



Infrastructure Action Team Equity Workshop

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Infrastructure Action Team Equity Workshop 2021

Workshop agenda

- Why are we here
- Review of Oakland plan equity commitment
- Ground in history
- Workshop equity commitments + outputs
- Next steps

Equity commitment statement

The Oakland Neighborhood Planning Process is committed to creating an inclusive environment where diverse voices are active in all aspects of mutual learning, engagement, and planning.

This requires a culture of inclusion in which ALL individuals feel respected and are treated fairly; and where different viewpoints, opinions, thoughts, and ideas are not only encouraged but embraced. This commitment is critical to deepening our relevance, credibility, and effectiveness, and it will strengthen our mission to advance a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive.

The civic and economic vitality of our neighborhood, city and region, depend on inclusive, equitable, and accessible opportunities for everyone

Commitment to the process

We view this commitment as an ongoing process through which each Action Team (AT) will periodically:

- **Examine where you are:** action team reflects on current state of equity within respective topic (i.e. community, mobility, infrastructure)
- **Map your route:** action team redirects priorities based on new shared information, state of the nation, etc.
- **Ask your stakeholders for direction:** action team consults members on new priorities and progresses accordingly

An inequitable history



History cont'd.,

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Liberty_(Pittsburgh)#Decline

Decline [\[edit \]](#)

East Liberty's decline was precipitated by a series of government policies relating to the underwriting of mortgages for homes commonly referred to as **redlining**. The residential areas immediately surrounding East Liberty's main business district **consisted primarily of tightly packed wood frame homes built in the mid-to-late 1800s.**^[9] In 1937, The George F Cram Company undertook the creation of federally sponsored surveys and maps which ultimately became the 'redlined' maps used by banks for underwriting. The Cram Maps **listed this housing stock as "obsolete," noted the "infiltration of Jews... and Negroes"**^[9], and the large number of people on relief (the New Deal version of Welfare) as justification for redlining the area.^[10] The result of this redlining was two-fold; first, it made accessing conventional forms of credit for home renovations difficult; and second, it fostered segregation of low income minorities in a neighborhood that was clearly racially diverse in 1937.^{[11][12]}

Review of materials



History of the Hill District

Chateau: A Fragmented History



How Urban Renewal Crushed PGH**

Health effects of past housing discrimination (NPR)**

**Output: *each* action team to
produce their own equity goals**

Community Action team example

Arts & Culture

Equity Goal: Opportunity to acknowledge, maintain, and highlight the extraordinary contributions of diverse artists and artistic disciplines that make up the fabric of public art in Oakland while intentionally engaging with diverse contemporary artists and co-empowering them and the community to lift up additional voices and identities

Community Plan goals:

1. Art is accessible
2. Art is diverse
3. Art is new

Workshopping equity goals

1. What comes to mind when thinking of “equity”?
1. What are some examples of inequities/commonly encountered barriers that show up in your space?
 - a. Ex. inaccessible design, cost of transit and availability of options
1. If you were to counteract those inequities, how would you articulate concrete goals within this space?
 - a. Ex. universal design
1. How could this neighborhood planning process reduce/eliminate these barriers?
 - a. Ex. cost protections, increased access, additional modes of transportation, etc.

Oakland Plan Staff feedback

What comes to mind when thinking of equity?

- Making sure that any improvement to the infrastructure are beneficial to all
- Balancing improvement that help the most while helping place with urgent need but less impact
- PAAC has an "Equity Index of Mobility Need" which includes eight populations of higher mobility need
- How do we lower barriers for people who need it most?
- Transit shouldn't have to compensate for other systems' failures to be equitable
- Everyone having the same opportunity to good quality of life factors, even if that means accommodations are put in place or extra funding/attention is given to certain areas or groups who need it more
- Equity is access to quality resources across the board
- Think of things more in terms inequity than equity - it's easier to define an illness than it is to define 'health'; easier for me to define inequities than to truly define equity

Oakland Plan feedback cont'd...

What are some examples of inequities/commonly encountered barriers that show up in your space?

- Access to quality green space within walking distance of your home
- Poor housing stock leads to higher utility bills for residents aka energy burden
- Prioritization of wealthy communities for infrastructure investment
- Disproportionate impacts of climate change on low income communities and communities of color
- Additional impacts due to poor environmental conditions such as increased such as poor air quality and exacerbated heat island effect
- Disproportionately high energy burdens in low income households and African American households
- Poor quality of housing stock and lack of affordable housing
- Climate 'solutions' such as EVs, renewables, energy efficiency, etc. are unaffordable and can accompany gentrification
- Density help making economic decision for infrastructure but if some portion of the neighborhood are less dense because of neglect and redlining, we ll perpetuate a vicious cycle if we let economical factor lead
- Cost of transit, location of transit, length of transit trip
- Lack of environmental quality - trees, impervious area, biodiversity, clean air, water, soil, healthy food, housing (things like mold and indoor air quality, basement backups)
- Access to open space including physical, safety, & social barriers
- Tends to cost more to live in a good environment which affects health & quality of life - especially in PGH in terms of risky housing -landslides, flooding, undermined / subsidence, close to highways & pollution

Oakland Plan Staff feedback

If you were to encounter those inequities, how would you articulate concrete goals within this space?

- Making sure we identify all the needs before starting to prioritize. and acknowledge why the need exist in the first place. Is it something new, is it a consequence of past failure, change of population.
- Ensuring we have several factors for prioritization including an equity angle to avoid perpetuating past mistake
- Reduce transit fares, locate jobs and housing close to transit, more high quality parks, green space, trees in areas that lack, programs for green jobs & training, universal design
- At a minimum, fair distribution of city resources or explore the reprioritization of resources for marginalized neighborhoods as well as
- Improved health and environmental indicators, Improved health and environmental indicators
- Workforce training/certification programs for jobs in the 'green economy
- Reduced energy consumption and reduced energy burden
- Strengthening codes and incentives to address CCHE issues and impacts

Oakland Plan Staff feedback

How could this neighborhood planning process reduce/eliminate these barriers?

- I am worried it all will come down to funding available. can we have develop a smart approach to investment during the process that ensure equity?
- Can we bundle smaller intervention to make more economical sense
- For energy, if we were to have a new district system, let s ensure we create program that reduce energy needs in other area
- Embracing density
- Improving walkability, prioritize affordable housing, access to \$ and education re utilities, energy, health, sustainability, prioritize funding for public infrastructure in disadvantaged communities
- Improved city-wide programs (say, for street trees & maintenance) that tie their efforts to equity. We should
- Create systematic plans for collaboration and projects for improvement
- Systematize city government programs as opposed to doing big one-off projects that can lead to "green gentrification" in their targeted efforts
- Develop/implement plan such as a ReLeaf strategy focusing on underserved areas
- Prioritize funding for public infrastructure in underserved communities

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Discussion notes...

- Need data on who is traveling to and from Oakland
- How does Oakland transportation infrastructure serve in the equity of other neighborhoods (being a large workforce epicenter)
 - Limited bus service; need a direct vein from other communities to Oakland - factor limits culture and other social growth in the neighborhood
 - What neighborhoods do/do not have access to Oakland
 - South Oakland residents excluded from BRT; lost transit loop ~10 yrs ago
- Inequity regarding tree canopy; ~20% tree canopy in Oakland; air pollution mitigation, heat reduction, stormwater management have an impact on quality of life and overall health
 - Challenging to commit folks to nurturing trees; financial means to maintain sidewalks
- Accessible parking, adequate spaces for access vehicles
- Can we increase space adjacent to sidewalks + improve the quality of sidewalks
- Equity in housing and homeownership; increased housing prices due to over occupancy, affordability, and renters market
 - Value/quality of housing has decreased
 - Tenant vs Homeowner divide

As an **ACTION TEAM** that seeks to counter a community legacy of inequity, we commit to:

1. Open space

- a. Equally distributed, higher quality, more inviting
- b. Accessible green hillside near West Oakland + Uptown
- c. Greenway development (Lawn street)
- d. Park vs playground “language” dictates access to funding

2. Tree canopy

- a. Development standards that require more tree canopy and stormwater management
- b. Inequity regarding tree canopy; ~20% tree canopy in Oakland; air pollution mitigation, heat reduction, stormwater management - are equitably improved and distributed with an emphasis on residents
 - i. Challenging to commit folks to nurturing trees; financial means to maintain sidewalks

3. Habitat restoration

- a. Process for converting abandoned/condemned properties into official green spaces/parks

4. Stormwater

- a. Water efficiency efforts for homeowners and tenants
- b. Oakland is uphill and has a responsibility to other communities for sustainability stormwater practices (and Panther/Junction Hollow)
- c. Fight for the space! Green infrastructure in curb changes, street repaving, green strips, etc.
- d. Water retention program in Oakland
- e. Water retention for parks (make a priority)
- f. incorporating green infrastructure into design decisions (streets/curbs/etc...)

As an **ACTION TEAM** that seeks to counter a community legacy of inequity, we commit to:

1. Energy + Utilities

- a. Burying utility lines through city property (to preserve tree canopy)
- b. Cost burdens on families
 - i. energy burden in Pittsburgh is some of the highest in the country- #2 for black households, #5 for low income house, and #6 highest for renters

2. Climate action plan

- a. Is potable water not part of this groups focus? Lead lines are definitely an equity consideration (Esp. related to the owner / tenant split benefits.) PWSA is making progress on replacement, but there are portions of Oakland that have not yet been touched: <http://lead.pgh2o.com/your-water-service-line/planned-water-service-line-replacement-map/>
- b. Wherever possible, combining investments/programmatic ideas along these priorities so that work is happening concurrently, improving things on multiple fronts (across objectives)
- c. Communication between departments and agencies on projects/planning
- d. Opportunity for institutions to take an active role in terms of development, information, advocacy

3. Air quality

- a. Relatively awful and makes Andrea LK want to move
- b. Main source of pollution different for parts of Oakland due to topography (trains, Braddock plants, transportation vehicles, etc.)
- c. Funding for removing highways that split communities of color (how to mitigate air and noise pollution)
- d. Intersection between climate, equity and air quality (fossil fuel free economy by electrifying and decarbonizing Oakland)

4. Digital network

- a. Information divide!
- b. Wifi access HUGE equity issues (especially for folks with disabilities who depend on wifi for tech aids ot improve quality of life)

Questions?

Equity next steps

- Review outputs of Workshop and return to action team
- Develop Equity Action Plan for Oakland Neighborhood Plan
- Select Equity Ambassador from each action team
- Host bi-monthly Equity TAG meetings with newly selected Ambassadors



Oakland Plan next steps

- **Review input from EngagePGH!**
 - Shortly, we will share a folder with all the raw data from EngagePGH, and a summarized report of the data
- **Learn more** from the various resources on the City website (<https://pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/oakland>)
- **Continue participating** in the Infrastructure Action Team meetings
 - The 2nd Wednesday of every month, next meeting February 10th @ 5 PM
- **Invite others** to join the infrastructure Action Team (<https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/oakland/oakland-signup>)