THE REGIONAL EQUITY ATLAS

2008 Community Outreach Summary Report

RESEARCH

In 2007, the Coalition for a Livable Future, in partnership with Portland State University, published the Regional Equity Atlas. This research began to paint a picture of equity conditions in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region by measuring access to key resources and opportunities like affordable housing, transit, parks and grocery stores.

EDUCATE & ORGANIZE

We are sharing the Atlas findings with policymakers, community and business leaders and residents as broadly as possible. We're asking them (and you) for their take on the implications of the research for how we approach regional planning and development. Our research shows inequities in our region, but we need the community, especially those who have historically been left out of planning debates and decision making, to help us determine what actions we should take to address these challenges.

TAKE ACTION

Using the research and feedback we collect from the community, we are developing an Equity Action Agenda. The plan will articulate regional equity objectives and serve as a blueprint for how to achieve the objectives through public policy change and other solutions that ensure future development that is fair for all communities.

With equity at the fore, we can make the greater Portland-Vancouver area a resilient, prosperous, and multi-cultural region, one whose exceptional quality of life is accessible to all who live in it.

WHAT IS REGIONAL EQUITY?

The right of every person to have access to opportunities for meeting basic needs and advancing their health and well-being.

Our principles of regional equity guide the work of the Atlas project. In our workshops, participants were asked to keep these principles in mind as they developed their solutions.

Community members were also encouraged to think of solutions that address more than one issue in a multitude of ways. To help us do this we returned to the different issues highlighted in the Atlas.

Atlas Chapter	Demographic		Housing			Schools		
findings ···→	Poverty Moves Outward	Wealth Becomes More Concentrated	Housing Affordability Decreases	Home Ownership Gap Increases	Forced Displacement	Lower Socio-Economic Districts have Less Funding & Teacher Resources	Achievement Gap	Poor Schools get Poorer

PRINCIPLES OF REGIONAL EQUITY

- All residents have access to opportunities for meeting basic needs and advancing their health and well-being: good jobs, transportation choices, safe and stable housing, a good education, a range of parks and natural areas, vibrant public spaces, and healthful, culturally appropriate foods.

- The benefits and burdens of growth and change are fairly shared among our communities. Communities with significant economic resources and political capital share burdens and benefits with people and communities with fewer resources.

- All residents and communities are involved fully as equal partners in public decision-making

CLF's Equity Action Committee has helped to collapse and refine the hundreds of proposals that have been generated through community outreach. In an effort to focus on identifying preliminary strategies for the Equity Action Agenda, the ideas were evaluated based on a set of "Solutions Criteria".

This evaluation process, along with additional research with community leaders, has helped us to prioritize our list of strategies. The 2008 Annual Livability Summit focuses on six breakout topic areas derived from this research process.

Transit		Parks & Nature		Health	
Poor Transit Access to Industrial Areas	Poor Transit Access in Some Poor Suburban Areas	Poor Parks Access in Low-Income Communities	Poor Access to Nature in Low-Income Communities	Access to Affordable Food	Walkability Around Schools is Poorest in Suburbs

SOLUTIONS CRITERIA:

1. **Prevalent (scope) –** Solution addresses a problem that is found throughout the region or portion of the region (i.e., not only a neighborhood or a special interest group).
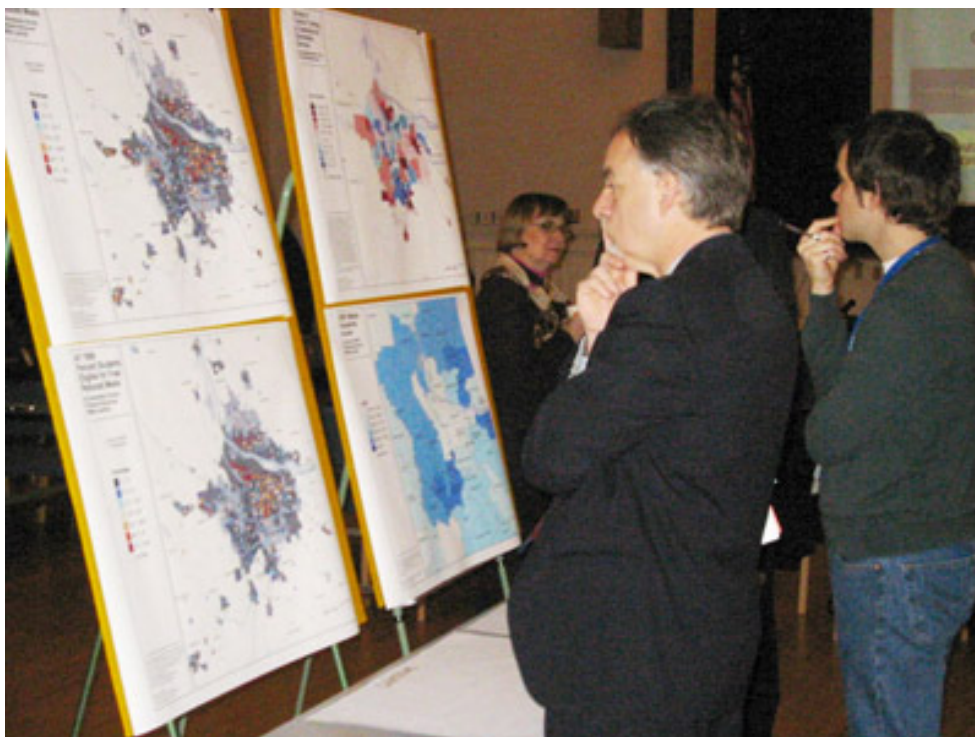
2. **Serious (depth) –** Solution addresses an issue that is of high importance; that in proportion to others, has a profound effect on quality/quantity of life (i.e., not just cosmetic issue).

3. **Actionable –** There is a concrete solution that will achieve a measurable result, both in the long term and the short term.

4. **Cross-issue –** Solution addresses more than one issue area, bringing together various sectors of the community.

5. **Achievable –** Solution is feasible and sustainable in terms of stakeholder buy-in, cost, timeline, and its capacity to build on efforts already underway.
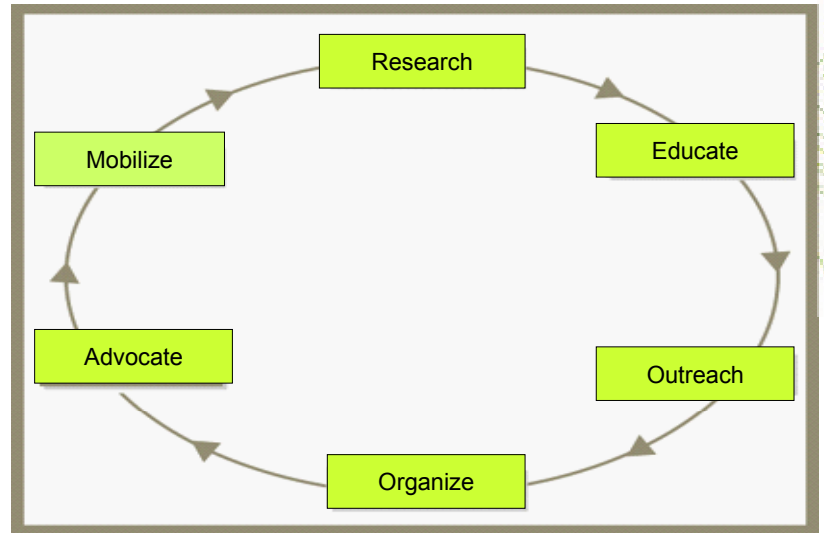
6. **Resonant -** Solution aligns with the Atlas, CLF mission, and equity principles.

Preliminary Strategy Topic Areas

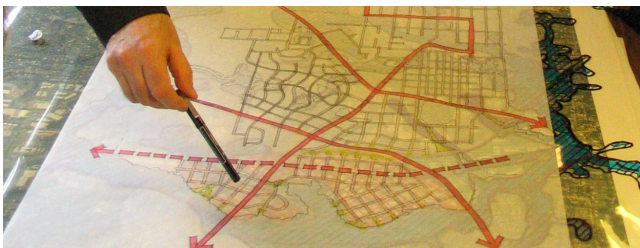This is where we talk about how the Agenda is not finalized and will be an iterative process

This is where we describe the following strategies as derived from the raw qualitiative data collected from community workshops and feedback forums.

systemic change is an iterative process

Topic: Equity Certification

- **Devise a criteria framework modeled after LEED that would promote equity priorities in real estate and business development and infrastructure investment.**

- **Use health impact assessments to address health equity issues - weave into broader equity criteria**

- **Support adoption of an Informed Growth Act: require economic analysis of impact on community (wage, job loss, etc.) similar bill for '09 legislature proposed.**

Topic: Outreach

- **Create "changing places" program for citizens and policymakers. Declare official "equity week" and get employers to promote it.**

- **Storytelling Project: Create curriculum with service learning for use in public schools. Have mini-gatherings with people affected by equity issues.**

- **Mini-forum— involve representatives from City Comprehensive Plan, County Comprehensive Plan, Metro, Business Alliances (PBA and Neighborhood), Housing, Workforce Development, visionPDX, and School Districts.**

- **Involve the voices of people living on low-income, ethnic minorities, communities of color, young people, and families in the workgroups, in major forums, and in decision-making, where possible.**

Topic: Complete Communities

- **Require or create incentives for inclusionary zoning for affordable housing.**

- **Tax Abatement, incentives and waivers should be targeted to high priority affordable housing needs and performance should be monitored.**

- **Create incentives for employer assisted housing within close proximity of the employer.**

- **Require that developments over 20 units or those receiving public subsidies institutionalize "Community Benefits Agreements".**

- **Secure a substantial ongoing revenue source for services and affordable housing for low income people.**

- **Community Land Trusts for affordable housing and other long term affordability requirements that provide a permanent infrastructure of homeownership opportunities.**

- **Adopt a regional housing code and enforcement program that ensures housing quality for multifamily units.**

- **Provide bonus points to affordable housing subsidies for projects that incorporate green building techniques or ensure better access to greenspace.**

- **Support legal structures for cooperative home ownership.**

- **Secure resources from Urban Renewal Areas that would be dedicated to affordable housing. State legislation should allow for spending funds more flexibly (eg outside of districts).**

- **Cap property taxes for elderly homeowners that have been in their home for a long time.**

- **Enforce developer agreements on public benefits (affordable housing) before tax abatements, etc. are fully actualized**

- **Create an investment fund when URA is created. to create equity for renters in the district so they could pay down rent increases caused by rising property values, etc…**

- **Use private van and bus fleets to meet underserved transit needs**

Topic: Transportation

- **Low-Carbon (Transportation) Footprint Credits**

- **Use Metro's Regional Transportation Plan process to ensure regional transportation investments (not just transit) meet equity criteria (link with equity criteria objective).**

- **Provide additional incentives for locating affordable housing near transit. For example include as part of "green housing" criteria, offer IZ bonuses (bonus densities or waivers of transportation SDCs), etc.**

- **Use private van and bus fleets to meet underserved transit needs**

- **Review how effectively existing TriMet routes connect highly transit-dependent communities with available regional jobs, shopping, and services.**

Topic: Wealth Building

- **Expand access to credit, traditional banking services and financial products in disadvantaged neighborhoods through a Community Benefits Agreement between public and private partners and the banking industry.**

- **Expand equity for low-income renters through asset development accounts (Individual Development Accounts) which couple access to diversified real estate investments with financial training and literacy programs.**

- **Provide job training, work experience, business advisory support, and living-wage green-collar jobs in communities that need them most.**

- **Incubate community-owned, green commercial development and redevelopment projects.**

- **Create Employer Incentives to set-aside permanent (not just temporary) jobs for targeted populations**

- **Regional "WPA" program for green economy projects**

- **Adopt living wage ordinance**

- **Employ strategies to limit predatory lending to reduce its impact on vulnerable populations -need to research tools**

- **Develop contracting standards/policies for public agencies to support minority owned businesses and locally owned businesses**

- **Support the Federal Employee Free Choice Act which would enable working people to bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions by restoring workers' freedom to choose for themselves whether to join a union.**

Topic: Universal Access to Opportunity

- **Promote the needs-based Shared Responsibility Plan for improving access to higher education.**

- **Support the next iteration of the Healthy Kids Plan.**

- **Guarantee tuition for state schools to students with a certain minimum GPA/performance level.**

- **Work with hospitals on a regional provider tax matched with Medicaid dollars for health care for kids.**

- **Incentive for health care providers to provide for low-income - pS-G-Em, Sliding Scale, Preventative care**

Topic: Resource Distribution

- **Regional revenue sharing of urban renewal area resources or property tax resources**

- **Target public funding to historically underserved populations.**

- **Create a regional parks district in E. Multnomah County to provide sustainable parks and recreation resources –or- support the creation of a statewide parks and recreation district, signed into place by the governor.**

- **Regional consumption tax**

Topic: Government Accountability & Transparency

- Integrate equity objectives into comprehensive plans. Use Portland Plan process as pilot and integrate equity criteria developed through PSU Social Bottom Line Project and develop a tracking system to ensure accountability.

- Produce a "Report Card" that highlights progress, or lack of progress, on achieving Regional Equity Action Agenda.

- Advocate for the funding of community organizations to conduct outreach to culturally specific communities and low-income communities to engage in public decision-making processes.

- Advocate that some jurisdictions pilot test Participatory Budgeting

- Create an Equity Political Action Committee

- Support City Council reform so elected by district

- Create regional governance structure for schools

- Create a clearinghouse where citizens and organizations can go to discuss/learn/participate in regional governance/planning/etc

Topic: Quality Schools with Mixed Use

- Provide Incentives to Encourage Experienced Teachers to Serve at Underachieving Schools

- Create School gardens in low-income schools and use the garden as an integrated curriculum.

- Give schools resources to make schools community focal point for planning, jobs, gardening, recreation, and open space in the community

- Change the state funding formula to have funding follow the student, rather than the district, and to additionally 'weight' students more in need

- Increase the teaching of both vocational skills, college-preparation and allocate a portion of State Schools Aid to Support School District Mentoring Programs

- Increase funding for school lunch programs, P.E., and the teaching of cultural competency

- Guaranteed affordable child care/early childhood education

- Turn Schools into mixed-used buildings; community spaces for 24/7 activities

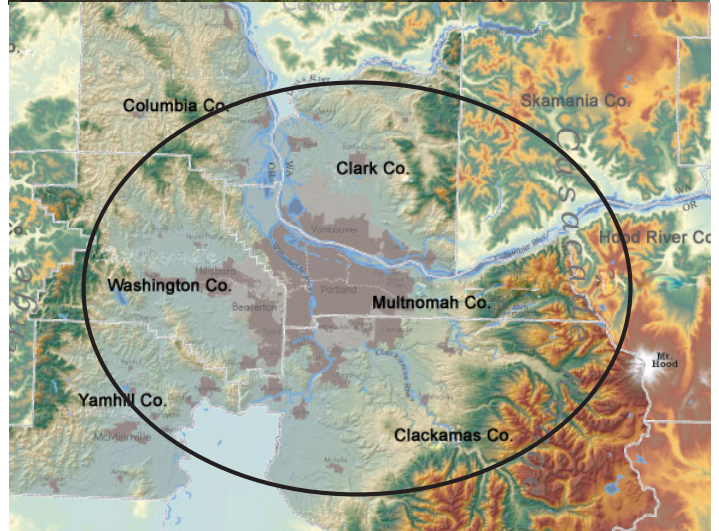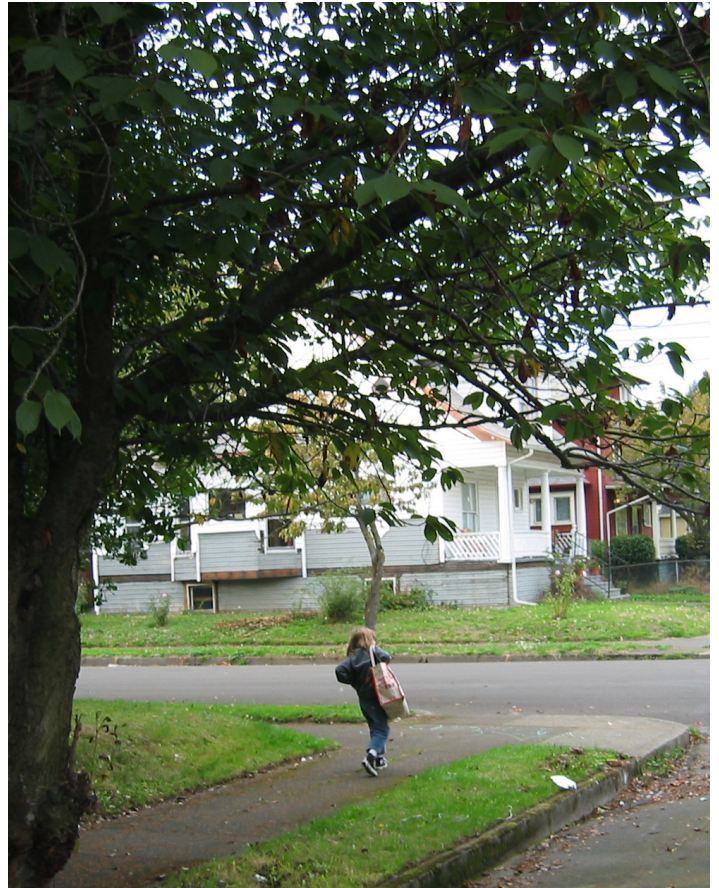# BUILDING AN
EQUITY ACTION AGENDA

So Where are we going from here.... The Regional Livability Summit will help to determine what the Agenda looks like..... Participants will work in six breakout groups to determine the most promising strategies:

- **Building a Sustainable Economy: Green Jobs and Green, Community-Owned Enterprises**
- **Creating and Preserving Quality Affordable Housing**
- **Achieving Equitable Transportation and Affordable Transit Oriented Development**
- **Accounting for Social Equity and Opportunity**
- **Encouraging Asset and Wealth Building**
- **Schools as Community Sustainability Centers**

The discussions at the Summit will help us further refine these strategies and give us direction as we finalize the Regional Equity Action Agenda.

Through public policy change and other solutions, the Equity Action Agenda will aim to ensure that future development is fair for all communities.

We are committed to moving this Agenda forward with ongoing workgroups comprised of citizens, CLF members, and partner organizations. We hope that Summit participants will become the foundation for these workgroups.

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Please go to our website at **www.clfuture.org** to see a full list of CLF member organizations and for more information about CLF's work, news on regional issues, or to volunteer.

Take Charge of Tomorrow - Get Connected Today!

Please call CLF to order a copy of the Equity Atlas or go to:
www.equityatlas.org

THE REGIONAL EQUITY ATLAS
Metropolitan Portland's Geography of Opportunity