Cleveland Climate Action Plan: Racial Equity Tool

Appendix A

What is a Racial Equity Tool?
How does it work in Climate Action Planning?

The Cleveland Climate Action Plan Racial Equity Tool can be used prior to making decisions related to policy, planning, programming and budgeting within city government and other institutions looking to advance racial equity and shared prosperity. This framework is adopted from the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE) and the City of Portland Oregon's Climate Equity Considerations. Because racial inequities are compounded by institutional policies and decisions, the cumulative implementation of these tools by institutions can create transformational systemic change. Equity in climate planning, in particular, ensures the just distribution of the benefits of climate protection efforts and alleviates unequal burdens created by climate change. This requires intentional policies and projects that simultaneously address the on-the-ground effects and larger structural forces of the systems that perpetuate both climate change and inequity[1].

Why *racial* equity?

Climate change and other environmental issues are sometimes viewed as issues that are not relevant to low-income communities and communities of color. Concern for the environment is frequently perceived as a concern of more affluent and less diverse communities. This narrative paints a false portrait and obscures the real diversity that exists. While there may be a lack of representation of low-income people and people of color in mainstream environmental organizations, this does not translate to a lack of concern with environmental issues. On the contrary, research has shown that people of color support environmental protection at a higher rate than whites. 68 percent of voters of color feel that climate change is an issue we need to be worried about right now, not something we can put off into the future[2].

Additionally, compounded inequities do not play out broadly across the common equity factors (age, income, gender), but they do almost always involve race. For example, socio-economic

difference does not explain racial inequity and racial disparity persists in every system across the country, without exception[3]. The naming of race and racism explicitly in its many forms is critical in order to correctly target and eliminate root causes of inequities[4].

The 2017-2018 Climate Action Plan represents concerted efforts that are connecting climate change with other community concerns of low-income communities and communities of color.

How does the Cleveland Climate Action Racial Equity Tool work?

The tool will be used to: 1) Analyze each climate action objective **and** its corresponding suite of actions, and 2) Aid in the development of an implementation strategy. When using this tool, distinguish between short-term 'wins' and structural changes that will generate long-term, ongoing 'wins'. The tool is not intended to solve all problems related to inequities in climate planning and sustainability. Rather, it is intended to guide stakeholders through the process of recognizing inequities, the conditions under which they thrive, and the possible solutions and environments that would mitigate negative effects and enhance positive results[5].

1 - Climate Action Through Equity: The integration of equity in the Portland/Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan, July 2016

2 - Climate Change and Communities of Color, Key Poll Findings and Top Lines Report

3 - Racial Equity Institute Groundwater Racial Equity Training, Cleveland September 2017

4 - Curry-Stevens & Cross-Hemmer, 2010

5 - Balajee, Sonali S., et al., (2012). Equity and Empowerment Lens (Racial Justice Focus). Portland, OR: Multnomah County.
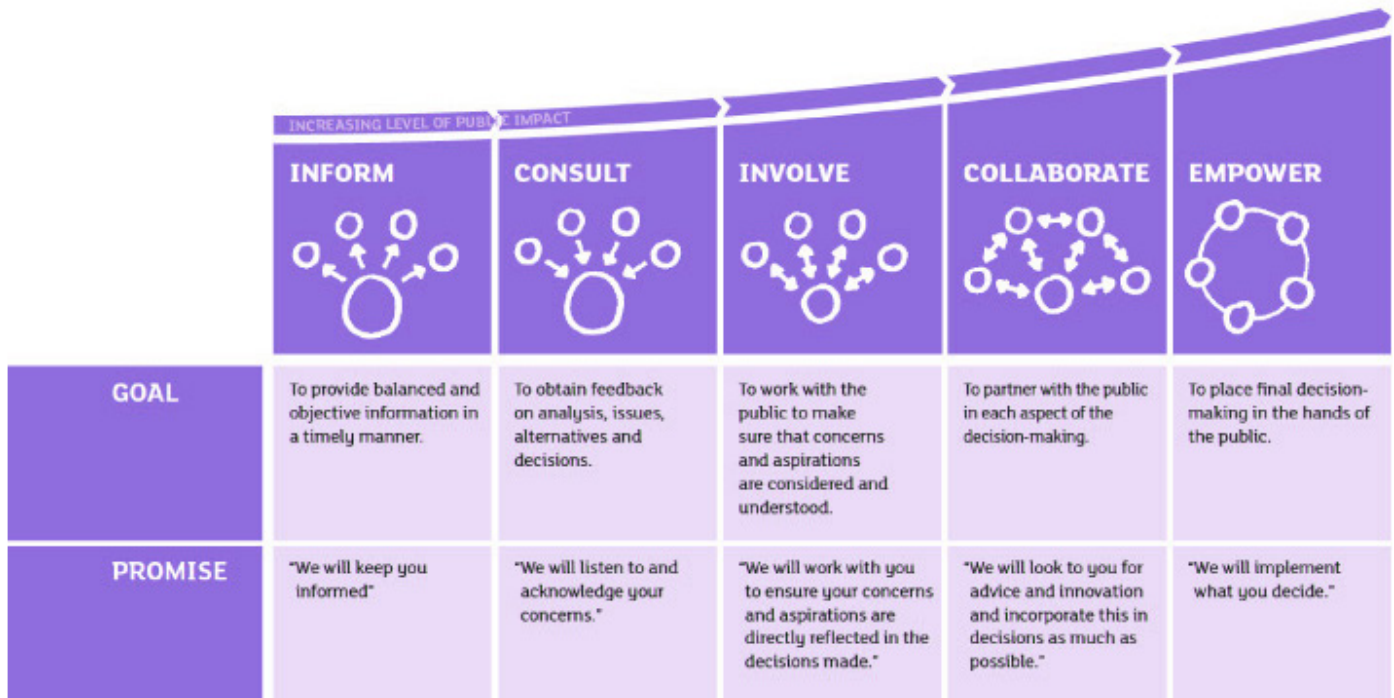
Climate Action Plan Equity Goals

- **Shared economic prosperity and inclusion:** The CAP will promote the creation of employment and small business/entrepreneurial opportunities with potential to lift up and empower communities. It supports equitable hiring and contracting policies that target these opportunities toward historically underrepresented populations. An equity lens in the CAP will also support community-wide (corporate and institutional) investment in equity practices that will not only impart benefits to vulnerable populations, but to all.

- **Improved health:** The CAP will mitigate environmental factors leading to health disparities, such as barriers to active lifestyles and transportation, pollution exposure, disparate access to greenspace and other natural resources.

- **Resilient and vital neighborhoods:** The CAP will promote investments in housing energy efficiency that will make them safer, more comfortable and affordable; and in community infrastructure that enhances the ability to respond to climate change, pedestrian and bike safety and other elements of resilience.

- **Engaging:** Communities of color and under-represented populations will be included in the CAP process, from defining priorities at the neighborhood level to implementation via the Cleveland Climate Action Fund. Proactive, culturally-appropriate strategies will be undertaken to reach out to these populations and involve and empower them through climate actions.

- **Transformational Change:** The CAP Racial Equity Tool will serve as a foundation to guide decision-makers through the process of recognizing inequities, the conditions under which they thrive, and the possible solutions and environments that would mitigate negative effects and enhance positive results. While these discussions are initially occurring under the Climate Action Advisory Committee, the intention is that use of the tool will expand and be adapted for further institutional use. **Interest in adapting this tool for other uses should be reported to the City of Cleveland, Office of Sustainability staff for approximating the extent to which the tool is meeting this goal.**

The Cleveland CAP Racial Equity Tool is made up of 5 question areas that help determine the extent to which proposed climate action objectives and corresponding actions prioritize equity. The CAP also acts as an aid for building an implementation strategy.

1. **Language**

2. **Accountability & Data**

3. **Disproportional Impacts**

4. **Economic Opportunity**

5. **Neighborhood Engagement** (see 'Spectrum of Engagement" below)

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions.	To work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE	"We will keep you informed"	"We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns."	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made."	"We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible."	"We will implement what you decide."

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, https://www.iap2.org/

Consider for each objective and corresponding actions the extent to which they advance equitable outcomes:

SIGNIFICANT: At least half of the actions under this objective advance equity. Keep as is. Clearly advances equitable outcomes, proceed with this climate action.

MODERATE: At least one action under this objective advances equity. Refine to more explicitly advance equity. These actions should be brought back to the Equity and Neighborhood Engagement Subcommittee for input and/or people this action may impact, including people of color, elderly, English as a second language population, etc.

INSIGNIFICANT: No actions under this objective advance equity. Rewrite with corrective action. Proceeding without making substantial changes is not recommended.

1. NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

How communities have informed or co-designed this objective and its corresponding actions

KEY QUESTIONS:

How have communities been engaged (refer to 'Engagement Continuum')? Specifically, have communities of color been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement? Does the proposed objective and its corresponding actions align with and support existing neighborhood priorities (refer to neighborhood workshops if possible)?

NOTES:

2. DATA & ACCOUNTABILITY

Determining the available data concerning inequities, its ability to illuminate the extent to which a climate objective drives desired results, and who is accountable

KEY QUESTIONS:

What is the best indicator to track the outcome we are looking for? What is the current data collected and what does the data tell us? Is the data disaggregated to illuminate disparity (by race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, income, etc.)? Who is accountable?

NOTES:

3. DISPROPORTIONAL IMPACTS

Anticipating disproportionate impacts

KEY QUESTIONS:

Who will benefit/be burdened by this objective and its corresponding actions? Is there a geographic priority for this action in an identified vulnerable geography?

NOTES:

4.   ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The ability to provide equitable economic benefit via training, jobs, and contracts

KEY QUESTIONS:

Does the proposed objective and its corresponding actions support communities of color and low-income populations through workforce development, contracting opportunities or the increased diversity of employees/staff across any sectors?

NOTES:

5.   LANGUAGE

The objective and its corresponding actions under consideration and their wording

KEY QUESTIONS:

Is this objective and its corresponding actions explicitly addressing factors of equity or racial equity in particular? Is the language easily understood and will it resonate with the community?

NOTES:

How does the Cleveland Climate Action Racial Equity Tool work?

As a result of going through this tool's set of questions, climate objectives and actions can fall into one of the following three categories that rate the extent they advance equity.

REVIEWERS
(please write down first and last name):

As a result of using this tool, the proposed climate objective:

is rated:

🟩 **SIGNIFICANT:**
At least half of the actions under this objective advance equity. Keep as is. Clearly advances equitable outcomes, proceed with this climate action.

🟧 **MODERATE:**
At least one action under this objective advances equity. Refine to more explicitly advance equity. These actions should be brought back to the Equity and Neighborhood Engagement Subcommittee for input and/or people this action may impact, including people of color, elderly, English as a second language population, etc.

🟥 **INSIGNIFICANT:**
No actions under this objective advance equity. Rewrite with corrective action. Proceeding without making substantial changes is not recommended.

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