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Equitable Community Engagement Best Practices

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About

Snotrac

The Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (Snotrac) advocates for connecting people and communities in Snohomish County and beyond with safe, equitable, and accessible transportation. We focus especially on the needs of people with disabilities, older adults, youth, low income individuals, people of color, immigrants & refugees, veterans, rural communities, and tribal nations.

Founded in 1999, Snotrac serves as Snohomish County's mobility management coalition to identify mobility gaps for priority populations and coordinate specialized transportation by convening transportation and human service providers.

Snotrac program priorities include:

- 1. Creating and coordinating mobility services
- 2. Education, outreach, and engagement
- 3. Planning and design of livable communities
- 4. Securing public support and funding
- 5. Emergency response coordination

For more information, visit **GoSnotrac.org**.

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Social, institutional, and systemic inequalities exist within our communities, and most often these inequalities impact historically marginalized communities the greatest.

There may be no bigger—or more literal—inequality than the racial wealth gap in the United States, where the average Black household's wealth is merely 14.5% that of the average White household's wealth, an \$838,220 difference, as of 2019. Given so much of household wealth is tied to home ownership, it's not surprising to find that 43.4% of Black Americans vs 51.1% of Hispanic Americans vs 61.7% of Asian Americans vs 72.1% White Americans own homes, as of 2020. (Washington Post)

A deep history of discrimination against People of Color—and affirmative action in favor of White Americans—has led us to these outcomes.

- Occupation and theft of native lands and successive efforts to eliminate native culture and ways of life.
- Enslavement and continued chattel slavery of indigenous people, Africans, and their descendants.
- Exclusion of People of Color in the Homestead Act.
- Exclusion and expulsion of Chinese immigrants.
- Internment of Japanese Americans.
- Deportation of Hispanic immigrants.
- Intimidation, violence, targeted law enforcement practices against People of Color.
- Voter disenfranchisement.
- Restrictive zoning, ethnic and racial covenants, redlining, segregation in affordable housing programs, and predatory lending.
- Neighborhood clearances for highway expansion to suburbs, where only White Americans could buy homes.
- Underinvestment in affordable housing and public transportation.

While the wealth of White Americans compounded generation after generation through favorable public policies, the compounding of injustices against People of Color led to generational traumas and extreme health, wealth, and social hierarchy inequities.

To address these problems, public agencies must fully understand the unique challenges and needs of marginalized communities, gain their trust, and implement targeted solutions. To understand, to have trust, and to successfully implement solutions all must start with a foundation of equitable engagement. Snotrac hopes this guide can be one important resource as your agency conducts its important work.



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Statement of Living Document

Snotrac has developed this equitable engagement best practices document to guide organizations and agencies in meaningful discussions with communities during decision making processes. This Equitable Engagement Guide is intended to assist agencies and staff in ensuring that community engagement remains equitable and inclusive.

Equitable engagement is a form of community engagement that intentionally stresses the participation of marginalized people such as, but are not limited to, groups excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status. Equitable engagement should go farther than involving more people in the decision-making process; it needs to lift up marginalized and historically underrepresented groups in order to create more equitable outcomes.

The ideas presented are through an effort of research and examination of existing diversity, equity, and inclusion works with-in other agencies and organizations. By compiling and critiquing these existing bodies of work, Snotrac has outlined our principles to guide equitable engagement and establish a working toolkit following these principles. Snotrac also understands that equitable engagement is a continuous and growing practice, there is no one size fits all solution. We encourage agencies and organizations to build off this document as they work with their respective communities.

For more information regarding existing bodies of work and where to find them please see our <u>equitable engagement</u> resources webpage.



Equity in Legislation

Federal, state, and regional laws and policies provide a minimum framework for how public agencies are to consider equity in community engagement, decision-making, and program delivery. As a groundfloor to equity, agencies should always strive to do more to achieve equitable outcomes.

Federal Law

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI states "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Through two executive orders and other rulemaking, Title VI has been applied to how agencies must engage the public and avoid impacts to people of color, low income populations, and people with limited English proficiency.

 Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994:
 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

E.O. 12898 directed federal agencies to:

- Identify and address the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.
- Develop a strategy for implementing environmental justice.
- Promote nondiscrimination in federal programs that affect human health and the environment, as well as provide minority and low-income communities access to public information and public participation.

Source: Summary of Executive Order 12898, US EPA

- FTA Circular 4701.1B, Oct. 1, 2012:
 Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal
 Transit Administration Recipients
 <u>Circular 4701.1B</u> provided guidance and instructions for
 - <u>Circular 4701.1B</u> provided guidance and instructions fo meeting Title VI requirements, including outreach to people with limited English proficiency (LEP).
 - Executive Order 13166 of August 11, 2000: Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency
 E.O. 13166 requires each Federal agency to examine the services it provides and develop and implement a system by which LEP persons can meaningfully access those services consistent with and without unduly burdening

by which LEP persons can meaningfully access those services consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the fundamental mission of the agency. Each Federal agency is also directed to work to ensure that recipients of Federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries. To this end,

each agency must prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities (i.e., the services it provides directly to the public) by eligible LEP persons.

Source: Overview of Executive Order 13166, US Dept. of Justice

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and access to state and local government' program and services. (U.S. Dept. of Labor)

State Law

In 2021, The Washington State Legislature, passed both the Climate Commitment Act (CCA) and the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act. These intertwined laws provide a transformative framework for how state agencies will address environmental justice through their programs, projects, and grants, especially when funded by revenue from the state carbon auctions.

Under the CCA and HEAL Act, state agencies must (A) conduct environmental health assessments and (B) prioritize at least 35% (with a goal of 40%) of funding from the state carbon auctions toward investments that directly benefit "vulnerable populations" who live or work within "overburdened communities."

This geography + people framework of the CCA and HEAL Act is an excellent approach for any local agency to use in planning their community engagement strategy and analyzing the potential impact of a program, project, or investment. Here's how the CCA and HEAL act determines "overburdened communities" and "vulnerable populations":

1. Geography—Overburdened Communities:

Does the project address an issue specifically in:

- A. Highly impacted communities, defined as:
 - i. Census tracts scoring a 9 or 10 on the Washington Tracking Network Scale; or
 - ii. Tribal Country;
- B. Another geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts from (historic, current, or projected):
 - i. Exposure to pollution, conventional or toxic pollutants, environmental hazards, or other contamination in the air, water, and land;
 - ii. Adverse environmental effects, including exposure to contamination, hazardous substances, or pollution that increase the risk of adverse environmental health outcomes or create vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change;
 - Loss or impairment of ecosystem functions or traditional food resources or loss of access to

- gather cultural resources or harvest traditional foods; or
- iv. Health and economic impacts from climate change?

2. People—Vulnerable Populations:

Within the defined geography, does the project address the needs or an issue of:

- A. Racial or ethnic minorities;
- B. Low income populations;
- C. Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; or
- D. Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms?

To determine what population groups satisfy C or D, the agency is to consider whether the population group is at higher risk for poor health outcomes due to environmental harms from adverse (i) socioeconomic factors and (ii) sensitivity factors such as low birth weights and higher rates of hospitalization.

Due to ample statistical and empirical support, it is likely the following population groups can be deemed "vulnerable": tribal members, adults 65+, people with disabilities, Medicaid patients, people experience homelessness, immigrants, and refugees.

Regional Policies

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) coordinates transportation and land use planning across King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap Counties within Washington State. The comprehensive plans of counties and cities within the Central Puget Sound must be consistent with the PSRC-adopted VISION 2050 and Regional Transportation Plan 2022-2050. These plans put a strong emphasis on equity, stating:

"VISION 2050 also seeks to reduce the risks of displacement of lower-income people and businesses through elevating social and racial equity in regional planning and encouraging integration of equity in local plans."

VISION defines equity as:

"All people have the means to attain the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and enable them to reach full potential. Communities of color, historically marginalized communities, and those affected by poverty are engaged in decision-making processes, planning, and policy-making."

PSRC, with the advice of a recently formed Environmental Advisory Committee, is establishing a Regional Equity Strategy that will include:

Tools and resources, including data and outreach, to

- better understand how regional and local policies and actions affect the region's people of color and with low incomes.
- Strategies and best practices for centering equity in regional and local planning work, including inclusive community engagement, monitoring, and actions to achieve equitable development and mitigate displacement of vulnerable communities.
- Implementation steps.
- Outcome measurement standards.
- Mechanisms to prioritize access to funding to address inequities.
- An equity impact tool for evaluating PSRC decisions and community engagement.

The intent of the Regional Equity Strategy is to help center equity within PSRC's work as well as within the major updates to cities' and town's comprehensive plans in 2024.



Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are provided within the context of equitable community engagement.

Accessibility

The ability for the community, and all its members, to engage and participate in the decisions that impact them.

Pay special attention to how spaces, either virtual or physical, can be accessed, understand the limitations which community members might have getting to spaces, and costs that are associated with them. For example: Are physical spaces ADA accessible? Are virtual spaces limited by community's members understanding of technology?

BIPOC

Black, indigenous, and people of color.

During community engagement, focus on the needs of specific racial and ethnic groups or other marginalized communities.

Capacity Building and Learning

Community Professional development in equity and public engagement for all staff and leadership. Partnership with other organizations and equitable engagement practitioners to exchange knowledge regarding best practices, this alleviates burdens on communities when engagement is learned though trial and error.

Community-Based Organization (CBO)

An organization or other collective group of individuals located within their communities, who focus on advocating and/or providing service to a specific group with special interests.

Due to their higher level of community engagement and culturally-relevant service delivery, CBOs are more likely to be trusted voices among marginalized communities. By partnering with CBOs, agencies are more likely to reach and engage people who either do not speak English or are unfamiliar with or distrustful of government processes. Agencies should consider holding in-language events within the community spaces of CBOs where community members already feel comfortable gathering, such as at religious centers, community centers, and Boys & Girls Clubs.

Continued Relationship

The relationship between the agency and the CBOs and other communities members after the agency's decision has been made, program has been implemented, or project has been constructed.

New polices and programs put forth by your agency will continue to effect communities. This is not a one time event. Relationships must continue to be reciprocal and not be an "only when we want something from you".

Equal Opportunity for Engagement

Providing "equal" opportunities for people to engage, without consideration for past or present inequities.

If an agency only strives for equal opportunity in its engagement, it will likely leave behind LEP populations, low income individuals who lack the time or childcare resources to attend a public meeting, or individuals with minimal education who lack familiarity with civics and public processes. The result will likely exacerbate existing inequities within the community.

Equitable Engagement

Public engagement that takes into account past or present inequities, and seeks to employ strategies and tactics that will address barriers to engagement.

Examples of equitable engagement tactics:

- Providing free childcare and meals at a public meeting in order to hear the opinions of low income parents.
- Serving culturally-relevant foods at public meetings.
- Contracting with an immigrant rights CBO to conduct outreach to residents who may face deportation or other enforcement actions.

Inclusion

The practice of providing equal access to information, opportunities, and resources to the people that reflect the culture, experience, and diversity of perspectives within the community.

Inclusive engagement practices welcome, recognize, and respect all voices within a safe space. A special consideration towards often marginalized groups such as those with physical or mental disabilities and other minority groups.

Marginalized Communities

Groups of people who have historically and currently are being neglected or excluded from participating in democratic process, usually due to discriminatory practices and other inequities, such as lack of political right/recognition.

These groups typically find greater challenges reengaging in the civic process. Notable under-represented group are indigenous people (both recognized and unrecognized), people of color, women, youth, seniors, veterans, gender non-binary individuals, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, lower socio-economic background, and levels of education.

Public Engagement

The practice of involving the community, stakeholders, and other local interest groups in an agency's and governing body's decision-making regarding programs, projects, investments, policies, and practices.

Public engagement exists on a wide continuum. It is a best practice to strive to engage marginalized communities to the fullest extent possible in order to achieve equitable outcomes.

Targeted Universalism

In striving for a universal goal in response to a social problem, the agency targets several different policies and outreach strategies toward different, particular groups of people.

For example, in order to address poor access to quality healthcare, an agencies may coordinate with one another to both (1) provide racial bias training for doctors (because people of color have felt uncomfortable in their past interactions with medical professionals), and (2) improve transit routes that connect neighborhoods of color to medical centers. For more information, check out this <u>primer</u>.

Community Engagement as a Continuum

Engagement can span multiple forms, in this document we have identified three broad categories:

- Non-Participation, where community members are unable to participate and are uninformed about projects in their community;
- 2. Limited engagement, where community members have limited access and communication with project leaders; and
- 3. Community Valued, where community members are active participants and are actively communicating and interacting with leader.

These categories can be further broken down into smaller levels of engagement practices, which are highlighted to the right and in the "Continuum of Community Engagement" chart on page 9.

Although all these forms of engagement can be valuable within different contexts, the purpose of this guide is to foster meaningful participation and dialogue when engaging communities and ultimately pursue Community Valued engagement practices. Deeper engagement with the community is more likely to result in greater long-term equitable outcomes.

Non-Participation

Project leaders or agency controls the engagement and decision making. Oftentimes these strategies include making absolute decisions without input.

The project leaders or agency has limited access to information for the community, preventing community members from expressing opinions. Decisions are then made behind closed doors.

The project leaders or agency has made decisions without public input and will provide listening sessions to the decisions.

Limited Engagement

Project leaders or agency still controls the engagement and decision making, however communication and information to the community has increased.

Inform: The project leaders or agency establish a one-way channel of communication, with one interaction during a limited time. Communication methods typically include media releases, brochures, and other information releases.

Consult: Project leaders or agency establishes a semi oneway channel of communication, where they will attempt to listen to the community through focus groups, surveys, interviews, and other means.

Dialogue: Here the power begins shifting towards the middle, as communication opens up between project leaders and the community. Multiple interactions between community members and project leaders have been established over a longer period of time. However community members still have limited control over decisions made by project leaders.

Community Valued

Project leaders or agency has begun to shift the control of engagement and decision making to the community. There is a continued two-way dialogue between these two entities.

Ameliorate: Project leaders or agency, through the two-way communication with the community, will make the initial decision, however will also establish alternatives that reflect the community's concerns.

Partner/Collaborate: Project leader or agency with community members will co-lead meetings and share decision making powers.

Empower: Here the power dynamic has shifted and decision making power has been given to the community as they plan and lead the project.



Continuum of Community Engagement

	No Darticiation	-				Pouls/ Atimimas	3
NOII-Lai	ricipation		mited Engagement	יוור	ر	ommun y-value	5 .
		Inform	Consult	Dialogue	Ameliorate	Partner/Collaborate	Delegate
			Level of Commu	evel of Community Engagement			
Agency limits information to community so community does not have opportunity to express opinion	Agency makes decision without informing public then provides listening sessions after decision has been made	Agency informs community	Agency consults with community stakeholders	Agency engages in dialogue with community stakeholders	Agency or in anticipation of adverse decision, Agency placates influential community stakeholders by providing additional "win"	Agency collaborates with community stakeholders	Agency delegates the control over community engagement process and final decisions to stakeholders
			Characteristics	Characteristics of Engagement			
No/inaccurate communication before decision and/or one-way communication after decision	Inaccurate or one-way communication before decision, and two-way communication after decision Agency asks for input on how to improve process in future and promises to do better	Primarily one-way channel of communication One interaction Term-limited to events Address immediate need of city and community	Primarily one-way channel of communication One to multiple interactions Short to medium term relationships Shapes and informs city programs	Two-way channel of communication Multiple interactions Medium to longterm relationships Advancement of solutions to complex problems	After decision is made: • Two-way channel of communication • Multiple interactions • Medium to long-term relationships • Advancement of solutions to complex problem	Two-way channel of communication Multiple interactions Medium to long-term relationships Advancement of solutions to complex problems	Two-way channel of communication Multiple interactions Medium to long-term relationships Advancement of solutions to complex problems
			Strat	Strategies			
Obfuscate the fact that a decision is being made, then, after decision is made, blame "unavoidable circumstances" for why the decision was made.	Obfuscate the fact that a decision is being made and/or blame "unavoidable circumstances," then after decision is made, hold focus groups, briefings, and listening sessions.	Media release, brochures, pamphlets, outreach to vulnerable populations, ethnic media contacts, translated information, staff outreach to residents, new and social media	Focus groups, interviews, community surveys	Forums; advisory boards; stakeholder involvement; coalitions; policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony; workshops; and community-wide events	After decision is made: stakeholder involvement, policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony; and workshops.	Co-lead community meetings; advisory boards; coalitions and partnerships; policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony.	Community-lead planning efforts; community-hosted forums; collaborative partnerships; coalitions; policy development and advocacy, including legislative brieflings and testimony.
			Who Controls	Who Controls Engagement			
Agency	Agency	Agency	Agency	Agency	Agency	Agency	Community
			Who Contr	Who Controls Decision			
Agency	Agency	Agency	Agency	Agency	Agency controls initial decision; community may choose what additional city actions will make an otherwise undesirable decision okay with them.	Shared. No decision made without approval of both parties	Community

Application of Equity in Context

Public engagement is an action based on the belief that communities have the right to be involved in decisions that will affect their lives. It is a process in which people in positions of power have an opportunity to listen to the community's lived experiences, learn from them, leading to more innovative ideas, better solutions, and creating greater support. Public engagement is the first step towards building equity and creating just environments, where power shifts toward a more collaborative environment between communities and leadership. The following principles examines equitable practices throughout the engagement process in four contexts:

1. Equity within the Agency

Works in equity should be a continuous growing and learning process for agencies and organization. Valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion within, better prepares organization for community engagement and should be integrated throughout and not hierarchical.

Internal Culture

Organizations and agencies must value diversity and inclusion. This begins with people in leadership positions (leader buy-in), by promoting practices that includes, respects, and listens to a diversity of lived experiences. Avoid Tokenism, where individuals are invited into spaces because they can present the organization as "diverse", however are not given the opportunity to succeed.

Establish an Equity Team

Equity and leadership teams should not be hierarchical, but rather on the same level. The team should be able to openly communicate and receive input from all departments/divisions leaders and otherwise. Members of the team should be comfortable with difficult conversation and be able to critique past and current issues in the context of equity.

Allocating Resources for Equity Team

In order to promote equity internally, the organization must commit resources to staff and organize the team. A commitment to equity should be an ongoing process as all decisions should be made through an equity lens. Can decisions be made equitably without an equity team? Equity should be an important job function.

Partnerships

Work and develop relationships with diverse organizations in the community to bring in unique voices and perspectives in agencies.

Set Forth Goals

Set short and long term concrete goals and establish metrics for guiding these goals. Be able to examine the current issues within the organization, and brainstorm ways that target them. Example, if a short term goal is to promote a more diverse working environment, a metric could be examining the hiring practices. Some questions to consider

when setting forth goals are: What does short & long term equity in the organization/agency look like? How are these aspects helpful to the work that we do?

Transparency

Agency/organization leadership should be open and accountable for their decisions to all members within. Leaders should be continuously informed of equity goals and processes.

Grow and Learn

Equity is an continuous learning process for both an organization and the subject matter. To support an internal culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, organization employees must be informed of ongoing practices in the work.

Equity Training for Organizations

In order to determine which trainings fit the culture and values of your organization, consider developing criteria that you can use to apply to the selection process for trainings. Given the continuous learning process, equity training should fit a long term plan of changing how we think and understanding the inequities within our systems, rather than completing a set of prescribed actions.

2. Equity within the Community

Respecting, trusting, collaborative, and reciprocal relationships are key pillars to having meaningful engagements with the community. We must also acknowledge that different communities have different values and life experiences, and we must make decisions that are fair, equitable, and in the context of bettering the community.

Engage Early

Develop an engagement plan that considers the time it takes to build meaningful relationships with the community.

Timeline and Goals

Set goals for the organization/agency desired outcome from the outreach process and a timeline for reaching those goals. Engagement with community will never go as initially planned, prepare extra time for adjusted schedules and remain flexible.

Understand the Locale of Community that is Engaged

Quantitative data gathering of the target and neighboring community. This will provide an initial view of the demographics our organization/agency is impacting. A good source to identify these populations is through the American Community Survey from the US Census and EJ Screen (Environmental Justice and Mapping Tool). Examine detailed breakdowns of impacted neighborhoods, rather than larger census blocks.

Avoid Assumptions and Mind the Gaps

It is important to note that shared characteristic within communities does not necessarily mean shared experiences.



The quantitative data initially collected should serve as a baseline for understanding how best to engage with the community. Be aware for demographics which may not be fully represented in the initial research, and actively search for those in that community. Be mindful of how implicit biases can show up and impact work with others. Implicit biases are forms of bias that occur automatically and unintentionally, often posing barriers to working with communities. While having biases are part of being human, working to undo them goes a long way, through things like equity training, goes a long way in engaging in equitable engagement.

Acknowledge the Community

Understand the culture of the community you plan to engage with, the language and terms which you uses could be misinterpreted from each community that is engaged. This also provides an opportunity to perhaps acknowledge any past inequities you as an organization/agency might have contributed to the community as well as understand issues reside in the community.

Partner with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Local Leaders

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and local leaders, are well established in the community and have existing relationships with community members. CBOs have an advantage in leading outreach and gathering genuine perspectives from the community since they do not have an agenda with the participating organization. CBOs and Local Leaders are facilitators to hearing directly from the public.

Reciprocal Relationship with Community

Respect each others time. Listen, learn, and connect. Meet in person. Provide meaningful compensation for community partners and individuals, whether its directly hiring CBOs to perform outreach, provide networking or skills training. The community is working with limited time and resources, these forms of reciprocity provide much needed support without adding greater burdens.

Building a Community Representation

A single individual does not represent the community as a whole. Invite multiple community members who identity similarly, encourage them to share from their life experience. Avoid assumptions regarding who can participate. During this process, actively search for under-represented groups in the community to understand their perspectives. All conversations need to be meaningful and avoid tokenism. The more voices that participate, the stronger the engagement will be and a clearer collective opinion can be gathered.

Accessibility to Engagement

Understand where community members meets, this is where partnering with CBOs are beneficial. Spaces for community engagement need to be readily accessible, questions to consider are: Is the space Physically Accessible for people with mobility issues? (ADA Complaint) Geographically Accessible? (Is safety and issue? Is there reliable public transportation? Is the commute time reasonable?) Financially Accessible? (What is the cost of attendance? Price of

transportation/ time off work/ child care?) Culturally Accessible? (Is there a language barrier) Gender Accessible? (Do individuals feel safe and respected in the environment?) Technology Accessible? (What is the digital literacy of the community? and the financial aspect of acquiring the technology) What are other accessibility issues?

Transparency with Community

Be open with the engagement process. Why were these individuals selected? How will their perspectives be used? This aspect build on the relationship of respect and trust between your organization/agency and community.

3. Equity within the Cycle of Planning & Engagement

Community engagement should be a process that continues to build on existing relationships, hold decision makers accountable, and provide transparency. It is an ongoing learning process that can be critical and open to improvement for all parties involved.

Critical Reflection Time

Create an opportunity for all parties involved to evaluate the process of engagement, before, during, and after. Look for uncomfortable conversations to challenge the established. Examine the unchecked, the unconscious, and unspoken systems.

Lessons Learned

Using the Critical Reflection Time, feedback from within and the public, and other engagement practitioners. How can you improve your engagement process? Highlight successes and disappointments, incorporate these findings into next engagement practices.

Reflection, Revise, Re-engage

For a single policy/program, there is usually multiple outreach and public engagement efforts. Use the critical reflection and lessons learn from the initial outreach, to improve the succeeding.

Accountability and Transparency

Honesty towards the community in shortcomings. Share with them issues and limitations, seek community input on best way to move forward, and propose a plan that address these shortcoming in a timely man. While often during the short term of the design solution (1-5 years) these issues are addressed, the long term (5 years+) is forgotten.

4. Equity and Justice as the Goal

The work of equitable engagement is to encourage participation in civic processes that have historically neglected marginalized communities. To question the structure of power between decision makers and the people affected by those decisions, and to empower the community.

Establishing Equity and the Pursuit of Justice in a Measurable Context

Organization and agencies must work to dismantle power inequities and systems that were built from discrimination and oppression. Work to support and advance marginalized communities to bring them back into the democratic process. For example, examining the financial stability of households effected by new policies/programs.

Promoting Community Leadership and Share Power

Community can openly bring forth issues they are concerned with, develop solutions alongside agencies and organizations, and implement them. Challenge the traditional hierarchy between decision makers and the public.

Reviewing Programs and Policies

Organization/Agencies that implement programs and polices in communities should expand beyond a top-down approach. These programs and polices which affect community member's everyday lives need to be co-created by the community and examined for their benefits and/or determent to the community. Polices and programs need to be more equitable and support marginalized communities.

Committing to Learning and Growing

Public engagement and equity are continuously growing and learning practices. As highlighted in our "Statement as a Living Document", these principles provide a base on which organizations and agencies can expand.

Achieving Diversity and Inclusion within Our Organizations and Agencies and the community

A table that invites and has numerous and varied perspectives provides an opportunity for deeper understanding of social and systemic issues. It provides an opportunity for co-creating unique design solutions that can address multiple issues that different communities face. Our organizations and agencies should continuously reflect the communities it serves.

Transparency and Accountability

This is highlighted repeatedly throughout each context of Equitable Engagement. Organization and Agencies must be transparent and accountable to the public in order to build and maintain a trusting relationship. Acknowledge past injustices and work to reconcile them.

"I can't believe what you say because I see what you do" — James Baldwin

Tips

- When working within the community, whether it be through outreach or meetings, it is important to consider the accessibility of language. Stick to easy to understand language as jargon can often times turn away equitable engagement. Using things like easy to understand illustrations can go a long way in conveying things that language often cannot.
- Make sure the community knows the planning process and major milestones of your project. Inform them of the opportunities of formal updates and feedback, and take into consideration the medium in which the feedback can be provided.
- When it comes to sharing power and co-creating, consider how you can compensate community members for their time and insight. Things like providing transportation, childcare services during meetings, and stipends are ways of reducing community members' barriers to participating.



Equitable Engagement Worksheet

This Equitable Engagement Worksheet is designed to provide organizations and agencies, an opportunity to connect and communicate with the impacted communities. The worksheet is designed in phases that include action steps and set questions to guide and evaluate public engagement. This worksheet is driven in particular to address and restore equity within historically marginalized communities that have faced and continue to face institutional and structural racism, discrimination, and neglect.

The 6 Equitable Engagement Phases

The Equitable Engagement Worksheet is composed of six phases, based in the equitable engagement principles set forth earlier. Each phase builds on the prior phase, with an intent for continuous improvements during and after each project such that trust with the community is built with the community from project to project.

When to use this worksheet

Share and use this worksheet *early* among agency and organization departments to coordinate equity goals and desired outcomes within agency/organization and respective impacted community.

How to use this worksheet

This toolkit is designed to be completed and critiqued in a group setting, including individuals with different leadership positions, racial background, abilities, and among others to provide a broad spectrum of ideas and perspectives.

Questions to consider when using worksheet

- 1. Process of Equity: Are these practices diverse, inclusive, and accessible to all interested parties? Are these interested parties actively engaging in meaningful conversation?
- 2. Present Conditions: What are the current issues that affect the community? How do they compare to neighboring communities? Is this fair and just?
- 3. Future Outcomes: What will be the lasting impact of these conversations and how will they change these communities? 5 years from now? 10 years from now? What are the generational impacts of these conversations and actions?



Phase 1: Pre-Engagement within Agency Project Title Description Department Establishing the Team

Project Manager Outreach Lead Phone Email Project Equity Compliance Analyst Additional Team Members Identify who on the team will be involved in planning the community engagement and considering issues of equity. Consider creating a project-specific equity team that helps establish project-specific equity goals, helps identify potential community partners and equity data, and holds the project accountable.

Outside Partners

What community partners should be engaged from the start in the design and implementation of the engagement plan?

What will their roles be? List their contact information.



Goals & Requirements List the equity goals which the project's leadership and equity teams wish team achieve. Rank these goals in order of importance and describe why they're important. How will community engagement further these goals? **Equity Goals** How will the community be involved to ensure the goals reflect their needs and desires? How will progress toward the equity goals be measured? How will success be reported to the community, and how will the project be held accountable to the goals? Accountability to Goals What policies, rules, and regulations must the agency comply with that are compelling it to engage in equitable community engagement? What specifically do these policies require of the agency? Regulations

Priority Geographies

What is the affected area of the infrastructure, service, program, or policy?

List and map the zip codes, census tracts, and census block groups, as appropriate.

HEAL Act Geographies

Are there "Overburdened Communities," as defined by the HEAL Act, within the proposed affected area?

Census tracts that score a 9 or 10 score on the Environmental Health Disparities Map.

Tribal Country, and waters & lands for treatyprotected hunting, gathering, and fishing rights.

Other census block groups where vulnerable populations may face combined multiple environmental harms and health impacts.

Describe and map all such geographies.

PSRC Equity Geographies

Reference PSRC Opportunity and Displacement Risk Maps

Are there areas where there is a high risk of displacement where steps should be taken to stabilize housing?

Are there areas where there is high opportunity where more housing or jobs should be provided for low income households?

Describe and map all such geographies.

Priority Populations

Who lives and works within the affected area?

	Affected Area		Overburdened Communities	
	%	#	%	#
Race & Ethnicit	У			
White				
Black				
Asian				
South Pacific				
Native				
Other				
Hispanic				
Total Population				
Limited English	Proficier	ncy		
Spanish				
Vietnamese				
Chinese				
Tagalog				
Russian				
African				
Arabic				
Total LEP				
Income				
200% Poverty Line				
< 60% AMI				
60-80% AMI				
80-120% AMI				
Median Income				
Average Income				
Homeless				
Additional Prio	rity Popu	lations		
Age 65+				
Age 18-				
Cognitive Disabilities				
Physical Disabilities				
Persons with Asthma				
Veterans				
Non-Vehicle Households				
Transit- Dependent				



Identify Community Resources	Locate the assisted living facilities, affordable housing, schools, YMCAs and Boys & Girls Clubs, social service agencies community centers, libraries, food banks, and ethnic grocery stores within the affected area. Produce and maintain maps.
Major Issues Facing Priority Populations	What are the major issues facing the vulnerable and priority populations within overburdened communities and the affected area? Gather any relevant qualitative and quantitative information that can help understand the affected community. List any relevant news articles or publications that demonstrate the local issues for the vulnerable/priority populations
Address the Issues	Describe how the project, program, or policy will address the major issues facing priority populations.

Phase 2: Creating the Community Engagement Plan

Menu of Engagement Activities Choose which activities your agency will use for this project: ☐ Media Release ☐ Focus Groups ☐ Public Forums ☐ Working with CBOs ☐ Community ☐ Public Forums led by during decision-Meetings co-led with CBO ☐ Translated Docs ☐ Listening Sessions ☐ Dinner & Dialogue making Policy Development led by CBO ☐ Ethnic Media ☐ Photo-voice ☐ Interviews ☐ Workshops during ☐ Advisory Boards Contact decision-making with Community ☐ Talking Circles ☐ Community Surveys ☐ Community members ☐ Brochures & ☐ Public Forums during Meetings led by ☐ Comment Wall ■ Workshops **Pamphlets** ☐ Briefings co-led with CBO decision-making ☐ Comment Form on ☐ 1-on-1 meetings with ☐ Speaking to Residents **CBO** ☐ Program ☐ Briefings during Website **CBOs** Implemented by decision-making ☐ CBOs & Advocacy ☐ Walking Tours ☐ Phone/Email Groups part of CBO Project Leadership ☐ Design Charrette ☐ Planning led by CBO ☐ Social Media Design Solutions co-☐ Conversation Café ☐ Design Solutions ☐ Website Content led with CBOs decided by CBO ☐ Silent Discussions ☐ Policy Development co-led with CBOs Program Implemented with **CBOs** Other Engagement Activities Describe the any other engagement activities that you plan to undertake. Continuum Based on the engagement activities you've chosen, where on the "Community Engagement Continuum" best describes this project? Consult Dialogue Ameliorate **Partner** Empower Does this level of community engagement align with your agency's expectations for engaging the community? If not, what will you do to increase community engagement?



Project Timeline	Create a timeline with approximated dates of starting and completing each phase. The phases should consist at minimum: (1) Creating Community Engagement Plan; (2) Community Engagement Time Period; (3) Developing Solutions; (4) Analyzing Solutions; (5) Deciding Solutions; and (6) Implementation.
Time and Resources	How much time and resources does the project have for community engagement? Provide a list of all resources and how much, such as staff members, money, consultants, social media access, printing, etc. It should be noted if the project intends to engage with the community.
When/Where of Community Interactions	List the spaces, both in-person and online, that the agency will interact with community members. List the times and locations. Make sure the spaces are set-up for genuine conversation and are accessible to all.

Phase 3: Engagement & Analysis

Collecting

Score Design Alternatives following categories, on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being most effective. Favor alternatives with the most positive equitable outcomes. Short-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Long-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Alt #4 Alt #5	Score Design Alternatives following categories, on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being most effective. Favor alternatives with the most positive equitable outcomes. Short-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Long-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5	Score Design Alternatives following categories, on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being most effective. Favor alternatives with the most positive equitable outcomes. Short-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Long-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5	Score Design Alternatives following categories, on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being most effective. Favor alternatives with the most positive equitable outcomes. Short-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Long-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5	Score Design Alternatives following categories, on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being most effective. Favor alternatives with the most positive equitable outcomes. Short-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Long-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Alt #4 Alt #5 Alt #4 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4	Score Design Alternatives following categories, on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being most effective. Favor alternatives with the most positive equitable outcomes. Short-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Long-Term Accessibility Safety Economic Environmental Social Equity Cost Alt #1 Alt #2 Alt #3 Alt #4 Alt #5 Alt #4 Alt #5	Commur In	ing See Appen nity community put ^{community}	ndix B for the Exan tell you about th that are the i	nple of an Commu e need for the pro oot causes of the	nity Engagement Surv ject, program, or polic se inequities?	vey. What does to cy? Are there exis	he data and dialogu sting inequities with	ie with the nin the
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Phase 4: Decide and Implement

Phase 4: Decide	e and implement
Design Solution, Get Feedback	Based on community input, design solutions. Present the solutions and underlying analysis to the community. Collect their reactions. See Appendix C for the Example of Design Solutions Survey.
Report Findings	Report the community reactions to the agency and project leadership teams, and report back to the community.
Preferred Option	Based on agency analysis and community input, what is the preferred design or option? Why?
Equity Outcomes & Solutions	Does the preferred solution offer the most equitable outcomes? If not, what are the strategies you will implement to reduce harm? How can the work be realigned to become more equitable? Consider: immediate and long-term strategies; programmatic, policy, infrastructure, and investment strategies; and partnerships.
Partnerships	List the community partners that will assist in implementing the selected design/option and their roles.

Phase 5: Accountability & Transparency Project Describe how the project team will continue to keep the community informed about and engaged with the project throughout project implementation. See Appendix B: Community Response Form. Communication Evaluate Project Effectiveness How will you evaluate and report the effectiveness of the program, project, or policy to leadership and the community? **Shortcomings** What are the shortcomings of the program, project, or policy? What are the reasons behind these shortcomings? How are these issues being resolve? What is unresolved or unresolvable? Report **Effectiveness** Report your findings to community leaders and stakeholders and to agency leadership. What were their thoughts? & Shortcomings



Phase 6: Continued Relationship and Learning

Best Practices	What are the better engagement practices learned through this process?
Needs Improvement	What are the engagement practices that need to be improved?
Save & Share	Share the engagement experience throughout the agency. File project documents in an easy to access location and format so future project teams can easily access the information and maintain positive relationships with the community.

Appendix A: Example of Engagement Feedback Form

To improve community engagement, we must continue to evaluate the process.

Engagement practices are best when guided by the community. Each community is different, engagement practices which work in one community, might not be as successful in others.

The below "Engagement Feedback Form" provides a means to improve practices in your the next work session with the community.

Community Engageme	nt Feedback	k Form						
Name/Organization (Optional) :_		Email	(Optional):					
Date:			e (Optional):					
Address (Optional):								
Community Engagement Overall Experience								
_	t Overall Ex	perience			_			
Provide a rating by placing an 'X' in the corresponding box.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE			
I am satisfied with the Community Engagement Process.								
I felt encouraged to contribute to the engagement team.								
The engagement team was respectful of our time and I understood the timeline of the project.								
The engagement team was knowledgeable and responsive to our questions regarding the project.								
I could openly ask questions about the project/program.								
I was able to make an informed opinion which was actively considered by the engagement team.								
The engagement team actively listened to our perspectives and did not attempt to promote their ideas.								
I could contact the engagement team through phone/email.								
Equity was a major concern to the engagement team.								
Please provide any additional comments and suggestions:								



Appendix B: Examples of Community Response Form and Community Survey

Community Response Form

Be accountable and transparent in your work. While implementing design solutions, communities will face immediate impact to their daily lives. Agencies and organizations must work continuously with the community to mediate any major issues and concerns expressed by the community in a timely manner.

Being attentive and accountable during the design implementation phase will establish a more trusting and respectful relationship with the community moving forward. Please provide the organization and point person's contact information to the community during this time.

Name/Organization:	Email:	
	Address:	
What are the impacts to your daily li	fe during this implementation process:	
What are your concerns during the in	mplementation process and do you have	any sort term solution suggestions:
Community Survey		
	Fmail:	Phone:
Name/Org:		
What is your experience in the	What are your needs to address the	Does your experience differs from
community involving the issue?	issue? Suggestions?	neighboring communities?

Appendix C: Example of Design Solution Survey

		Email:	
Name/Organizatio	n:	Address:	
Design Option	What are the benefits from the proposed design alternative?	What are the issues with the proposed deigns alternatives?	What are the short term (1-5yr) and long term (5+yr) impacts?
A			
В			
C			
D			
E			



Appendix D: Case Studies

Within this section are example summary case studies with their corresponding Community Engagement Continuum levels. Note that some many not cleanly fall in a single category.

Case Study 1: Seattle Slow the Flock Down

As a part of Seattle's Vision Zero campaign Seattle Department of Transportation, in conjunction with Portland Department of Transportation, started a public education campaign designed to raise awareness that speed limits were lowered to 25 miles per hour on most Seattle arterial streets. A press release can be found here.

This case study falls under the 'inform' portion of the continuum. The agency primarily did a one way channel of communication to inform the community about the lowered speed limits. This way of informing was limited to this one time education event. This case study does not address the broader Vision Zero strategy, just the outreach component of the educational campaign 'Slow the Flock Down.'

Case Study 2: King County In Motion & ORCA

In 2009, in order to roll out and promote the new regional ORCA card, the DOT's In Motion program took steps to send out surveys and outreach to vulnerable populations. A full report can be found here.

This case study falls under the 'Consult' portion of the continuum. The agency primarily did one way communication to vulnerable populations using targeted media and surveys. The outreach was conducted through a short period of time and the goal for the city was to consult the community about the rollout of a new program that was established and gain insights from groups on improvements.

Case Study 3: Rainier Valley Transit Oriented Development

In order to construct affordable housing on land that was originally acquired for construction of light-rail routes in Seattle, an initiative between Sound Transit and the Seattle Housing Authority was undertaken. Before any development could take place, extensive outreach which took the form of surveys and public meetings were conducted. A full report of the findings can be found here.

This case study falls primarily under the 'Dialogue' portion of the continuum. In order to understand what should be considered, the agencies sought out community input through a two-way channel of communication and had multiple interactions with multiple groups. Furthermore, things like forums, advisory boards, and coalitions were used. Given that this outreach was to find out the next course of action for the next 10 years and the city primarily

controlling engagement, the case study does not fall under the next portion of the continuum.

Case Study 4: Seattle Racial Equity Fund

The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is the City of Seattle's long-term commitment to undo institutional racism. The city works in partnership with community based organizations and uses its Racial Equity Fund to provide funds to projects. For more information, click here.

This case study falls under the 'Partner/Collaborate' portion of the continuum. Racial Equity Fund collaborates with community stakeholders to pursue goals of racial equity. Some of this <u>collaboration</u> is done by the usage of dispersing funds to advance specific project goals. They provide things like training, technical assistance, and handson facilitation.

Appendix E: Resources

Snotrac maintains and updates a Google Drive folder of equitable engagement resources. A list with links to the resources are maintained on <u>Snotrac's website</u>.

Case Studies

- "Community "Engagement Mobility Project Examples," Shared-Use Mobility Center (2020). Blog post.
- "Inclusive and Equitable Engagement: Case Studies, Lessons Learned and Best Practices," Western Planner (2021). Blog post.
- "Equity Analysis in Regional Transportation Planning," Transit Cooperative Research Program (2020). Report.
- "Bike and Pedestrian Safety for an Equitable City," Streetlight Data. Report.
- "<u>Equitable TOD: A Sound Transit Case Study</u>," Seattle University (2020). Presentation.
- "Equity-Driven Outreach for Bicycle Planning and Beyond: Let's Bike Oakland as a Case Study," Columbia University (2020). Master's thesis.
- "LA Metro and Transit-Oriented Communities: Creating Equitable Planning Practices through Community Engagement at Mariachi Plaza," Occidental College (2018). Bachelor's thesis.
- "Las Cruces Case Study Engaging underserved communities to focus on building more complete streets," American Public Health Association and Transportation for America (2016). White paper.
- "Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan Public Engagement Results," Massachusetts Department of Transportation (2019). Report.
- "Equity-centered Transportation Project Prioritization Process City of Peoria, Illinois," University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2021). Master's thesis.

Equity Toolkits

- "Community Engagement," Racial Equity Tools. Website.
- "Equity Impact Review," King County. Website.
- "Continuum of Community Engagement," King County. Toolkit.
- "The Equity Impact Review checklist," King County (2016). Toolkit.
- "<u>Using the Equity Impact Review Toolkit</u>," King County Equity & Social Justice (2012). Guide.
- "King County Equity Impact Awareness Tool," King County Office of Equity & Social Justice (2020). Toolkit.
- "Racial Equity Toolkit COVID19," City of Seattle. Guide.
- "Seattle RSJI Racial Equity Toolkit," City of Seattle. Guide.
- "Making Equity Real in Mobility Plots," The Greenlining Institute. Guide.
- "Toolkit to Integrate Health and Equity Into Comprehensive Plans," American Planning Association (2020). Report.

Practitioner Guides

- "Balancing the Scales--Equity Analysis in Transportation Planning," Transportation Research Board (2020). Webinar.
- "Achieving Transportation Equity through GIS," Esri (2022). Webinar.
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