-building. All city staff are community clinicians and they're seeing their work as connected," said Shasa Curl of the city manager's office. An example of this connection is the campaign the city spearheaded to have staff across city departments fill in this blank: "I Keep Richmond Healthy By _____." Staff had to name a specific way their work keeps residents healthy.

In addition to internal infrastructure, local governments are building substantial partnerships with local universities, community organizations, foundations, and the business community to create a team inside and outside of government to move their equity agendas. Richmond's Health in All Policies strategy was substantially influenced and supported by community-based organizations and partners at the University of California, Berkeley. In Philadelphia, the William Penn Foundation has provided funding for a range of equity-related mapping projects. The Seattle RSJI states it well in their assessment recommendations for 2011-2014. It included the recommendation to "strengthen partnerships across institutions and community: "[32]

> "Even if Seattle City government were doing everything it could to achieve racial equity, we would not be able to achieve results on our own. All institutions and the community must work together and share a similar sense of urgency. Only by joining together in a broad partnership with common goals and strategies can we hope to achieve racial equity in key areas such as jobs, health, education and criminal justice."
>
> —*Racial Equity in Seattle: Race and Social Justice Initiative Three-Year Plan 2012-2014*

Inspired leadership and effective structures have great potential to marshal and leverage the contributions of a growing cadre of employees, offices, and community partners toward achieving local equity goals.

The Downtown Street Team's work in San Jose, California, is an excellent example. Its Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities project provides employment and social services to more than forty homeless individuals while cleaning up Coyote Creek in three neighborhoods that suffer from significant urban blight. Homeless residents living in encampments near the creek are paid to collect trash and litter in the nearby trails and in the waterway. Affordable housing advocates and city, county, and federal agencies collaborate to provide access to social services and manage the project. Partners include the San Jose Environmental Services Department, Santa Clara Water District, US Environmental Protection Agency, Destination: Home, and the eBay Foundation; the project was spearheaded by a member of City Council, Sam Liccardo.

The project received commendations by Mayor Chuck Reed and Councilmember Xavier Campos for its innovative approach. By providing jobs and human services, engaging one of the hardest-to-reach populations, the homeless, and cleaning up a long-neglected creek, the project is the epitome of sustainability. Made possible by partners with a rich mix of expertise and resources, the project is bringing hope and a lifeline to its team members..

SPOTLIGHT — SEATTLE, WA

Seattle aspires to end institutional racism in city government. It "is the first city in the United States to undertake an initiative that focuses explicitly on institutional racism and has become a national leader in efforts to achieve racial equity." Because of its expansive goal, the city has created an infrastructure and is building the panoply of community partnerships to achieve it.

The story of the Race and Social Justice Initiative began thirteen years ago:

> "When Greg Nickels campaigned for Mayor of Seattle in the summer of 2001, he asked thousands of Seattle residents for their perceptions concerning City services and government. The range of their responses surprised him: some Seattle residents felt that the City served their interests well, while others saw the City as a remote institution that served their interests poorly, if at all.

> There were a number of explanations for the chasm that seemed to divide people, but to future Mayor Nickels the single overriding factor was race. White people tended to feel engaged and well-served by City government; people of color tended to feel disengaged and poorly-served.

> Several City departments and many staff members already had been working for years to address racial disparity and race-based barriers to the use of City services…After Mayor Nickels took office, he directed staff to address those concerns Citywide. His staff began to work collaboratively across City departments to develop the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI)."[34]

Launched by Nickels in 2004, the initiative was strengthened by the city council in 2009, broadened by Mayor Mike McGinn in 2010 and 2012, and further expanded by current Mayor Ed Murray in April of this year. It has been endorsed by every elected official in the city and is codified in executive orders by mayors and city council resolutions.

According to john powell and Julie Nelson[35] of the University of California, cities need an "infrastructure that creates experts and teams throughout the breadth and depth of local government."[36] To powell and Nelson, successful collective impact requires a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone organization.[37]

In Seattle, the RSJI is the common agenda. The city's commitment through the initiative has expanded in the last decade. Currently, its goals are to:
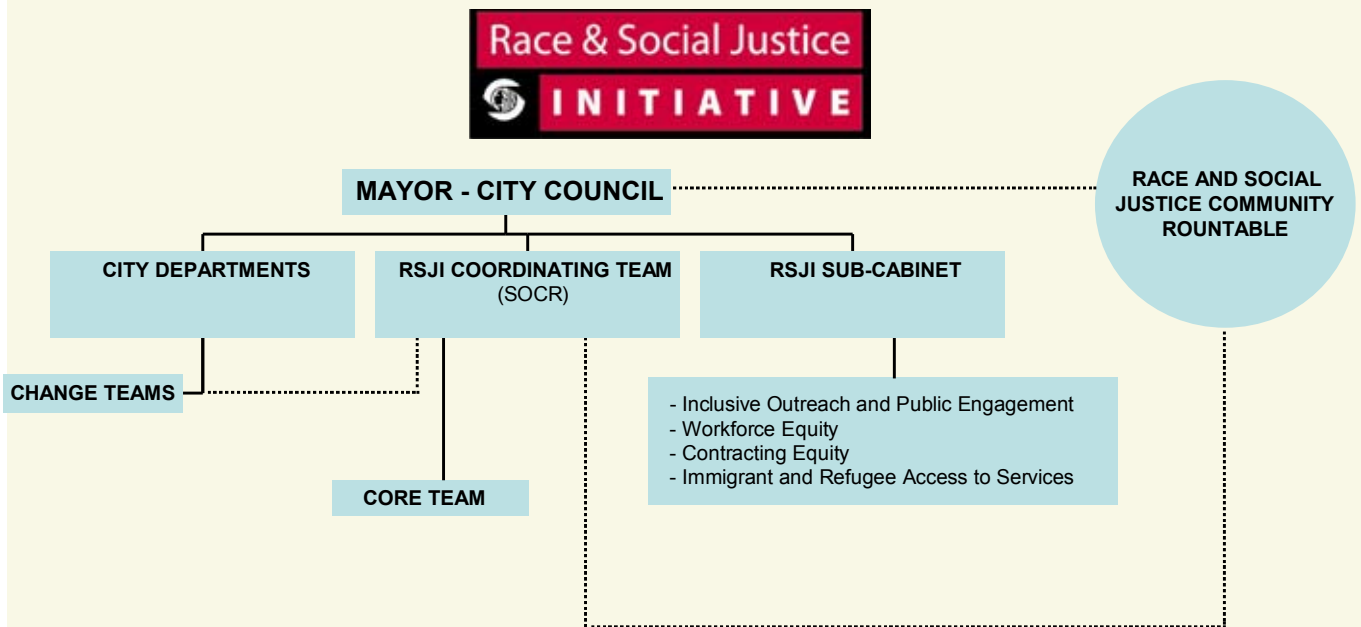- End institutionalized racism in City government.
- Promote inclusion and full participation of all residents in civic life.
- Partner with the community to achieve racial equity.[38]

The city is currently focusing on shared measurement; the initiative's most recent assessment identified the need to "develop meaningful measures for our racial equity work and set specific targets for eliminating racial inequity."[39] Mutually reinforcing activities include the requirement that each department must integrate race and social justice into its work plans and create a Change Team to manage the activities it outlines. A core team of internal consultants was trained to provide capacity and support across the city. Continuous communication is facilitated by the Seattle Office of Civil Rights (SOCR). Finally, as the backbone organization, the SOCR leads an interdepartmental team and manages the RSJI, overall. RSJI outcomes are integrated into the Accountability Agreements between departmental directors and the mayor.

As the RSJI evolved, the initial focus on internal culture, policies, and practices pivoted to include the broader community landscape. This year, the city committed to drafting a new strategic plan for the initiative "aimed at reducing inequities in education, housing, criminal justice, health, community development, the environment and arts and culture." In March, they conducted the first racial equity community survey to track residents' views on race and equity and to identify key areas of concern for RSJI's next phase of development. One conclusion from the survey results is that the city "should continue to focus on achieving racial equity in the community."[30] The necessity of community partnerships, as part of the city's infrastructure for its race and social justice efforts, is more than apparent.

Careful construction of this kind of infrastructure does not guarantee success and RSJI assessment reports have been candid about failures. For example, early on, implementation was spotty. The effectiveness of Change Teams and levels of commitment were inconsistent across departments and some departments did not complete their work plan activities. But no goal as ambitious as the elimination of racial disparities is achieved easily and the city is in it for the long haul. Officials acknowledge they will need to be tenacious. In the spirit of continuous improvement, its recent community survey is an example of how the city is expanding how it solicits feedback.

GRAPHIC: Seattle RSJI Structure

Provide professional development to cultivate the awareness, knowledge, and skills to effectively address equity within local government

Making tangible, measurable gains on an issue as deeply entrenched and complex as equity requires investment in the people tasked with that ambitious charge. Beyond intellectual recognition of sobering statistics and underneath conscious good intentions, equity is deeply personal. Every individual brings a lifetime of experience to this issue. North Americans carry the cultural weight of the oppression of indigenous and enslaved peoples and at least a general recognition that significant disparities exist here and across the globe. Colleagues in local government often bring drastically different backgrounds and a mix of group identities to work. Logically, these varied experiences shape people's reactions to the elevation of equity as a local government priority.

Professional development is a nearly invisible component of equity, but its inclusion is at the heart of long-term, sustained progress. Equity initiatives are often described as strategies, action plans, and indicators. They are programs that can be implemented, tools that provide analysis, and statistics that can be tracked. But beneath publicly touted initiatives, attention to equity comes down to the sensitivity and awareness of individuals and their willingness to engage discomfort, rather than running away from it. Equity is promoted or thwarted in the daily choices, big and small, of administrators and policy makers. The level of awareness and expertise they bring to these moments can be influenced by investments in their professional development.

Ironically, local governments often invest more in capacity building for residents than in what they provide for employees. There are many excellent examples of city, county, and regional initiatives to educate community members and cultivate their leadership on sustainability and equity. By comparison, the number of comprehensive, equity-focused internal training, education, and leadership programs for local government employees is small.. The best examples in North America are based in the Pacific Northwest, in Portland and Seattle, and their respective regions where equity, racial justice, and social justice are becoming hallmarks of local government.

Building the capacity of local government employees charged with leading equity efforts is paramount. Participants in a recent two-day peer-to-peer exchange on equity, hosted by Portland, made this point. The twenty city and county officials representing nine jurisdictions agreed that "the need for more training was the biggest take-away," said Desiree Williams-Rajee, Portland's equity specialist. "It's the tools that everyone wants. 'Just tell us what to do and we'll be fine.' But this work is about behavior change and that doesn't happen with just one tool. It takes a shift in thinking."

This sentiment is echoed in Seattle's experience implementing its Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI). "No change is possible without at least a basic understanding of the problem that needs to be fixed," noted a 2008 city report. "As departments wrestle with developing and implementing annual RSJI action plans, it is critical that we continue to build the capacity of City employees to understand institutional racism and to learn to analyze policies, practices and procedures from a racial justice perspective."[41]

Intensive training has been a cornerstone of the RSJI from its inception. Citywide teams participated in multi-day workshops to build their knowledge and leadership skills as organizers of the effort. Managers followed, attending mandatory eight-hour trainings that were rolled out across the city. Every employee was required to participate. The city used the Public Broadcasting Service series

Race: The Power of an Illusion as a starting point. Trainings included a deep dive into dismantling racism, institutional racism, white privilege, inclusive outreach, and public engagement.

"Over 8,000 City employees have participated in training through the initiative and most departments have trained all their employees."[42] This intense professional development is now ingrained and ongoing.

The Seattle story illustrates the power of leadership, political will, and accountability to forge ahead in the face of the resistance that is inevitable when engaging every person within an institution. Then-Mayor Mike Nichols was instrumental. "Employees who attended antiracism training could not walk out with impunity. This was work time, after all, and participants were answering to their supervisors, who were responsible to their directors, who were responsible to the mayor."[43]

The unwavering commitment of city leaders encouraged employees to wade through discomfort and emerge with revelations and new skills. Trainings were intense and emotional, but they achieved the goal of creating a foundation of shared understanding and commitment. A 2010 employee survey found that "83% of the 5,200 respondents said they believe it is valuable to examine the impact of race, and over 3,000 employees stated they are actively involved in promoting RSJI changes in their workplace."[44] Undermining the taboo against speaking about race is a major achievement of the city's trainings. The ability to discuss race is an obvious, foundational skill for employees charged with bringing a racial and social justice lens to their work. Furthermore, the depth of the city's training fostered a new dimension of interpersonal and professional dialogue. Coworkers not only have shared frameworks and language, but they also better understand the privilege and challenges their colleagues bring to work every day, fostering an awareness and empathy within agencies that can be reinforced and echoed with their constituents.

Portland's regional government, Metro, created a detailed *Diversity Action Plan* in 2012. The plan outlines goals and actions on employee recruitment and retention, public involvement, and procurement in addition to details on professional development.

> Metro's diversity philosophy is built upon our commitment to creating, establishing, and maintaining a diverse and inclusive culture through increased internal awareness and diversity sensitivity, employee recruitment and retention, public involvement and citizen advisory committee membership, procurement, and accessibility. Metro embraces diversity in such a way that it includes understanding the strength of individual and group differences, respecting the perspectives of others, and communicating openly. We strive to create an environment where all participants value and celebrate each other's contributions, skills, and experience and a workplace where all staff are encouraged to thrive and reach their highest potential.
>
> — *Making A Great Place Together, Diversity Action Plan,* Metro

For six years, Metro has offered optional courses from the Uniting to Understand Racism program and discussion groups convene via an ongoing program called Re-uniting To Understand Racism. Ouch! trainings focused on developing skills for identifying and addressing bias and stereotypes are mandatory for all staff. Facilitators are trained from among the Metro ranks to lead the trainings and dialogues that follow. In addition, diversity-focused events are held throughout the year and staff are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities in the field and with local organizations. "We're taking a long-term approach that results in a cultural shift for the organization," said Bill Tolbert, diversity program manager at Metro. "I recognize that people are in different places along the spectrum when it comes to this work. With that in mind, the next phases of the program are being designed to build on the foundation we started to build. It will include more of the basics for those who are still developing their understanding the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We'll also have more advanced learning for those folks who yearning for

deeper and more challenging exploration. Overall, the goal is to build a bridge of understanding and action from the individual that connects to the organization and systems."

In the city of Portland, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability took a different and, at times, zigzagging path, but the rewards have been substantial. "We're proof that you can have challenging experiences along the way and still create a successful pathway to more effective training and capacity building. When it gets hard, you have a choice to give up on it or realize this is a sign you need to go deeper. We chose the latter, and now we see understanding and addressing institutional racism and bias as a professional competency," said Williams-Rajee.

In 2011, the agency participated in a diversity program with local environmental and conservation organizations. Training for senior leaders and an organizational equity audit—a review of organizational practices and culture—were two mandatory components of the program. Due to the size of the bureau, information gathering for the equity audit included a little over half of the staff. When the audit was completed, it was not well received internally. "Despite the insightful findings of the report, a major problem was that all the staff were not involved. 'You didn't include my perspective,' was what we heard," said Williams-Rajee. In response, the bureau created a team of employees to serve as facilitators and launched a process that included everyone. "We turned it into an opportunity to build community, to talk about what resonated and didn't resonate from the report and we got great ideas for how to improve the Bureau," she said.

Recommendations emerged from the extensive series of meetings, including making it a priority to offer emotional intelligence trainings. Held in 2013, the trainings provided a "great foundation for communicating better. We got new ideas and new means to have positive working relationships both inside and outside the Bureau," said Williams-Rajee.

Simultaneously, the Bureau's Diversity Committee proposed two additional trainings that ended up providing another learning opportunity, one on "The Language of Race and Racism" and another titled "Handling Oppressive Moments." In the interest of time and based on the desire to include the entire agency, the trainings were scheduled for ninety minutes and held during all-staff meetings. "The intent was for the sessions to be introductory, a chance to dip your toe into the issues" but employees reacted with frustration and discomfort. "We learned our lesson. You can't really talk about those issues in an hour and a half," said Williams-Rajee. The experience led the management team to realize these were "much bigger issues that need more time, not less. They gave their endorsement to do more."

The Bureau provided a mandatory two-day Dismantling Racism training in May 2014. "The timing was not what the Diversity Committee had originally planned, but the work on emotional intelligence served as important preparatory work for difficult conversations," and that investment paid off, said Williams-Rajee. "The Dismantling Racism training was transformative for us, it gave us an understanding of how racism as a system works and our role in it. This is what gives you the power to make decisions differently." Many staff reported that the shared learning experience across the Bureau was a key to its success. "Not only did it build community and normalize the conversation, it created common reference points. This wouldn't have been possible if we sent staff to different trainings. Anti-racism, power, privilege, bias are all now part of everyone's lexicon."

Another strength was "the training's focus on institutional racism, rather than individual experiences. It enabled people to engage in the subject without feeling overly vulnerable, but still connect to the topic on a personal level, because everyone is impacted by institutions," she said.

In addition to trainings, the Bureau offers coaching, technical assistance, and guidance from Williams-Rajee, in her role as equity specialist, to employees' efforts to integrate equity into their work. "I've seen a substantive shift in our Bureau since the Dismantling Racism training. The conversations are bolder and more honest. People are willing to ask for help and that, in itself, is a huge step forward and progress I'm proud of," said Williams-Rajee.

GOOD PRACTICE #10	Develop implementation tools and processes to institutionalize equity and increase accountability in decision-making, budgeting, and programs

The good practices summarized in this chapter are part of a tapestry of work, interwoven threads that bring the picture of equity to life. Equity is strengthened, deepened, and made more expansive with every good practice a city or county takes on. But you can lay a foundation without building a house. Ultimately, integrating equity in sustainability requires institutionalizing equity throughout all facets of local government decision-making. Every issue touching sustainability and equity must be approached systemically to dismantle historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that create chronic, cumulative disadvantage for marginalized groups.

A structure of explicit policies and processes to prioritize equity are necessary to leverage the knowledge, information, and skills cities develop and nurture in employees through professional development. A few cities and counties are mandating an equity lens, and in more places tools are being pioneered to create mechanisms to consistently consider equity in decision-making. Rather than allowing equity to remain an invisible, generalized intention, these tools make equity an explicit, deliberate consideration.

The role of implicit or unconscious bias is critically important to understanding how decision-making tools can facilitate improved equity outcomes. While explicit discrimination certainly continues, the vast majority of institutional decisions that negatively impact a group are unintentional. They are the result of unconscious bias that is ingrained in policy or practice. Terry Keleher of Race Forward, a racial justice research and leadership development organization, describes implicit bias at the institutional level. "In institutions, the bias of individuals is routinely replicated through collective decisions and actions. It becomes compounded unless it's consciously counteracted," she said. "When racial impacts are not consciously considered during the lawmaking/decision-making process, there is more likelihood that negative racial impacts will result—implicit bias is the default."[45]

Equity tools are an opportunity to use choice points, "decision-making opportunities that influence outcomes,"[46] as opportunities.

> Using Choice Points to Advance Equity
>
> 1. Identify a Choice Point: What is one of your points of opportunity to make or influence a decision that may affect equitable outcomes?
> 2. Assess Impacts: What are the impacts of current decisions and actions that may be unintentionally reinforcing bias, barriers or inequities?

3. Generate Options: What are some alternative action options that could produce different outcomes? (Try to generate several of them.)
4. Decide Action: Which option will generate the most leverage, momentum or gain towards advancing equity and inclusion?
5. Change Habits: What reminders or "equity primes" can be structured into you routine practices and protocols to make equity an ongoing priority and habit? What relationships, supports, incentives or accountability measures could help?

—An Introduction to Racial Equity Assessment Tools, Race Forward

Most equity tools are sets of questions consistently used during decision-making. They are deliberate reminders to consider equity and to be conscious of equity impacts "during an important choice point; thereby helping to counteract unconscious bias."[47] Race Forward's description of a racial equity impact assessment is excellent and can be broadened beyond race: "A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. REIAs are used to minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. The REIA can be a vital tool for preventing institutional racism and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities."

IMPLICIT BIAS	EXPLICIT BIAS
Unaware of choice points	Builds in decision-making guides that evoke consideration of equity
Exclusive of stakeholders	Fosters active engagement and empowerment of stakeholders
Not attentive to race, gender, income and other inequities	Gives distinct, specific and sufficient attention to key disparities/inequities
Ignores barriers to access	Supports and implements strategies to remove barriers
Does not consider racial impacts	Systematically analyzes potential impacts on disadvantaged groups

— An Introduction to Racial Equity Assessment Tools, Race Forward

SPOTLIGHT — STAR COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM

A combination certification program, resource hub, and learning community, the STAR Community Rating System (STAR) is a valuable tool for institutionalizing equity in local government operations. "Local leaders use STAR to assess their sustainability, set targets for moving forward, and measure progress along the way."[49] STAR provides a structure of goals, objectives, and specific preparatory and implementing actions and clear performance measures with point ratings.

ENSURES EQUITY: Sustainable communities allocate resources and opportunities fairly so that all people who do the full range of jobs that a community needs can thrive in it. Local governments in these communities actively eliminate barriers to full participation in community life and work to correct past injustices.

> EMBRACES DIVERSITY: Sustainable communities feature a tapestry of peoples, cultures, and economies underpinned by a richly functioning natural environment. Local governments in these communities celebrate and foster ethnic, cultural, economic, and biological diversity and encourage multiple approaches to accomplish a goal.
>
> — *STAR Community Rating System, Version 1.1,* January 2014

The STAR Rating System is organized into seven "Goal Areas" including one on Equity & Empowerment "to ensure equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity for all citizens." The goal is broken down into six objectives: Civic Engagement, Civil and Human Rights, Environmental Justice Equitable Services and Access, Human Services, and Poverty Prevention and Alleviation.[50]

In addition to the Equity & Empowerment stand-alone goal area, STAR signals its intent to integrate equity throughout its framework by the use of these key words and phrases within the other goals: "for all," "equitably," and "diverse communities." It also uses the phrase coined by the environmental justice movement "where people live, work, and play." The Health & Safety goal overlaps with equity significantly, and outcomes and actions throughout the rating system are equity-focused. For example, the Built Environmental goal includes a Transportation Affordability Outcome to "show that at least 50% of households in the jurisdiction are estimated to spend less than 15% of income on transportation costs." Under the category of Facility and Infrastructure Improvements, actions include: "Increase the percentage of households with access to Transit Facility and Infrastructure Improvements" and "Construct or retrofit transportation infrastructure to meet standards in the Americans with Disabilities Act."

Promising features of STAR include its convening capacity and commitment to continuous improvement and evolution of the rating system. To create the index, the organization worked for years, bringing together dozens of local officials and thought leaders to design the rating system. In 2013, they piloted STAR in thirty-one communities. As STAR continues to engage city officials leading the integration of equity in sustainability, its equity actions and measures can only continue to improve, providing much-needed guidance across the United

SPOTLIGHT — EXAMPLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EQUITY TOOLS IN USE

INCLUSIVE OUTREACH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GUIDE, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Created in 2009 and last updated in 2012, this 29-page publication defines inclusive engagement and includes a glossary of key terms. The guide provides a Cultural Competency Continuum that can be used to assess "behaviors, attitudes, policies, and practices,"[51] and explains Six Essential Strategies for Inclusive Engagement. Actions are suggested and specific questions are posed to correspond with key process points in the community engagement process. In addition, a step-by-step process is described for creating an Inclusive Public Engagement Plan and worksheets are included. A Public Engagement Matrix describes types of engagement along a spectrum of Inform—Consult—Collaborate—Shared Decision-Making. Finally, the guide provides criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of public involvement initiatives.

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT			
INFORM	**CONSULT**	**COLLABORATE**	**SHARED DECISION-MAKING**
Goal of Participation Educate the public about the rationale for the project or decision; how it fits with City goals and policies; issues being considered, areas of choice or where public input is needed. Message to the Public: To keep everyone informed.	Gather information and ask for advice from citizens to better inform the City's work on the project. Message to the Public: Will keep everyone informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	Create a partnership with the public (key stakeholder groups) to work along with the City in identifying problems, generating solutions, getting reactions to recommend-ations and proposed direction. Message to the Public: Will work with the public to ensure that their concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and show how public input influenced the decision.	Decision-makers delegate decision-making power to stakeholders or give them a formal role in making final recommendations to be acted upon. Message to the Public: Will implement what the public decides.
Tools/Activities - Fact Sheets - Brochures - Websites - Open Houses - Exhibits/displays (in public areas) - Newsletters (mailed/online) - Newspaper articles	- Focus groups - Surveys, interviews, and questionnaires - Public Meetings - Door to Door - Workshops and working sessions - Deliberative polling - Internet (interactive techniques)	- Citizen Advisory - Committee/ Liaison Groups - Visioning - Consensus building - Participatory decision-making - Charrettes - Implementation Committee	- Citizen juries - Ballots - Delegated decisions to specific representative citizen body or to voters
Inclusive Engagement Techniques Translation of all key documents. Interpretation at events.	Translation of all key documents. Interpretation at events. Provision of Childcare Culturally appropriate food Individual meetings with community leaders	Translation of all key documents. Interpretation at events. Provision of Childcare Culturally appropriate food Individual meetings with community leaders	Translation of all key documents. Interpretation at events. Provision of Childcare Culturally appropriate food Individual meetings with community leaders

RACIAL EQUITY TOOLKIT, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Since 2005, the city of Seattle has mandated that all city departments create and report progress on their Race and Social Justice Initiative workplans. "The City's Budget Office requires departments to use the *Racial Equity Toolkit* to analyze each and every budget proposal. The toolkit helps analyze the Race and Social Justice impact of policy and program decisions, as well as unintended consequences. City managers have been trained to use the toolkit to review policies, programs and projects, resulting in hundreds of changes that are aimed at achieving racial equity."[52]

The toolkit, formally named the *Racial Equity Toolkit to Assess Policies, Initiatives, Programs, and Budget Issues,* "lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity."[53]

GRAPHIC: Excerpted from *Seattle Racial Equity Toolkit To Assess Policies, Initiatives, Programs And Budget Issues*
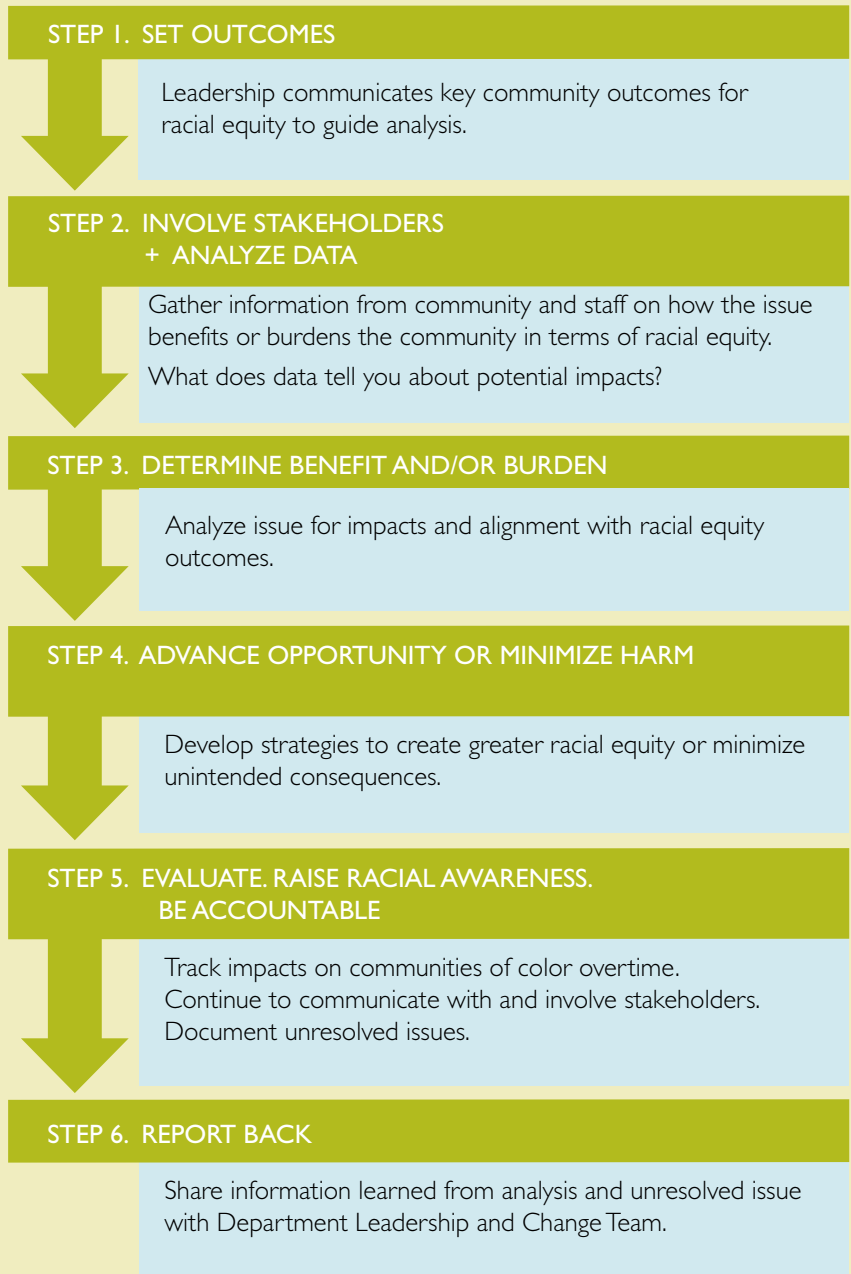
WHEN DO I USE THIS TOOLKIT?

Early. Apply the toolkit early for alignment with departmental racial equity goals and desired outcomes.

HOW DO I USE THIS TOOLKIT?

With Inclusion. The analysis should be completed by people with different racial perspectives.

Step by step. The Racial Equity Analysis is made up of six steps from beginning to completion:.

STEP 1. SET OUTCOMES

Leadership communicates key community outcomes for racial equity to guide analysis.

STEP 2. INVOLVE STAKEHOLDERS + ANALYZE DATA

Gather information from community and staff on how the issue benefits or burdens the community in terms of racial equity.

What does data tell you about potential impacts?

STEP 3. DETERMINE BENEFIT AND/OR BURDEN

Analyze issue for impacts and alignment with racial equity outcomes.

STEP 4. ADVANCE OPPORTUNITY OR MINIMIZE HARM

Develop strategies to create greater racial equity or minimize unintended consequences.

STEP 5. EVALUATE. RAISE RACIAL AWARENESS. BE ACCOUNTABLE

Track impacts on communities of color overtime.
Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders.
Document unresolved issues.

STEP 6. REPORT BACK

Share information learned from analysis and unresolved issue with Department Leadership and Change Team.

EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS FOR ONE MINNEAPOLIS, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Minneapolis has created a racial equity framework to "change the way we engage the community, plan activities, make policy and deliver services to improve the socio-economic condition for the residents of Minneapolis."[54] Recruitment and hiring, board and commission membership, and procurement are three focus areas, but "the framework applies to all work in the city."[55] Development of the racial equity assessment toolkit began in 2012. A Racial Equity Assessment and three equity guides are being finalized. They include a *Recruitment and Hiring Guide,* a *Guide to Engaging Boards and Commissions,* and a *Guide to Equitable Purchasing.*

EQUITY IMPACT REVIEW TOOL, KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Based on its Equity and Social Justice Ordinance, King County must "consider equity and social justice impacts in all decision-making so that decisions increase fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency or, when decisions that have a negative impact on fairness and opportunity are unavoidable, steps are implemented that mitigate the negative impact."[56] The county's *Equity Impact Review Tool*, "is both a process and a tool to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential impact - both positive and negative - of a policy or program on equity."[57]

The ten-page tool has three components:

STAGE I **WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL ON DETERMINANTS OF EQUITY?**
The aim of the first stage is to determine whether the proposal will have an impact on equity or not.

STAGE II **ASSESSMENT: WHO IS AFFECTED?**
This stage identifies who is likely to be affected by the proposal.

STAGE III **IMPACT REVIEW: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION**
The third stage involves identifying the impacts of the proposal from an equity perspective. The goal is to develop a list of likely impacts and actions to ensure that negative impacts are mitigated and positive impacts are enhanced.[58]

EQUITY TOOLKIT, BUREAU OF SUSTAINABILITY AND PLANNING, PORTLAND, OREGON

The City of Portland has created an equity decision tool that has been piloted for the last year. It is currently under review. The optional tool is available to all Bureau of Planning and Sustainability employees and interest in its use has increased due to its deliberate linkage to the agency's recent Dismantling Racism training. The intent of the toolkit is to remain dynamic and to be used as a facilitation guide for discussion within work groups.

"People want equity tools as a saving grace, but they may not get what they're hoping for," said Desiree Williams-Rajee of Portland, Oregon. "Toolkits are not going to solve this for us. They're not useful if there isn't the proper orientation and training to use it well. You can make things worse. Think of it like a scientific calculator, if your reasoning is faulty on the input side, the end result will not be what you were hoping for. Developing an analysis of power and understanding the logic behind institutional racism and institutional bias" all matter as much if not more.

RECOMMENDATIONS: NEXT STEPS FOR INCREASING THE IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY BY STRENGTHENING EQUITY

RECOMMENDATIONS: NEXT STEPS FOR INCREASING THE IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY BY STRENGTHENING EQUITY

RECOMMENDATION #1
Spread what works by expanding opportunities for information sharing and peer learning on equity in sustainability

RECOMMENDATION #2
Multiply and deepen professional development opportunities

RECOMMENDATION #3
Expand the use of equity measures and support their increasing sophistication

RECOMMENDATION #4
Diversify the sustainability field

RECOMMENDATION #5
Strengthen community partnerships, across sectors, to accelerate progress on equity

RECOMMENDATION #6
Push the envelope on equity in sustainability to innovate on high impact strategies

The good practices in this report are recommendations in themselves. Cities can focus their time, attention, and resources on embedding equity by implementing as many of the good practices as possible. Those actions will contribute to sustainability living up to its full potential. Through the integration of equity, sustainability's expansive scope can more often serve as an organizing frame for addressing intersecting issues within a systemic view of community vitality and prosperity.

Beyond the good practices, this chapter notes further opportunities for the urban sustainability field. An array of actors can follow up on these recommendations, at varying scales. Individuals—including but not limited to mayors and other elected officials, city and county staff, regional planners, academics, and national thought leaders—can continue to make the case for equity in sustainability and spur change within their institutions. City, county, and regional governments can continue leading the charge to make equity a true pillar of sustainability by operationalizing a range of practices and policies and focusing intentionally on the organizational culture they create and sustain. National organizations—including nonprofit organizations across multiple issues not just environmentally-focused, foundations, and national governments—can play pivotal convening and funding roles to move dialogue and build momentum for equity.

Evolution is a naturally occurring phenomenon, but the direction of change can be influenced. The recommendations in this chapter are specific opportunities for spurring the growth of equity as a foundational component of sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION #1 — Spread what works by expanding opportunities for information sharing and peer learning on equity in sustainability

A more intentional peer learning strategy could create a dramatic upswing in the recognition that equity needs to be more forthrightly and intentionally engrained in local sustainability efforts. Leading cities have accumulated substantial knowledge about how to start or expand equity work, and their wisdom not only needs to be shared, it should be front and center when community sustainability is discussed. Similar strategies can ripple from city to city, creating a wake of newfound momentum for equity.

Informal networks pop up whenever people or organizations discover their shared interest in a compelling topic. Many of the people engaged in the hard, complex work of making cities more equitable and sustainable have found each other. Most of the time, individuals interested in equity learn of each other's efforts secondhand and communicate in one-off conversations. While one-on-one conversations are incredibly useful, by definition, information conveyed between two people is a small scale. Impacting an entire field one conversation at a time could take eons. It is imperative to increase the scale and pace of communicating the urgency of equity and the pathways toward progress.

ACTIONS

- Compile and share more stories and lessons learned from local sustainability efforts integrating equity, including deeper dives into specific topics, strategies, and tools—via publications, factsheets, webinars, online interviews, and conference sessions.

- Ensure that sustainability conferences weave equity throughout their programming in plenaries and concurrent sessions.

- Offer equity-focused sustainability training and learning opportunities for local government officials and staff including site visits and peer-to-peer sessions. Fundraise for travel, expenses, and staff time whenever possible.

RECOMMENDATION #2 — Multiply and deepen professional development opportunities

A major finding of this scan is the need for a much more expansive array of professional development offerings within local government on equity.

Decades ago, corporations pioneered diversity training because they saw a direct tie to their bottom line and the skills of managing diversity. The business case for the private sector was clear. Address diversity, or lose out on the broader perspectives, creativity, and innovation people from different backgrounds bring. Support people in developing the skills of working with and managing people who are both similar and different, or face the consequences of increased conflict and a lack of teamwork. As the demographics of North America continued to shift, diversity, and now inclusion, have become even more relevant to institutions across sectors and in politics and policy. The private sector has continued to lead in its intentional focus on diversity, inclusion, and related organizational culture and human resources initiatives. Corporations have the resources and a business case for their investments in performance reviews, company values statements, pulse surveys to assess employees' experience, mentoring and coaching programs, and affinity groups of employees who bring diversity to the organization.

The sustainability field has work to do to clarify its rationale for why equity, diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence matter to its success. Correspondingly, it needs to make professional development on these topics as a priority. Professional development is sorely needed because it is an essential component of instilling the will to make equity a priority and of building the competencies that will translate good intentions into positive impacts. In Seattle and Portland, city leaders used trainings to sensitize employees to the realities of disparities in their

communities and then to educate them on how the dynamics of difference play out. They dug deeply into how individual roles, institutionalized factors, and societal systems and structures have created disparities. The eye-opening experience those cities' trainings provided translated into higher levels of awareness and buy-in for their equity and social justice commitments.

Regardless of a city's level of ambition on equity, carefully planned and executed professional development opportunities are a foundational component. Equity is simply too knotty an issue and too sensitive a topic for a checklist. Trainings, workshops, study groups, and coaching create the space for knowledge, awareness, and learning new skills that are mandatory for progress on equity. In an ideal world, the competencies that are cultivated through professional development are explicit and also integrated into performance reviews.

ACTIONS

- Identify the core competencies needed to achieve equity goals within sustainability, including but not limited to knowledge of core concepts, community demographics, and equity-related community data and development of interpersonal skills. Design professional development offerings, accordingly.

- Encourage and incentivize participation in trainings offered by national, regional, and local organizations on equity, inclusion, diversity, racial equity, dismantling racism, and related topics.

- Build equity-related skills into job descriptions and performance reviews. Create clear expectations for employees for contributing to sustainability departments' equity goals and hold them accountable.

- Create additional collaborative leadership development and training opportunities on equity in sustainability where multiple jurisdictions can send staff, nationally or regionally.

RECOMMENDATION #3   **Expand the use of equity measures and support their increasing sophistication**

Indicators and metrics provide the specificity that contributes to a deeper understanding of equity. The use of equity indicators in local government has increased and should continue to be expanded. If sustainability indicators and metrics are among the most often-used tools for accountability, the integration of equity within them is absolutely necessary for this leg of the three-legged stool of sustainability to assume its rightful place. The use of equity indicators by local governments has helped explain the concept to those who perceive it as a more nebulous concept; their expansion will add depth and dimensions to further understanding and acknowledging the complexity of equity.

Measurement contributes a sense of control and agency. Moving the dial on specific indicators is a tangible goal to work toward. But the complexity of equity exacerbates challenges in measuring progress. Acting on and measuring equity in sustainability is difficult because sustainability programs cannot create procedural, distributional, structural, and transgenerational equity on their own. In addition, equity indicators and metrics are complicated enough. How do you measure the intersection of equity and sustainability given the expansiveness of both concepts? These conundrums are part of the next frontier for the sustainability field to address in the years ahead.

Communities creating equity metrics within sustainability plans and programs need additional opportunities to convene to learn from each other and national organizations including the STAR Index. More detailed publications and tools providing guidance on developing equity in sustainability measures would be valuable and contribute to their expanded use. Finally, additional technical assistance and automated mapping tools could

facilitate the tracking of equity metrics. Rather than each jurisdiction across the Canada and the United States creating manual tables, an automated template could be created to allow local governments to import their data to map equity-related information and identify trends.

Robert F. Kennedy once lamented that the gross national product measures everything "except that which makes life worthwhile."[59] The impulse for measurement is understandable, but Kennedy's caution should be noted. As the good practices illustrate, equity is much more than data points and the transformational work of equity and sustainability is impossible to convey simply through measures, as important as they are.

ACTIONS

- Create additional written guidance specifically focused on equity measures within sustainability.

- Leverage investments by individual local governments by creating shared templates and other information gathering and tracking tools.

- Provide technical assistance to support jurisdictions just starting out on equity measures and those who are increasing the sophistication of their work.

RECOMMENDATION #4   Diversify the sustainability field

Demographics aren't destiny. A local government agency's commitment to equity is not dictated by its percentages of employees who are women, people of color, or from low-income backgrounds. At the same time, the sustainability field is no different from any other sector; its institutions face the same crisis of credibility confronting many companies and organizations today. The questions can be simply stated: Do you represent the constituency you purport to serve? Is your "customer base" likely to see itself reflected in your institution, including in powerful decision-making roles? Furthermore, if inclusion is an institutional value or necessity for conducting business, what does it mean when major segments of the community you serve are not represented within your ranks?

This report aims to make the case that a more expansive definition of sustainability, one that is true to its own Three Es and triple bottom line definitions, will garner higher levels of engagement, political support, and positive impact. But messengers often matter as much as a message. Leadership development programs can cultivate and train community members to play roles in local sustainability initiatives, but the demographics of the people at the forefront of this work are even more important. Paid employees, especially decision makers, of local government sustainability offices need to reflect the full audience and constituency for sustainability.

In an era where infographics on the diversity of technology companies go viral on their own social media platforms, no sector or institution is immune to higher levels of scrutiny. University of Michigan professor Dorceta Taylor's recent analysis of the diversity of the environmental field included seventy-four federal, state, and local environmental agencies. Because most sustainability-focused offices are closely tied to or housed within environmental agencies, her data is relevant to sustainability practitioners. Taylor found a clear lack of racial diversity across the board and of women in leadership in environmental agencies. While women comprise 60.2% of staff in government environmental agencies, they make up only 33% of their boards.[60] The data on racial diversity show an even greater imbalance. People of color comprise 6.9% of government environmental agency board members and 12.4% of paid staff.[61] Taylor's data confirmed anecdotal assumptions and her analysis showed little improvement in recent years. In the last three years, participating agencies reported that 11.7% of hires and 15% of interns, who by their very nature are temporary, were people of color.

Municipalities have to clarify what diversity means to them, based on their demographics, the current composition of their workforce, and an analysis that specifies the groups who are least represented and engaged. While representation and commitment to equity are not always directly tied, the skills of engaging effectively with a wide range of residents are more easily cultivated within sustainability departments when those competencies are part of day-to-day work. Interaction among staff colleagues who bring an array of backgrounds and perspectives on how best to engage the full spectrum of community members on sustainability is a plus. People of color and individuals from low-income backgrounds, and other subordinated groups, often bring heightened consciousness about equity to sustainability based on their life experience. Their presence within sustainability departments is an indicator that their institutions truly value diversity and are practicing inclusion, not merely talking about it or only addressing it as an external task. In many cases, sustainability efforts with a strong equity focus were spearheaded by mayors of color. They brought the more expansive lens to sustainability and insisted that equity and their "relevant to all" framing and content imbue its programs.

Finally, diversity is never sustained without inclusion. Organizational culture needs to evolve and the cultural competencies of everyone within an institution have to ramp up for diversity of any kind to flourish. Recruiting people who are different only to have them leave, relatively quickly, simply creates a revolving door. Employees who depart because they felt excluded or dramatically uncomfortable based on their differences do not leave happily. Intentional effort and professional development to create an inclusive culture, instill higher levels of awareness, and cultivate new skills are an important foundation for diversifying any institution.

ACTIONS

- Local governments and national sustainability organizations need to clarify a compelling mission-driven rationale for the importance of diversity and inclusion within their organizations. How do diversity and inclusion support the achievement of the mission of the sustainability department or organization? What are the top three or four diversity priorities and why? How do diversity and inclusion demonstrate commitment to their core values and strategies?

- Building on their clear rationale, these institutions need to create proactive programs to create a pipeline of people of color into the field. This includes paid internship opportunities to develop a cohort of experienced applicants of color for entry-level positions and intentional efforts to create pathways for experienced professionals to translate their skills and knowledge into the sustainability field.

- Leadership development programs and anti-bias training for managers should be developed and offered to address the need to bring more women into senior leadership positions.

- Local government leaders and entities that appoint individuals to boards should track demographics and conduct proactive recruitment and relationship building to expand the pool of potential appointees to more accurately represent the community.

- Local government sustainability offices should collaborate with their counterparts in Equal Employment Opportunity and civil rights divisions to ensure fair and inclusive recruitment and hiring processes are in place for sustainability jobs. They should collaborate to expand leadership development and recruiting efforts to bring more underrepresented groups into applicant pools and ensure anti-bias training is part of the professional development offered to hiring managers.

- Conference planners should track the demographics of speakers and the integration of equity and economic issues, especially in plenary sessions, and proactively recruit women, people of color, and equity and economic experts to play leadership roles at sustainability conferences.

RECOMMENDATION #5 — Strengthen community partnerships, across sectors, to accelerate progress

Because local governments cannot dismantle societal disparities on their own, their ability to forge long-term partnerships is a key to progress on equity. From Boston to Philadelphia to San Francisco, foundations have been key partners to local government sustainability offices. They have funded research and community engagement activities and played important convening roles. Foundation-led networks focused exclusively on equity have been created in Denver, the Puget Sound, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis, providing ripe collaboration opportunities for local sustainability offices. Community-based organizations have been pivotal in pushing city and regional governments to prioritize equity through advocacy campaigns, reports, and equity atlases. Neighborhood-based groups have been key allies to local governments seeking to expand engagement in underrepresented areas. Universities are a rich source of research, training, technical assistance, and advice for sustainability practitioners integrating equity in sustainability. And federal government agencies have also provided seed funding and the impetus for numerous equity-focused sustainability programs. In some regions, the private sector is a key partner in equity initiatives because they see the economic risks of inequality.

Constrained budgets narrow the focus of many local government sustainability offices. When funding is limited, these offices are more likely to focus on a smaller sphere of work, like energy efficiency and solar energy projects. A more ambitious agenda, including examples profiled in this report, depends on a more expansive vision, but it also depends on the financial resources to broaden the scope of sustainability. Partnerships with foundations, community and neighborhood groups, universities, federal agencies, and the business community are an opportunity to bring financial and other resources to the table. Equity is a priority to many of the organizations in these broader sectors and, in some cases, an equity focus is required for foundation and federal funding eligibility. These collaborations are win-win. They bring resources to expand sustainability programming and they incentivize a strong commitment to equity.

While collaborations are rarely at the top of a sustainability director's to-do list, efforts to build relationships and forge partnerships across sectors hold great potential to enliven and enrich their equity work and accelerate progress and innovation.

ACTIONS

- Connect to established and emerging regional equity networks to explore participation or to learn how to launch similar collaborative groups close to home.

- Dedicate staff time to exploring opportunities for funding and community partnerships with institutions that share a focus on equity.

Push the envelope on equity in sustainability to innovate on high impact strategies

Growing the number of cities doing good work in the realm of equity and sustainability is an important priority. For equity to take hold, people and institutions in more places need to take it on and apply what they can where they are. Equity-minded sustainability leaders also need to pioneer additional approaches. Local governments need to build on current work and discover new good practices. They need to be innovative and push an even higher level of connection with allies and organizations with similar equity goals working on related issues.

An important area of innovation is diversifying the rationale for equity in sustainability and the entry points for this work. Options abound. There is great opportunity to strengthen the pathway into equity in sustainability via economic prosperity and community development. How can sustainability-related educational programs contribute to students' engagement in school and increase graduation rates? Are there other ways sustainability programs contribute to educational attainment, a core equity priority? How is sustainability connected to building safe spaces? In addition to safe streets, the focus on making streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists, how does sustainability contribute to increased public safety? There isn't a community in Canada or the United States that doesn't care deeply about economic development, education, and public safety. How can sustainability strategies be more deliberate in contributing to those goals that are so inextricably tied to equity?

Lastly, this report did not delve deeply into local legislative initiatives, focusing solely on those that mandate equity considerations, but equity-focused policy change is a logical, high-impact priority. A wave of local legislation on equity in sustainability, from cumulative impact and living wage ordinances to green jobs targeted to those who need them the most, is a arena that can be further cultivated and seeded across North America.

ACTIONS

- Encourage interaction and partnerships between sustainability professionals and colleagues in other fields who are taking equity seriously to cross-pollinate and transfer good ideas and innovations into the sustainability field.

- Convene practitioners representing leading local government efforts to identify new frontiers for expanding and deepening equity-related sustainability efforts. In addition to providing inspiration, assistance, and funding to communities new to equity in sustainability efforts, target opportunities for those on the cutting edge to push into new territory.

- Share details and lessons from equity-related legislative wins at the local level to encourage additional municipalities to spread their adoption. Make policy a focus of information sharing on equity in sustainability.

FINAL THOUGHTS

By fully integrating equity, local governments are uniquely situated to make a substantial contribution to the sustainability field. Equity has been left out of the framing and content of sustainability for too long, but a new generation of local leaders is bringing it to the fore. With this evolution, the sustainability field has the opportunity to communicate and brand its work far beyond environmental, scientific, and seemingly wonky policy approaches that don't touch people's daily lives. As mentioned earlier in this report, while sustainability has too often been defined as an interchangeable concept with environmentalism, city officials across the country are rebranding sustainability in more concrete terms focused on tangible benefits. Their efforts are creating a bigger, broader constituency for sustainability and newfound understanding of its relevance to everyone.

Most importantly, many local sustainability leaders are rethinking and redesigning their work. They are using a structural equity lens to analyze access and opportunity to the determinants of a healthy, prosperous life. They are addressing distributional equity and uncovering the truths beneath community-wide data by identifying the groups who are the face of society's disparities and targeting their resources accordingly. They are building the capacity of the most disenfranchised groups in their communities to be true partners in democracy through their efforts to foster procedural equity. They are institutionalizing equity by making it an intentional, conscious part of their decision-making processes. In doing so, local government leaders are on the front lines of sustainability. Their lessons learned and cumulative efforts have much to teach those who are working on state, provincial, federal, and national sustainability policy and advocacy.

Equity is a key to maximizing the potential for sustainability to serve as a galvanizing, interconnected frame for creating a better world. Our collective future depends on making equity a priority.

> "In the coming decades, it is today's younger generation who will drive economic growth, whose tax contributions will support social insurance programs for the elderly and other services, whose purchasing power will determine the demand for goods and services, who will serve in our armed forces, and who will act as caregivers to an aging population. The majority of this generation will be children of color, many of whom will face the legacy effects of past racism and ongoing inequities of structural racism and implicit biases… The ability of these children to succeed will shape our shared future."[62]
> — *The Business Case for Equity*

Sustainability has the power to weave the strands that create hope and prosperity, health and wellness, community cohesion and true opportunity for all. A focus on equity is an opportunity for sustainability leaders to address some of the thorniest, most deep-seated issues in society and to reinforce the inextricable ties that bind us in one shared destiny as people on the planet. Local governments have important roles to play, momentum on their side, and a window of opportunity with their grasp. The benefits of sustainability must accrue to all, not just the privileged few.

> **"We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."[63]**
>
> — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
> *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution*

[1] *Racial Equity in Seattle: Race and Social Justice Initiative Three-Year Plan 2012-2014:2.*

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