



# INTEGRATING EQUITY IN SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

The following task list is intended to support integration of equity considerations within the planning and implementation of regional or local sustainability efforts. The list was directly adapted from questions and metrics developed for the King County Washington Racial Equity Impact assessment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The King County Equity Impact Statement process and task list used as a source for this guide can be accessed at: [https://kingcounty.gov/~media/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/2016/The\\_Equity\\_Impact\\_Review\\_checklist\\_Mar2016.ashx?la=en](https://kingcounty.gov/~media/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/2016/The_Equity_Impact_Review_checklist_Mar2016.ashx?la=en)

## PURPOSE

*Ensure that equity impacts are rigorously and holistically considered and advanced in the design and implementation of regional and local sustainability policies and programs.*

## PHASE 1: SCOPING

### Identification of who will be affected.

- Identify how the proposed action will affect/serve people and places using demographic information. Consider impact to specific populations (e.g. lower-income populations, communities of color, and limited-English speaking resident).
  - Reach: which people and places will be affected by your action?
  - Intensity: what effects, impacts and/or outcomes will your action have on people and places?
  - Duration: how long will the action have a short-, medium-, and/or long-term effect?
  
- Utilize the assessment above to inform identification of the group of stakeholders and affected parties – including those who have historically not been included or engaged.



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## PHASE 2: ENGAGEMENT

### Engage community stakeholders identified in Phase 1.<sup>2</sup>

- Have you gathered adequate background information about the affected populations you intend to reach (i.e., language or dialect spoken, customs, historical or geographic data, relevant data reports)?
- Are there historical or logistical barriers to engagement or trust concerns that should be integrated into planning?
- Do you need to address language and literacy needs including translations, interpretations, and reading levels?
- Do you have sufficient resources (financial and time) to conduct engagement activities? Are there incentives to provide participants to encourage participation among underrepresented groups?
- Have you identified specific targeted strategies to ensure affected populations you intend to reach are engaged?
- Have you taken into account alternative and non-traditional approaches to consider before proceeding? Does your intended audience have their own engagement practices that should be considered? Alternatively, does your audience or community use new and social media (e.g., web videos, texting), and could this be an effective way of reaching them?

<sup>2</sup> Adapted directly from the King County Washington community engagement worksheet, accessible at: <https://kingcounty.gov/~media/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/documents/CommunityEngagementWorksheet.ashx?la=en>

## PHASE 3: ANALYSIS/PRIORITIZATION

### Identify and prioritize strategies that best integrate equity goals and concerns in sustainability planning. Identify potential unintended consequences.

- Evaluate strategies to understand who will be disproportionately burdened or benefit - now and in the future. Assess if actions will improve or worsen current equity conditions.
- Identify potential unintended equity-related outcomes of this action.

### The following questions should guide prioritization.

- Does the sustainability action/plan or policy serve the needs of equity populations or proactively address equity concerns? For example, how does the action or policy meet needs of particular communities, such as lower income households or transit dependent households? Does this issue address important equity concerns in the community (such as affordable housing, access to employment, transportation mobility or environmental justice)?

- Does the action proactively seek to expand access to opportunities (transportation mobility, safe, affordable and healthy housing, or economic opportunities) for marginalized communities?
- Identify potential unintended equity-related outcomes of this action.
- Will the action help reduce disparities in outcomes (e.g., disparities in income, employment, transportation, health, or housing) within the region?
- Does the action align with the community needs identified through the community engagement process (specifically for needs or concerns identified by underserved populations)?

## PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTATION

- Continue to engage with affected communities to guide successful implementation.
- Measure and evaluate your intended outcomes in collaboration with affected communities. Are there sufficient monitoring and accountability systems to identify unintended consequences? How will course corrections be handled if unintended consequences are identified?

## PHASE 5: REFLECTION AND LEARNING

- Evaluate outcomes and learn with the community to adjust your action as their priorities and concerns shift.
- Communicate progress to all stakeholders. Plan to include community feedback into future planning.

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