In 2007, Coalition for a Livable Future and Portland State University Population Research Center and Institute for Portland Metropolitan Studies unveiled the groundbreaking Regional Equity Atlas. One of the first of its kind in the country, the Atlas examines how benefits and burdens of development are distributed in the region. It reveals gaps in access to housing, quality education, parks, transit, and food – foundations for individual and community health, prosperity, and sustainability – by some of our region’s most vulnerable populations.

With the Regional Equity Atlas in hand, CLF used workshops, community forums, one-on-one meetings, letters, and blogs to share the findings with policymakers, community and business leaders, and residents as broadly as possible throughout the region. The goal of this outreach effort was threefold:

1. To synthesize ideas and narrow the list, volunteers started a community dialogue about solutions.
2. To learn more about the regional Equity Action Agenda initiatives to finalize the Agenda.
3. To achieve true sustainability, we must build upon our leadership in green development and go further — toward full inclusion, toward reduced disparities, toward equality. We must pay special attention to and work with the people in our communities who encounter barriers to opportunity that cannot be overcome through hard work and perseverance alone. We must tear down the walls that block opportunity so that all residents in our region can enjoy, contribute to, and participate in creating a healthy future.

Through our outreach efforts, we engaged over 3,000 individuals and gathered hundreds of proposals for how to address inequality in our region. To synthesize ideas and narrow the list, volunteers made up the Equity Action Agenda Committee and evaluated proposals using the following criteria:

**PREVALENCE:** Solution addresses a problem that is found throughout the region or portion of the region.

**SERIOUSNESS:** Solution addresses an issue that is of high importance, and has a profound effect on quality of life.

**ACTIONABLE:** There is a concrete solution that will achieve a measurable result both in the long term and the short term.

**CROSS-ISSUE:** Solution addresses multiple issues or brings together various sectors.

**ACHIEVABLE:** Solution is feasible and sustainable in terms of stakeholder buy-in, cost, timeline, and its capacity to build on efforts already underway.

**RESONANT:** Solution aligns with the regional equity principles and CLF mission.

The third and culminating stage of our outreach occurred at the CLF 2008 Annual Regional Livability Summit. Over 300 participants worked in multidisciplinary groups whose topics were formulated around the most promising strategies that emerged from our community outreach:

A PLAN FOR ADVANCING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE PORTLAND-VANCOUVER AREA SO THAT ALL PEOPLE CAN PARTICIPATE AND PROSPER

1. Building a Sustainable Economy: Green Jobs and Green, Community-Owned Enterprises
2. Creating and Preserving Quality Affordable Housing
3. Achieving Equitable Transportation and Affordable Transit-Oriented Development
4. Accounting for Social Equity and Opportunity
5. Encouraging Asset and Wealth Building
6. Schools as Community Sustainability Centers
7. Crafting Equitable Climate Policy

Following the Summit, CLF staff conducted research on best practices and met with organizations that are leading campaigns on emerging Equity Action Agenda initiatives to finalize the Agenda.

LEARN MORE & JOIN THE EFFORT

To learn more about the Regional Equity Atlas Project, including the findings of the groundbreaking research, or to find out how you can get more involved in the growing movement for regional equity, visit [www.equityatlas.org](http://www.equityatlas.org).

**PRINCIPLES OF REGIONAL EQUITY**

1. All residents have access to opportunities for meeting basic needs and advancing their health and well-being.
2. The distribution of benefits and burdens of growth, economic wealth, and political capital are equitably distributed, within and between generations, across the region.
3. All residents and communities are involved fully as equal partners in public decision-making.

To achieve true sustainability, we must build upon our leadership in green development and go further — toward full inclusion, toward reduced disparities, toward equality. We must pay special attention to and work with the people in our communities who encounter barriers to opportunity that cannot be overcome through hard work and perseverance alone. We must tear down the walls that block opportunity so that all residents in our region can enjoy, contribute to, and participate in creating a healthy future.

Our region is known for smart, innovative urban planning, leadership in the sustainability movement, and exceptional public participation in civic life. We believe that if we tap into these talents and work together, in a way that includes ALL communities, we can build a better, healthier future for everyone. Sustainability means that everyone is engaged in our region’s prosperity, civic life and connections to both built and natural environments. This is what the Regional Equity Action Agenda hopes to accomplish.
Each of us deserves the support of our land and community so that we are able to grow, blossom, and in due time, nurture the community and land. Regionally prosperous with every genuine personal success. Therefore, an essential element of our approach is to develop and promote collaborative leadership originating from communities that have been deprived through marginalization and systemic abuse. Yet, the success of the Equity Agenda is ultimately dependent on how well the benefits of each initiative transform opportunity and diminish inequity—particularly race and income inequity—in every resident’s life.

HEALTHY PLACES INITIATIVES: INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Initiative 1. Secure ongoing local, regional, and state revenue to develop and preserve affordable homes to meet regional needs.

Support the Oregon Housing Alliance legislative agenda aimed to achieve $300 million in new funding for housing.

Advocate for increasing the portion of urban renewal district funding for affordable housing.

Initiative 2. Promote strategies for mass transit, financial access, affordable goods, as well as inclusive neighborhood investments that are linked with parks and natural areas within walking distance of residents.

Secure full funding for Metro’s Regional Revolving Loan Fund and work to ensure that loan recipients’ plans to build homes, create commercial opportunities, and invest in projects that are linked with parks and natural areas within walking distance of residents.

Promote incentives and policy changes that increase the linkage between affordable housing, healthy communities, and expanded opportunities for equitable living.

Support incentives for employee-assisted housing that links to support workers’ ability to live close to their workplaces, prioritizing low-wage workers.

Promote policy changes that will increase efficient use of land, lower construction costs, make housing more affordable, and increase options for permanent greenways and habitat protection, and other public uses.

Support mandatory and incentive zoning strategies to increase affordable housing supply and defend affordability throughout the region.

Support strategies that create and ensure home ownership opportunities in perpetuity.

Link investments in affordable housing with investments in public greenspaces, including projects that connect beneficial greenspaces with affordable housing.

Promote public policy that increases opportunities for urban agriculture (home, school, community gardens).

Promote public policy that increases opportunities for affordable housing.

Promote policies that increase opportunities for public investment in affordable housing.

Link investments in affordable housing with other public uses.

Promote cultural competency and equity in the development of affordable housing and affordable housing policies.

Healthy Equity: A framework used to address the existence and absence of systemic health inequities in regional planning and decision-making.

Glossary: "Equity Agenda leaders refer to a set of policies, programs, and projects that are designed to promote equity by reducing barriers to health care and economic opportunity, increasing access to economic opportunity, and addressing the root causes of social and economic inequality."