

**MAKING  
EQUITY  
REAL**



## A Framework for Equity

Advancing equity in Portland means changing the way the city works – how city government and partners make decisions, where they invest, how they engage with Portlanders and each other and how we measure success.

This chapter of the Portland Plan provides a framework for advancing equity—long-term policies and short-term actions. It includes information on what to do—close disparity gaps and focus on equitable outcomes; how to do it—improve participation, build partnerships and implement a racial and ethnic justice initiative; and how to stay accountable. It sets forth a new way of working that puts achieving equity front and center and identifies some of the specific actions needed to ensure that the Portland Plan’s equity foundation is strong and supportive.

This framework can be easily adopted by any of the lead or supporting agencies to meet their particular needs. The specific actions in each agency’s equity plan will need to be tailored to meet their specific circumstances.

## EQUITY DEFINED

Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. We have a shared fate as individuals within a community and communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all.

### Making Equity Real

We make the promise of opportunity real when:

- All Portlanders have access to a high-quality education, living wage jobs, safe neighborhoods, a healthy natural environment, efficient public transit, parks and green spaces, decent housing, and healthy food.
- The benefits of growth and change are equitably shared across our communities. No one community is overly burdened by our region's growth.
- All Portlanders and communities fully participate in and influence public decision-making.
- Portland is a place where your future is not limited by your race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, income, where you were born, or where you live.

### Why Equity Matters

#### Prosperity

We all win when everyone achieves their full potential. We all win when business can thrive in our community, when children graduate from school and when we all can access healthy food sources. Our shared prosperity depends on everyone's participation.

#### Resilience

Without healthy, thriving, prepared people we cannot achieve our highest goals, implement our best plans for dealing with climate change or secure Portland's position in the global economy. Without a city that is physically designed to last, future generations will not benefit. We want a city where we are better on a good day so we can bounce back from a bad day. That requires everyone's well-being, everyone thriving, everyone participating.

#### Prevention

Meaningfully connecting everyone to community institutions, programs and services prevents problems from occurring in the first place. The cost of doing nothing is profound, both socially and fiscally.

#### Leadership

Just as Portland has led innovation in environmental sustainability and green technology, Portland can be a leader in social sustainability. By focusing on ways to build equity and accountability, we can lead the development of 21st century business practice and tools — and that has value in a knowledge-based economy.



Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in social structures over time to ensure that all communities can experience their vision for success.

## CLOSE THE GAPS

### We will ...

- Recognize the multiple, overlapping identities that affect access to opportunities.
- Collect culturally-specific metrics, alternative data sources, and research methods.
- Examine and revise policies and practices that may appear fair, but marginalize some and perpetuate disparities.
- Raise awareness and understanding of critical disparities by City staff and other Portlanders, and build capacity to identify the nature and extent of critical disparities, in an inclusive manner.
- Identify what works. Prioritize policies, programs and actions to make measurable progress towards more equitable outcomes.
- Tailor disparity reduction approaches to the primary needs of each at-risk community.

### 5-Year Action Plan

1	Complete and move forward with implementation of the City of Portland Civil Rights Title VI Program Plan to remove barriers and conditions that prevent minority, low-income, limited English proficiency and other disadvantaged groups and persons from receiving access, participation and benefits from City programs, services and activities.
2	Assign responsibilities to City bureaus to identify, track, educate and act on critical disparities in self-identified communities.
3	Share data between City and partners. Invite self-identified communities to provide information and sources unique to them.
4	Develop and apply a set of equity tools to evaluate the development and implementation of all City policies, programs and business operations to close critical disparities
5	Initiate a racial/ethnic focus, using well-documented disparities. Apply lessons and adapt tools from this initial focus to other historically underrepresented and underserved communities.



*The Portland Plan embraces the letter and spirit of federal civil rights laws, including the Civil Rights Act (CRA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The equity framework is guided by the principles of Title VI of the CRA and ADA, which promote fairness and equity in the programs, services and activities of public entities, including the opportunity for participation. Identifying disparities to close the gaps, delivering equitable public services and engaging meaningfully with the community are all critical components of complying with federal civil rights law, along with reporting and accountability requirement.*

## DELIVER EQUITABLE PUBLIC SERVICES

### We will ...

- Assess social impacts of public services and investments on communities with critical disparities.
- Develop mitigation strategies to resolve identified disparities in levels of service.
- Reallocate public resources to address critical disparities.
- Track and report spending and actual public service delivery measures geographically and by community.
- Report to City Council.

### 5-Year Action Plan

6	Continue and expand the practice of tracking and reporting budgetary expenditures and levels of service by district and selected communities and map proposed infrastructure investments that address unmet levels of service. Report social impacts and mitigation strategies in the annual City Council budget process.
7	Assess social impacts of local public services provided by the City of Portland and Portland Plan partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Correlate and track geographic area and community disparities in public services, using existing levels of service and measures of performance.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Evaluate the benefits and burdens of urban renewal on communities using best practices of racial and social justice impact assessment.</li> </ul>
8	Prioritize investment in public structures to address disparities and improve performance. Devise and apply mitigation strategies, including changes to levels of service, risk assessments and resource allocation — budgetary, staff and programmatic attention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a.</b> Apply triple bottom line business case analysis for repair, maintenance and/or replacement of infrastructure. Mitigate the risk of not meeting equitable levels of service, while also ensuring reliability, quality and safety.</li> <li><b>b.</b> Monitor and continually improve the Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy for achievement of equity goals while avoiding involuntary displacement.</li> <li><b>c.</b> Work with Portland Plan partners to develop policies, programs and delivery mechanism that reduce critical disparities in all public services.</li> </ul>

## ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

### We will ...

- Be transparent and accountable, with public engagement throughout the policy making process — from setting priorities to implementing programs and evaluating their success.
- Build capacity for people to participate and ensure broad inclusion in decision-making and service level negotiations. Recruit, train and appoint minority members to city advisory boards who represent the city's diverse population.
- Provide early engagement of community members and resources, to develop programs that effectively respond to their needs and priorities.
- Hold culturally appropriate venues and forums.

### 5-Year Action Plan

9	Expand and build upon community-based leadership training programs to build community organizing capacity and the capacity for people to engage in shared governance, focusing on underrepresented and underserved communities.
10	Develop and implement a coordinated language and cultural interpretation strategy and program for the City and partner agencies.
11	Implement recommendations of the City of Portland Public Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) to include residents in decision-making, advisory committees and technical teams.
12	Develop a community-wide conversation on equity and elevation of racial justice.
13	Ask residents to assess well-being and equity in City services. Use the City Auditor's Biannual Resident Satisfaction Survey, if available.

## BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

### We will ...

- Build relationships with public and private sector partners around diversity and equity — learn from one another to advance equity objectives through complementary work.
- Leverage the skills and expertise of partner organizations, agencies and private sector leaders to research and develop innovative tools and methods.
- Clarify service responsibilities and synergies, and report on progress over time.

### 5-Year Action Plan

14	Inventory current practices among the Portland Plan partner agencies.
15	Strengthen collaboration among City bureaus, partners, equity advocates, and the community to fully integrate equity in decision-making.
16	Periodically, convene Portland Plan implementers to coordinate equity work tasks and devise mutual accountability measures.

## LAUNCH A RACIAL/ETHNIC JUSTICE INITIATIVE

### We will ...

- Build the skills, capacity, and technical expertise to address institutionalized racism and intercultural competency.
- Use this foundation of knowledge and tools to address disparities for other underserved communities.
- Engage diverse constituencies to discuss race, disparities and public services.
- Actively work to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in public agency hiring, retention and contracting.

### 5-Year Action Plan

17	Educate and train public agency staff in institutionalized racism and intercultural competency, and hold staff accountable in performance reviews. Build skills and technical capacity to address institutionalized racism in policy-making, program development, and evaluation. Educate staff on the legal requirements and implementing regulations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
18	Hold public forums on race and the importance of equity. Continue and advance such forums as restorative listening and the Race Talks series, in collaboration with communities.
19	Recruit, train and appoint minority members to City advisory boards who represent the city's diverse population.
20	Show measurable progress in hiring, retention and contracting at all levels of public agencies. Implement business equity plans to increase purchasing and contracting from MWESBs and firms committed to a diverse workforce.

## INCREASE INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

### We will ...

- Meet and exceed the requirements of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and related implementing regulations by allocating appropriate resources and developing the capacity of staff to support compliance.
- Continually report out and make available equity outcomes and compliance reports.

### 5-Year Action Plan

21	Evaluate business equity plans of City bureaus and partner agencies for their overall effectiveness in promoting workforce diversity.
22	Implement and produce required civil rights reviews and reporting to comply with Civil Rights Act Title VI program plan. Build on lessons from implementation of the program plan for the Portland Bureau of Transportation.
23	Report on progress toward ADA compliance, including redevelopment of the City of Portland's ADA Transition Plans and Self Evaluations and implementation efforts. Work with the Portland Commission on Disability to identify broader measures and outcomes for equity goals on disabilities.
24	Evaluate public information, requirements and fees for ease of entry for diverse communities to access to community resources and business opportunities.
25	Develop key indicators to track community disparities, and report performance on those indicators periodically.



