


The ABC's of Equity

What you need to know
about prioritizing
equity within climate
action planning



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Executive Summary

Background Picture taken by Ducan Mullen

We would like to acknowledge that the Methow Valley is the traditional land which has been stewarded by the Methow People since time immemorial. We did not ask to be here and this land still remains unceded.

In Methow Valley, the changing climate has already impacted the quality of life. The Methow Valley Citizens Council started the community-wide process of developing a Climate Action Plan by assembling a Task Force representing the community's sectors. This plan aims to determine strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change and build resilient, adaptable communities that can actively work on these preventative strategies. The problem here is the need for integration and practice of equity within each section of the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan because Climate Change disproportionately impacts Communities of Color. To ensure all Methow Valley residents are justly represented and supported, equity must be fully incorporated. This means equity is not only applied as a lens; it is put into practice in every stage of the process.



Smoke is attempting to break through an inversion over the Mosquito prescribed fire in Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park in California.



Photo capturing the Carlton Complex Fire. (Guard, 2014)

This project includes developing recommendations based on various comprehensive and Climate Action Plans by addressing what each plan did well to incorporate equity, and what could have been done better. Guidelines have also been developed on specifics to the writing process. This project is essential for the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan. If the plan is going to be comprehensive and effective, it will need to address social and environmental issues that impact all stakeholders. Understanding each stakeholder's needs is integral to creating a Climate Action Plan that is representative of all those who live within the Methow Valley, particularly the most vulnerable and historically marginalized community members. Recommendations need to come from varying perspectives for the most equitable solutions. For this to work, special consideration needs to be given to those who are hit first and worst by Climate Change. Thus, multi-solving for equity in the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan is essential to everyone living in the Methow Valley currently, and for future generations who will live in Methow Valley.

Equity in this report has been defined as providing support to disadvantaged groups, so ensure the same opportunities and benefits for action for all.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Accountability:

Honor the land and respect Indigenous knowledge by learning and listening without pushing an agenda. Work with the Colville tribe and compensate accordingly for their time and expertise. Scrutinize suggestions that impact natural resources farther downriver and recognize the implications of this plan beyond Methow Valley. Recognize the plan as a living document.

Addressing hate:

Acknowledge systemic racism and discrimination along with the position of power held by the taskforce in drafting and implementing the plan. Prevent stereotyping of groups or individuals and microaggressions in the plan.

Community Engagement, Outreach, and Accessibility:

Begin with the needs of the most vulnerable and ensure enough time for an equitable process, transparency, and communication in multiple languages across multiple avenues. Represent the community without tokenization through diversifying leadership, remain aware of various political perspectives, and form diverse focus groups.

Economic Development:

Focus on jobs that are local, difficult to outsource, and support sustainable livelihoods. Create a food recovery program, support the reuse and repair economy, and prioritize funding projects that help the most vulnerable populations.

Education:

Educate readers on the importance of equity within the plan, the urgency of climate change and carbon emission reduction, and coordinate with local schools to improve climate literacy with emphasis on climate justice and equity.

Employment & Labor:

Support programs that enable local contractors to diversify and compete in new markets, ensure disadvantaged communities are aware of and properly trained to meet the needs of jobs in the new green economy, and connect them with green job opportunities.

Environmental Justice:

Support residents from a variety of backgrounds, identities, and financial statuses. Invest in areas that have been under invested in, prepare for natural disasters, and highlight the different amenities available.

Food Justice:

Limit carbon emissions from food transport, focus on health, equity, and local economic benefits of food by increasing community gardens and ensuring the health and safety of local farmworkers.

Health:

Acknowledge that health is connected to a person's environment. Address public health risks by providing more opportunities for local health care, specifically for low-income groups, and enhance natural disaster-warning systems.

Housing:

Adapt to climate change without exacerbating displacement of housing-insecure and cost-burdened residents by lowering energy costs, improving energy efficiency in existing homes, increasing affordable housing, maintaining diverse housing options, and incentivising second home owners to support community housing.

Identifying opportunities of change:

Support groups disproportionately impacted by climate change, set up programs to create structural change, be cautious of renaming/naming things and places without recognizing the original names associated with the area.

Transportation:

Provide affordable, accessible public transit, make walking, biking and carpool options more accessible, switch to more efficient or hybrid vehicles for company transportation, and support new trail development.

Youth Development:

Provide opportunities for local youth to avoid displacement and continue engaging students in climate work.



Picture taken by Ducan Mullen

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES

1. Provide working definitions of equity, sustainability, resiliency, mitigation, and others.
2. Organize the plan to be accessible and easily understood by all potential readers.
3. Understandable by all potential readers by writing in short, precise sentences, removing extra words, etc. Explain all processes, highlight main points, use lists, add colors, pictures, images, graphs, and tables to break up dense text.

Introduction



[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/6/6c/MountShuksanPictureLake.JPG/1200px-MountShuksanPictureLake.](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/6/6c/MountShuksanPictureLake.JPG/1200px-MountShuksanPictureLake)

This project is intended to support the Task Force in creating an equitable, comprehensive Climate Action Plan. Historically, marginalized and vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Communities of color and those of low socioeconomic status often have the least access to resources and are underrepresented in decision-making processes. Equity is crucial to climate action planning. The needs and knowledge of the entire community, particularly those who are most vulnerable, must be considered for the plan to be successful.

The Planning team and Task Force members are working to further implement equity in the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan. The planning process began a year ago with a workshop with the PNW climate impacts group from UW, followed by a public workshop in November that gathered community input from over 400 attendees and from an online survey for those not able to attend. The process slowed down due to COVID-19. The Task Force has worked on prioritizing adaptation and resilience. A baseline emissions report is forthcoming so that the process will enter the mitigation phase in the fall. The background chapters of the Climate Action Plan are being drafted. When the task force finalizes the recommended mitigation actions, a draft of the plan will be shared with the public with opportunities for public input. The intention of sharing the plan with the community is to emphasize and practice equity throughout the plan's writing and implementation processes. This project and report aim to give the task to force additional tools to do that successfully.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/3c/Burnt_Bridge_Creek_Autumn_Morning.jpg/1920px-Burnt_Bridge_Creek_Autumn_Morning.jpg

THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are goals proposed by the United Nations in 2015. These 17 goals ensure equity when working together, it is essential to highlight and understand these goals since they relate to the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan's intention. The United Nationsurgently recommends that all countries end poverty, improve health, create access to education, reduce inequality, create economic growth, and address climate change. When reading through the eight Climate Action Plans, our benchmarks and recommendations for making the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan equitable were written to reflect the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) to transform our world:

- | | |
|---|---|
| GOAL 1: No Poverty | GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality |
| GOAL 2: Zero Hunger | GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities |
| GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being | GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production |
| GOAL 4: Quality Education | GOAL 13: Climate Action |
| GOAL 5: Gender Equality | GOAL 14: Life Below Water |
| GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation | GOAL 15: Life on Land |
| GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy | GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions |
| GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth | GOAL 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goal |
| GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | |


	Accountability	Addressing Hate	Community Engagement, Outreach, and Accessibility	Economic Development	Education	Employment & Labor	Environmental Justice	Food Justice	Health/ Healthcare	Housing	Identifying Opportunities of Change	Transportation	Youth Development
Goal 1: No Poverty							X	X		X			
Goal 2: Zero Hunger							X	X					
Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being							X	X	X	X			X
Goal 4: Quality Education	X	X	X		X	X							X
Goal 5: Gender Equality		X				X							X
Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation				X			X		X	X			
Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy				X			X			X		X	
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth				X		X							
Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure				X		X				X		X	
Goal 10: Reduce Inequalities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities			X	X			X	X		X		X	
Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X			
Goal 13: Climate Action			X		X		X						X
Goal 14: Life Below Water							X						
Goal 15: Life on Land							X						
Goal 16 Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	X	X			X		X		X				
Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the goal	X	X	X		X	X		X					X

Our benchmarks and recommendations will reflect the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals within the context of Methow Valley. The Task Force may integrate these suggestions into the framework for creating an equitable plan. These benchmarks, guidelines, and recommendations are part of an effort to integrate and implement equity within the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan. Our recommendations and benchmarks reflect Methow Valley’s specific goals and how strategies from other Climate Action Plans might be used within the Methow Valley context. Many of the things we were looking for within other climate action plans are goals that directly, or indirectly, relate to one or more of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

Background research included examining equity within eight Climate Action Plans and one Comprehensive Plan along with interview Planning Team members who are currently working on the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan.

The plans we examined included the following. We chose each of these plans because they exemplified equity.

- Sustainable Lowell; this plan is a comprehensive plan for the city of Lowell
- Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP)
- The Chicago Climate Action Plan (CCAP)
- The Chicago Climate Action Plan for Nature (CAPN)
- City of Rochester Climate Action Plan
- Our Climate Our Future City of San Diego Climate Action Plan
- Ashland Oregon Climate & Energy Action Plan
- The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan

A scenic mountain landscape with snow-capped peaks, evergreen forests, and a winding road in the foreground. The word "Methodology" is centered in the middle of the image.

Methodology

The primary method we used was benchmarking. Benchmarking will be displayed in both a recommendation list and the creation of guidelines. Our benchmarking will be presented in a table using criteria we have developed from looking at and referencing other Climate Action Plans and comprehensive plans that show either a strong correlation and inclusion of equity and lessons we have drawn from ones that don't.

The plans we use to create our benchmarks included the perspectives of minority populations impacted by the plan acknowledged current inequalities within the city/town/area that the plan covered and addressed those inequalities. The solutions we use as a part of our benchmarks will acknowledge the discrepancies and inequities of previous environmental solutions, especially the impacts of those solutions on communities that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Our benchmarks will act as a template, including category definitions and their contents. Categories were adapted from the Racial Equity Tools website using their planning section's main issues. These were chosen because to be as equitable as possible, it's best to look at the commonalities within a problem, and many injustices lay within the issues listed. We will also include examples from various plans and how each applies to Methow Valley. Our benchmarks are based on seven Climate Action Plan examples and one Comprehensive Plan example, including Oakland, Portland, Lowell, Chicago (CCAP & CAPN), Ashland, Rochester, and San Diego.

In addition to these benchmarks, we also conducted stakeholder interviews with Joshua Porter, Drew Katz, Sarah Brown, and Daisy Purdy.

1. We interviewed Drew Katz, the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Methow Valley Citizens Council, because he is on the planning team and focuses on equity. We interviewed Joshua Porter, the Climate Program Manager, because he wanted to ensure equity will be integrated and implemented in the plan as a planning team member and as our instructor for the Campus Sustainability Planning Studio course.
2. We interviewed Sarah Brown because she is a Methow Valley resident and non-profit leader with valuable insights on equity, experience living in Methow Valley, and work in community health and social services through Room One. She has engaged in public policy and sustainability work through her graduate program at Cornell and as a Fulbright Fellow in Hungary.
3. We interviewed Daisy Purdy because of her work with equity on the Flagstaff Climate Action Plan, and her background in ethnic studies and applied Indigenous Studies as a sociology instructor at Northern Arizona University. We consider Daisy to be an expert in the fields of equity and inclusion and feel sincere gratitude for her time speaking with us and editing the draft of this report.

Our short time frame of two months meant we only had enough time to conduct three stakeholder interviews. Communication through focus groups is one of our recommendations, so these interviews are intended as the beginning of ongoing communication efforts.

We asked each stakeholder from the Methow Valley Citizens Council questions about the goals of equity in the plan during stakeholder interviews. These questions included:

1. What does equity mean to them/you?
2. How do you see equity being part of the plan?
3. How is equity already incorporated into the plan?
4. What is your main worry revolving around equity?
5. How do you plan to make the plan's language accessible to those lacking knowledge around planning and climate language/verbiage?
6. How do you plan to do community outreach to get information on how equity should be a part of the plan?
7. How do you feel that equity within the plan will impact the community and how changes are made?

We included room for follow-up questions within a follow-up email to interview participants. Information that was acquired from the interviews influenced the following criteria used for benchmarking and the recommendations. If the scope and timeframe of this project were increased, we would have interviewed more Task Force members and community members. Throughout the process of writing the plan, speaking with those who are going to be affected by the plan is critical.



Results

Background Picture taken by Ducan Mullen

Benchmarking

This section will include our results from comparing the Oakland, Portland, Lowell, Chicago (CCAP & CAPN), Ashland, Rochester, and San Diego Climate Action Plans. Our categories include accountability, addressing hate, community engagement, outreach, & accessibility, economic development, education, employment & labor, environmental justice, food justice, health, housing, identifying opportunities for change, transportation, and youth development. We based our recommendations and guidelines for a more equitable Climate Action Plan on these results. The following table includes the criteria used to assess each of the plans mentioned above. An “X” in the box indicates that the plan has equitably addressed the criteria. The Racial Equity Tools website (2020) inspired most criteria.

	Accountability	Addressing Hate	Community Engagement, Outreach, and Accessibility	Economic Development	Education	Employment & Labor	Environmental Justice	Food Justice	Health/ Healthcare	Housing	Identifying Opportunities of Change	Transportation	Youth Development
Lowell			X	X		X	X			X		X	
Portland	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Oakland	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Rochester			X		X	X		X		X	X	X	
San Diego	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
CCAP(Chicago)			X	X						X	X	X	
CAPN(Chicago)	X		X		X	X	X	X			X		X
Ashland	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	

Full Chart: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_ZvZS9j2IKNsRNxYCW_bdt8b42LRWa8nxtTsYh-OcLQ/edit#gid=0

Accountability

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP) demonstrates accountability by acknowledging that “Oakland was founded on unceded Chochenyo Ohlone land, the land of Huichin, Confederated Villages of Lisjan.” This holds the City of Oakland accountable for honoring the land they are making a Climate Action Plan for it opens the plan by recognizing the need for the City of Oakland Planners to communicate with and learn from the indigenous groups whose land they are on. (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan has a Green Ribbon Committee comprising businesses and community leaders that review the set goals and add adjustments and improvements. (CCAP.Pdf, n.d.)

The Ashland Oregon Climate & Energy Action Plan recognizes the plan as the beginning of an ongoing, evolving process. It is set to be updated every three years. Progress indicators track equitable implementation of the plan. The plan also acknowledges the responsibility of developed societies to contribute most to greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Equity considerations and indicators are provided within the implementation plan. (Ashland

Accountability recognizes the plan as a fluid document in need of changes as time goes on. Accountability also acknowledges positionality on Indigenous lands and the responsibility to remain aware of impacts on surrounding areas

Acknowledgment of the evolving document, considering public feedback, and including land acknowledgment and equity implementation metrics can all be integrated into the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan.

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS	
1. Disproportionate impacts Does the proposed action generate burdens (including costs), either directly or indirectly, to communities of color or low-income populations? If yes, are there opportunities to mitigate these impacts?	6. Alignment and partnership Does the proposed action align with and support existing communities of color and low-income population priorities, creating an opportunity to leverage resources and build collaborative partnerships?
2. Shared benefits Can the benefits of the proposed action be targeted in progressive ways to reduce historical or current disparities?	7. Relationship building Does the proposed action help foster the building of effective, long-term relationships and trust between diverse communities and local government?
3. Accessibility Are the benefits of the proposed action broadly accessible to households and businesses throughout the community — particularly communities of color, low-income populations, and minority, women and emerging small businesses?	8. Economic opportunity and staff diversity Does the proposed action support communities of color and low-income populations through workforce development, contracting opportunities or the increased diversity of city and county staff?
4. Engagement Does the proposed action engage and empower communities of color and low-income populations in a meaningful, authentic and culturally appropriate manner?	9. Accountability Does the proposed action have appropriate accountability mechanisms to ensure that communities of color, low-income populations, or other vulnerable communities will equitably benefit and not be disproportionately harmed?
5. Capacity building Does the proposed action help build community capacity through funding, an expanded knowledge base or other resources?	

Right: Etiam egestas, dui vel facilisis consequat, massa nibh ultrices nisl, sed sollicitudin diam odio non ante

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan focuses on climate-equity metrics. An equity implementation guide has been created as a companion document for the Climate Action Plan. The following equity considerations were used in both the Portland and Ashland plans. (Armstrong et al., 2016, p.12)

Addressing Hate

Addressing hate includes acknowledging prejudice, privilege, unconscious biases, and other social dynamics that oppress specific demographics and groups, including minoritized Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

The San Diego Plan addresses hate by outlining and acknowledging their past actions and effects on communities, especially minorities. The San Diego plan also has a social equity monitoring reporting system that focuses on identified problems in underserved communities, plans, and implementations. (City of San Diego's Climate Action Plan | Sustainability | City of San Diego Official Website, n.d.)

Systematic racism and discrimination may not be apparent to everyone in the Methow Valley, so it is essential to dig deeper into the history of the Methow Valley and uncover ingrained biases. It will be crucial to take a step back from positions of privilege and observe what power dynamics are still in play.

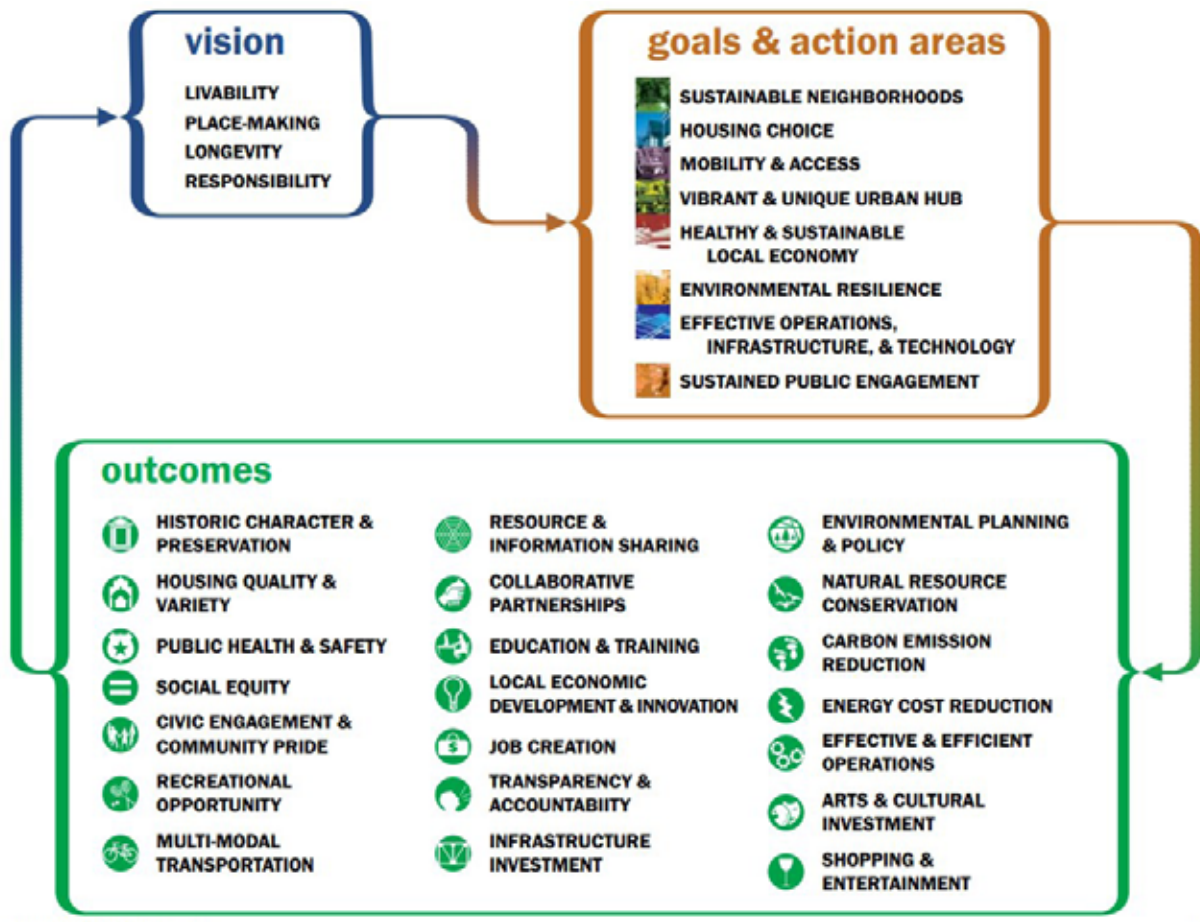
Community Engagement, Accessibility & Outreach

Community engagement, outreach, and accessibility encompasses the inclusion of diverse and underrepresented voices within outreach and planning. This also translates to the accessibility of information within and about the plan through transparency, understandable language, translations, and ample usage of images. All community members must have access and insight into the plan to ensure just representation.

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan has most of its community engagement in the form of an Equity Working Group comprising representatives of minoritized groups. In working with community members, it was found that more time was needed to ensure equitable processes, but pushing back deadlines was well worth it. This plan uses "targeted universalism," which states that solutions should begin with the most vulnerable needs and ultimately benefit all. The plan is translated by request into over ten languages and ensures further accessibility through easily readable graphs and images. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

The Ashland Oregon Climate & Energy Action Plan does a great job of being reader-friendly with the use of graphics, accessible language, and definitions. The creation of the plan included extensive public input, all of which were included in appendices. The planning committee was relatively diverse and intergenerational, including high school students. This plan also named local organizations within and ways they can be involved. (Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan_pages.Pdf, 2017)

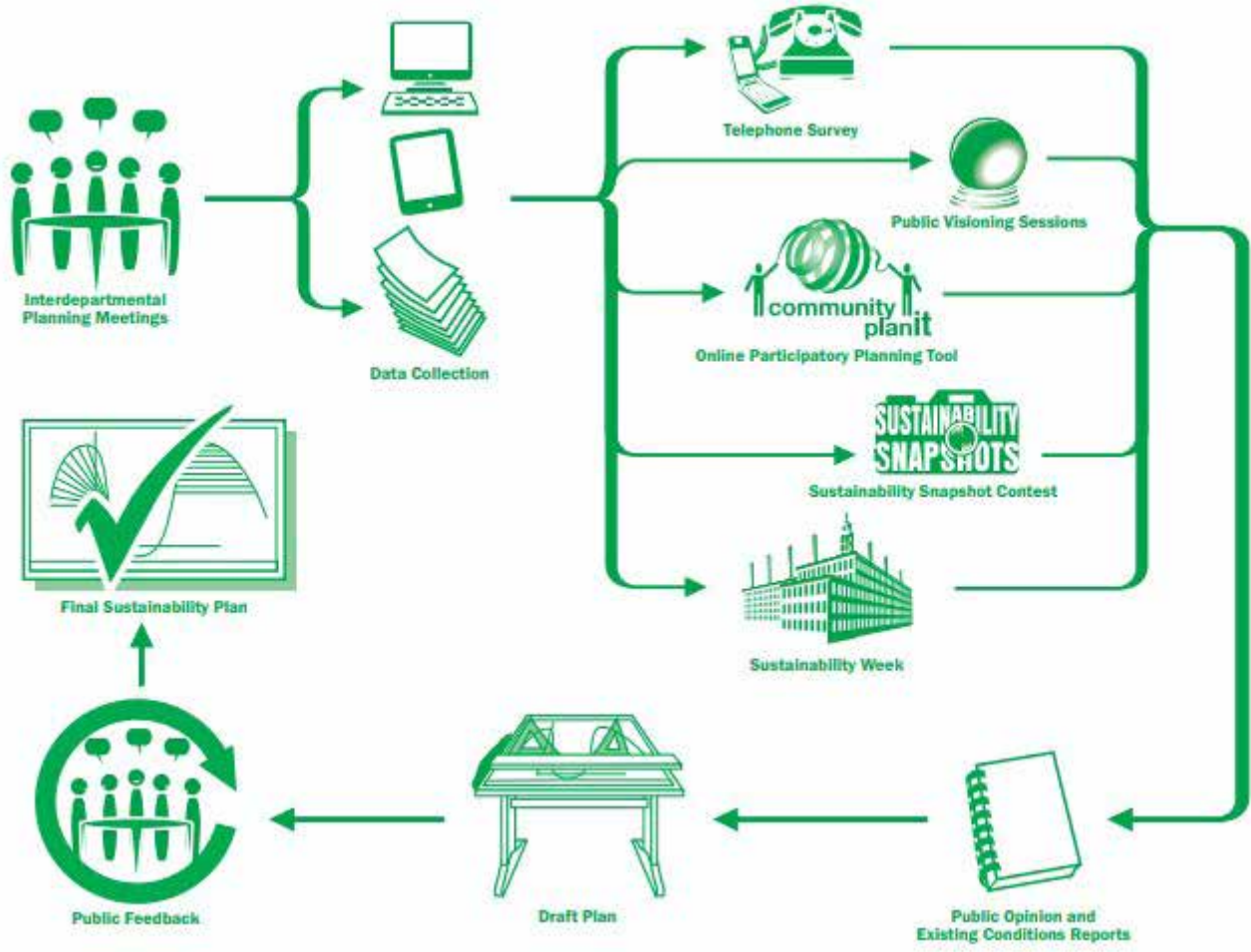
The Sustainable Lowell plan focuses on sustaining public engagement by setting goals and criteria. These goals and criteria include strengthening community pride and building public trust by ensuring that pertinent information and success stories are widely communicated, and resident comments and observations are welcomed. Continue to make strides towards more inclusive and transparent decision-making practices. Make planning and public engagement fun and enjoyable whenever possible. Diversify existing leadership. Cultivate the next generation of local leaders by encouraging the sustained engagement of youth in civic life. (Sustainable-Lowell-2025-PDF.Pdf, n.d.)



SUSTAINABLE LOWELL 2025

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These images are from the Sustainable Lowell Comprehensive Plan. They are a great representation of how images can replace words and justify meanings across; the picture above shows the communication process. It shows examples of equitable ways to collect information and people’s perspectives, thoughts, and opinions. Below is an image that shows the thought process behind the plan and gets their points across. (Sustainable-Lowell-2025-PDF.Pdf, n.d.)



The Chicago Climate Action Plan focuses on public engagement and communication by having full copies of the Climate Action Plan in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. (CCAP.Pdf, n.d.)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan for Nature provides ways for public engagement and communication by providing community-level and individual actions recommended for climate-friendly practices. These include education about sustainable watering practices (especially for lawns), and interaction with community members about the importance of composting, opportunities to conserve water, and an outline of how to set up a community monitoring program that allows Chicago residents to provide

This applies to the Methow because the plan's process will need to be transparent enough that community members can choose to give their input if they want to. Transparency is essential for allowing community members space and time for their contribution to be addressed during the writing and following through on the plan. Ensuring that the opportunity for all community members to provide their input--especially communities that have a history of being systemically underrepresented--like Indigenous communities and predominantly Latinx migrant farmworkers--have opportunities to learn about the plan and provide their input. Making sure the plan is presented in a format accessible to all the communities within the Methow is vital. It can be achieved by including explanatory photos, charts, and graphs, as well as making sure the language of the plan is accessible by not including scientific jargon and making the plan available in many languages.

<https://methowvalleynews.com/2019/11/06/local-climate-task-force-seeks-public-input-at-resilient-methow-workshop/>



Photo by Ralph Schwartz

Members of the Methow Valley Climate Action Task Force held a workshop July 9 in the Twisp Valley Grange. The group will seek input from the general public at a forum, 6 p.m. Nov. 19 in the Methow Valley Community Center gym.

Economic Development

Economic development aims to increase or diversify the range of income and wealth-generating opportunities in a given place, including economic opportunities that require a balance of experience and education across economic and status spectrums. Economic development also includes creating a reuse-oriented economy rather than an economy that relies on single uses of products, land, buildings, and human skill sets. Sustainable economic development is essential to creating a more resilient community.

This applies to the Methow because supplying jobs within the Methow Valley is going to be a crucial aspect of how climate change is addressed.

If measures for mitigating climate change are brought to Methow Valley, it will be essential to make a point of giving local Methow Valley residents opportunities to work on climate-related jobs, rather than simply outsourcing. Reducing the demand for new products will also create room for an economy that is not solely focused on purchasing things new. Secondhand and recycling-based parts of the economy will create a more environmentally-friendly economy that also lowers the cost of some goods

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses economic development by focusing on green jobs that are local, difficult to outsource, and support sustainable livelihoods. Retrofitting buildings to replace on-site fossil fuel combustion with modern electric systems are goals outlined in the plan with the outcome of supporting jobs for HVAC technicians, construction workers, electricians, and plumbers. Meeting the City's food recovery and organic waste reduction goals will create increased demand for compost management and regenerative material sourcing, and strengthen the infrastructure for edible food recovery, all of which can create jobs. Efforts to support the reuse and repair economy with deconstruction, community repair facilities, and training will help grow the demand for repair and reuse workers. Attempts to remove carbon from the atmosphere will create new jobs in urban farming, tree planting and maintenance, engineering, opportunities in local food systems, traditional and green infrastructure repair and maintenance. (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan addresses economic development through the goals of upgrading power plants, improving power plant efficiency, building new infrastructure for renewable energy alternatives, and promoting household renewable power, which will create many jobs associated with the production of renewable energy. (CCAP.Pdf, n.d.)

The Ashland Oregon Climate & Energy Action Plan addresses economic development focused on collaborative consumption, which "reduces demand for new products by facilitating the sharing and/ or repair of existing products in the community." This reduces the negative impacts of consumption and creates greater accessibility to useful items for many. (Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan_ pages.Pdf, 2017)

Education

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan educated readers on the importance of equity. Members of the Equity Working Group were educated on climate science, so everyone had a baseline understanding. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses education by actively coordinating with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) to improve climate literacy. OUSD enacted an Environmental and Climate Change Literacy policy that calls for the district to reinvigorate sustainability programming, support climate change education, and strengthen partnerships with the City of Oakland and local sustainability organizations. (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan for Nature addresses education on climate change by linking community members with local organizations that host nature walks. They talk about the impacts of climate change on the natural environment. The CAPN also sets the recommendation that local stores carry products and materials such as native plants, rain barrels, compost bins, etc. (CAPN_draft_ver2.Pdf, n.d.)

Education covers awareness around climate and equity issues as heard from those in the community experiencing such issues first hand. This can be done within the plan itself or as a result of the plan. Educating readers of the plan and those impacted by it is important in providing opportunities for equitable implementation.

This applies to the Methow because if a Climate Action Plan is going to be widely accepted by the community within the Methow, they are going to need to have some background information available so they can see why the plan is important and what ways they can--and need to-- help make the goals within the plan a reality.

Employment & Labor

Employment and Labor includes fair and equal employment for all, providing support for disadvantaged communities and transitioning them into quality jobs. Such communities are most often “disadvantaged” as a result of systemic racism. Thus, it is the responsibility of those who have benefited from these systems to redistribute resources to rebuild capacity in communities that have been depleted.

The San Diego Plan addresses Employment and Labor by incorporating goals and ideals for the labor industry. An example of those states;

This applies to the Methow Valley because as the Valley begins to address the impacts of climate change, new jobs and tasks will become available. This will require skill sets that may not have been taught eradicated or intentionally withheld from particular populations. Ensuring that job training programs are available for climate and environmental jobs will be vital in ensuring that the job opportunities brought into the valley for addressing climate change remain in the valley rather than being outsourced.

“for workers that do not have the required skills to obtain these new jobs, there are several training options available through a large university extension and the large system of community colleges... These programs enable local contractors to diversify and compete in new markets to ensure growth in the industry. Additionally, outreach should ensure that disadvantaged communities are aware of and properly trained to meet the needs of jobs in the new green economy. Many professionals will be trained via the state-certified apprenticeship system for construction workers. These four- to five-year training programs are largely self-funded by employers and workers”(City of San Diego’s Climate Action Plan | Sustainability | City of San Diego Official Website, n.d, page 49)

The San Diego Plan addresses its accountability to its employment and labor community by stating “while the City may not be able to promise new jobs for or change the underlying socioeconomic factors of disadvantaged populations, it can take action to provide equal access to opportunities for economic advancement and promotion of social equity.” This is important because they are acknowledging that not everyone will still be able to get a job. It does not make up entirely for the hiring companies’ opinions and biases, but it will help those disadvantaged populations. (City of San Diego’s Climate Action Plan | Sustainability | City of San Diego Official Website, n.d., page 50)

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan connected community members with job opportunities that resulted from actions in the plan. The plan also maximized career development opportunities, especially for low-income populations, Communities of Color and youth, in the fields of energy, green building, transportation, and others. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, with respect to environmental decision making. This involves providing extra support to those most vulnerable to climate impacts.

The Rochester Climate Action Plan addresses environmental justice by acknowledging that “low-income populations and communities of color are more likely to be disproportionately impacted by climate change. Further, low-income populations and Communities of Color often have less access to healthy and energy-efficient housing, transit, or safe bicycling and walking routes. Strategies to reduce carbon emissions and other implementation efforts should be designed to accommodate and support residents with various experiences and perspectives, and those with less financial capacity. Implementation should include targeted investments, particularly in areas that have seen under-investment in the past.” By acknowledging these various issues, Rochester identifies normalized privileged and calls out multiple ways to dismantle set privilege. By setting a goal to create and focus implementation in under-developed areas this will allow for the creation of more sidewalks allowing for more pedestrian-friendly environments and overall adding to the reduction of carbon emission by enabling people to have the option to walk more. (City of Rochester | Climate Action Plan, n.d.)

The Sustainable Lowell Plan addresses environmental justice by prioritizing the following goals. Develop policies and programs that will build upon the successes of reducing solid waste and increasing recycling citywide. Develop programs and policies to minimize the disposal of organic wastes into the waste stream. Improve water quality. Improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions through energy efficiency enhancements and the adoption of alternative fuels. Promote urban forestry as a method for improving public health as well as the physical and built environment. Produce energy from renewable sources. Seek to reduce the adverse impacts and severity of flood events. Prepare proactively for heatwaves, droughts, ice storms, and other types of natural disasters to mitigate their harmful effects. Educate the public about the importance and urgency of climate change and carbon emission reduction. (Sustainable-Lowell-2025-PDF.Pdf, n.d.)

The Ashland Oregon Climate & Energy Action Plan addresses environmental justice in many ways. Still, it has a significant focus on Intentional tree planting in urban heat islands and identifying and minimizing potential urban heat impacts. (Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan_pages.Pdf, 2017)

Environmental justice was the main focus of the Equity Working Group is creating the integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan. This plan is excellent at giving context on the importance of equity and environmental justice within the region while explaining how low-income communities and People of Color are disproportionately impacted by climate change. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses environmental justice by acknowledging that much of the food that is meant for consumption in Oakland ends up in the landfill. People facing marginal food security (MFS) are more likely to be non-white, rent their homes, and have a household head over the age of 60. Often, those experiencing MFS have incomes above 200% of the federal poverty level, so although they struggle to afford food, they do not qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan for Nature addresses environmental justice by outlining plans and regulations for both community and rooftop gardens, compost and minimalist watering to make the city more environmentally friendly in ways that also consider mitigating other issues like food insecurity. (CAPN_draft_ver2.Pdf, n.d.)

This applies to the Methow because any recommendations within the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan will potentially affect specific populations disproportionately. Communities that are generally at risk of being systematically excluded from the narrative often are the same communities that will be most impacted by the effects of climate change. Environmental justice within the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan means ensuring that there is outreach to Indigenous tribes, migrant farmworkers, and low-income communities within the valley, but that their perspectives are in the process and writing of the plan. Moving forward, this also entails representation among the Task Force and Planning Team throughout the planning process and compensation for their work accordingly.

Food Justice

Food Justice recommends various actions that allow greater access to nutritious foods for all community members while transforming current food systems to eliminate disparities and inequities. Food Justice needs to be addressed to ensure equitable access to foods, which is essential for health and wellbeing. Local healthy foods are often unaffordable.

This applies to the Methow as a way to add more emphasis on existing food programs and create a basis for discussion on the potential need for more community gardens. Food access, and what it means to provide fresh, local options to food programs that serve low-income communities in Methow Valley, need to be prioritized within the actions proposed in the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan.

The Ashland Oregon Climate & Energy Action Plan addresses food justice through the “Greening” of public spaces and increased community gardens usage. The plan also supports edible food donation and works toward expanding local food production. (Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan_pages.Pdf, 2017)

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses food justice by creating the goal to adopt climate-friendly food policy such as the Good Food Purchasing Policy with a racial justice lens, ensuring that all food purchased by the City, on City property, or at City events, has limited carbon emissions and maximum health, equity, and local economic benefits. This will minimize the City’s contribution to the upstream emissions of unsustainable food practices that characterize the current global food system. (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan for Nature addresses food justice by linking readers to the City of Chicago outline for rooftop gardens, which provides directions and organizations for help with creating community gardens on the roofs of buildings and also in vacant lots, at sidewalk corners, parkways, parks, and along railroad corridors as an effort to use underutilized spaces within the city for environmental purposes, while also created ways for more people to have access to fresh, healthy food. (CAPN_draft_ver2.Pdf, n.d.)

Health

Health solutions acknowledge a need for better access to health care to address the intergenerational and cumulative effects of structural racism and its impact on health. Health and well-being options should be equitably available to all. Holistic well-being incorporates cultural and mental health along with physical. Health and health care may also show up in ways of informing the community of health impacting events such as wildfires and poor air quality.

The Oakland Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses health by first acknowledging that health is connected to the environments that people live in—meaning that access to clean air and water, nature, and fresh and nutritious food vary dramatically based on where individuals live. This acknowledges that health is also an issue of income and racial equity. The plan also addresses the fact that exposure to pollution is unequal. It addresses the fact that environmental factors, like exposure to more pollutants, can create health burdens that are both physical (bodily response to pollutant exposure) and economic (the medical expenses resulting from higher levels of exposure). (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The Ashland Oregon Climate & Energy Action Plan worked with vulnerable populations to create specific adaptation strategies to address public health risks. Intentions to develop or enhance heat-warning systems for employees and the public was also addressed. (Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan_pages.Pdf, 2017)

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan continued tree planting and expanded tree preservation and maintenance programs and incentives. Focus on low-canopy neighborhoods and neighborhoods with populations at higher risk of adverse outcomes of urban heat island effects. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

This applies to the Methow because the Valley is a place that frequently experiences wildfires. Wildfires disproportionately affect the health of low-income residents because they do not always have the means to evacuate or a place to evacuate to when there is a wildfire. Thus, they are exposed to more smoke by remaining in the valley. Farmworkers and other outdoor, essential workers are also more at risk for exposure to things like smoke and increased heat, as they are more exposed when they work outdoors than people who work indoors. Low-income residents also may not have the same financial means to add air filtration systems that can help filter smoke from wildfires, which could also make them more at risk for adverse health effects. Thus, health is a central consideration in the Climate Action Plan with low-income and other vulnerable residents in mind.

Housing

Housing within equity focuses on sustainable, affordable housing, especially in low-income areas historically impacted by various forms of segregation. Equitable housing can include adjustments to a current house that make existing living areas more environmentally friendly and accessible.

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnom

ah County 2015 Climate Action Plan focuses on affordable housing and its relationship to access to transit and the use of regulatory and voluntary tools to promote affordable and accessible housing development along transit routes and in opportunity areas. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses housing by working to adapt to climate change without exacerbating the displacement of housing-insecure and cost-burdened residents. The plan proposes to do so by lowering energy costs, improving energy efficiency in existing homes, lowering the risk of damage to homes from flooding or fire, and ensuring that as much affordable housing as possible – including for low, very low, and extremely low-income households – is built throughout Oakland. Other building goals include: increasing the number of building electrification retrofits and the number; type of renovations in frontline communities; establishment of a refrigerant management program, with verifiable results for reduced climate impacts from refrigerant leakage; estimated reduction in GHG impact from embodied carbon standards. (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan addresses housing through addressing buildings. Chicago's goals include retrofitting commercial buildings, industrial buildings, and residential buildings, creating ways that people can easily trade-in appliances, conserving water, updating the city energy codes, establishing new guidelines for renovations, and, finally, providing ways to cool the city with trees and green roofs. (CCAP.Pdf, n.d.)

The Sustainable Lowell Plan addresses housing by focusing on goals, including maintaining high-quality, healthy homes throughout the city for rent and purchase. Builds and maintains a diversity of housing options throughout the city to support economic vitality and meet residents' evolving needs. Encourages responsible home ownership to support neighborhood stability. Maintains an abundance of affordable housing for rent or purchase, and strives to maintain the relative affordability of housing in Lowell compared to other communities in the region. Prioritizes sustainable housing development policies and practices. Ensure that adequate infrastructure exists for new residential development. Encourage institutional growth that ensures a high quality of life in Lowell's neighborhoods. Ensure that all residents have a safe and secure place to call home. Ensure that all residents have equal access to fair housing. Balance open space needs with development citywide. (Sustainable-Lowell-2025-PDF.Pdf, n.d.)

This applies to the Methow because making housing more environmentally friendly by providing more energy-efficient options for buildings and appliances and providing ways for energy use to be reduced is useful for lowering those building's carbon footprint and decreasing the overall utility bill, which helps low-income populations. Building low-income housing in Methow Valley is another essential housing factor. Access to affordable housing determines how much a community will be impacted by the more extreme weather events and temperatures that are a result of climate change.

Identifying Opportunities for Change

Identifying opportunities for change takes both accountability and addressing hate a step further by adding how they will support those who have been disproportionately affected. It is important to hear how people have been impacted and foster a supportive community to create systematic changes

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses opportunities for change by introducing the equity premise of the plan as an opportunity to "increase neighborhood resilience. An equity-focused response to the climate crisis represents an unparalleled opportunity for Oakland to realize its full potential." The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan also recognizes within the plan that, though Oakland will be working towards a greener future, the change must also happen on an individual and global scale. Oakland even made it a goal to address their consumption and waste by adding to the number of community repair, resale, and sharing facilities, the percent of such facilities in frontline communities, and the tons of edible food recovered and redistributed. (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan identifies numerous opportunities for change, particularly concerning increasing gentrification and the displacement of low-income communities of color. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan addresses opportunities for change by working on managing heat, looking at how to cool buildings, protecting air quality, managing stormwater, implementing green urban design, preserving plants and trees, engaging with the public, and engaging with businesses, plan for the future. (CCAP.Pdf, n.d.)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan for Nature identifies several opportunities for change, including Reduce or eliminate lawn equipment that produces carbon dioxide, such as leaf blowers and lawnmowers. Choose non-synthetic products, know the garden's fertilizer needs, and use fertilizer only as necessary. Also, avoid planting mixtures and soils that contain peat, creating community gardens, and planting native plants. (CAPN_draft_ver2.Pdf, n.d.)

Identifying opportunities of change is important within the Methow Valley because it is not enough to just address that low-income communities and migrant farmworkers are disproportionately impacted by wildfires, among other things. Plans must be set in place to better support these disadvantaged groups. The creation of this Climate Action Plan holds the unique opportunity for community engagement and action that is needed to foster systemic change.

Transportation

Equitable transportation encompasses ways of moving from one place to another, which supports health and well-being while also increasing access to affordable, reliable, and safe transport for disadvantaged communities.

Equity in transportation is vital to Methow Valley because increasing alternative modes of transportation will allow Methow Valley residents to have transportation options that reduce individual vehicle usage and do not rely on each individual owning a car. This is important to the environment because more opportunities for public transportation, like busses, and more options for ride-sharing will create more transportation equity for those who may be unable to, or who may struggle to own a car or pay for gas. Other transportation methods, especially carpooling and transit options, will help decrease the carbon footprint of the individuals who choose alternative forms of transport.

The City of San Diego Climate Action Plan addresses transportation briefly but powerfully by creating specific implementation measures that include changing land uses, adopting a new perspective on community design. By doing so, this promotes alternative modes of travel, revising parking standards, and managing to park (City of San Diego's Climate Action Plan | Sustainability | City of San Diego Official Website, n.d.).

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan, among other solutions, considered programs to expand the use of car-sharing among low-income households. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

The Ashland Oregon Climate & Energy Action Plan provided a more affordable and accessible public transit. Supported development near transit hubs without displacing disadvantaged populations through gentrification. (Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan_pages.Pdf, 2017)

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses transportation with housing units built near high-quality transit lines, and affordable housing units built near transit. It also looks at the percent increase in non-auto related mode share (active mobility and public transportation), charging infrastructure installations, and total mobility infrastructure investment in frontline communities. (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The Chicago Climate Action Plan addresses transportation by proposing to invest more in transit, expand transit incentives, promote transit-oriented development, make walking and biking more accessible, encourage car share and carpool options, improve fleet efficiency, achieve higher fuel efficiency standards, switch to cleaner fuels, support intercity rail, improve freight movement, and include regional transportation initiatives (increasing the efficiency of freight transportation, reducing emissions from air travel. Chicago is also encouraging organizations and companies to switch to more efficient or hybrid vehicles for company transportation. (CCAP.Pdf, n.d.)

Youth Development

Youth development acknowledges how inequitable systems profoundly influence the opportunities available to children, youth, and families. It focuses specifically on providing education and hands-on opportunities for disadvantaged youth. Youth programming and development plays an essential role in building a more resilient community as youth are the primary influencers of the future.

This can be applied to Methow Valley by recognizing that youth development is vital to ensuring that climate action and environmentally friendly practices exist in the future. Expanding opportunities for high school and college students to engage with climate change and its impacts on the Methow Valley creates a generation of informed and passionate youths who can bring that energy to issues within the Methow Valley. With such a high percentage of children in schools on free and reduced lunch programs, it is vital that youth programming in the Methow Valley continue to be supported and funded.

The Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan addresses youth development by partnering with UC Berkeley. One hundred sophomores researched topics from low-carbon mobility to adaptation. They made recommendations for how the City of Oakland could support youth and families to tackle the climate crisis, engaging a cohort of high school students to prepare climate action recommendations. (Oakland 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (Final Draft, July 2020), 2020)

The integration of equity in the Portland/ Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan provided training opportunities for local youth to build wealth and avoid displacement in communities. (Armstrong et al., 2016)

The results from benchmarking the eight climate action plans and information learned from the interviews with Joshua Porter, Drew Katz, Sarah Brown, and Daisy Purdy influenced the following section of recommendations. Complete interview notes can be found in the appendix.

Recomendations

Accountability

- Acknowledge the history of the land and the culture which once thrived upon it and still carries a relationship with today.
 - ~ Who was this land stolen from, and how can reparations be made?
 - ~ Which agreements were not upheld?
 - ~ Honor the land and the people and communities who were here first.
- Emphasize building relationships before making requests or pushing agendas and learning from the Indigenous groups of the area.
- Continue discussions to submit the plan to the Colville tribe for consideration. Allow time for the Colville to review, weigh-in, and add to the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan while compensated for their expertise. Consider adopting and supporting the Colville Climate Action Plan once it has been written.
- Create progress indicators to track the equitable implementation of the plan.
- Hold all of the individuals, organizations, consultants, and community partners accountable while acknowledging contributions by listing them at the beginning of the plan and what they worked on.
- Remain transparent.
- Apply scrutiny on suggestions that impact natural resources farther down the river.
- Recognize the implications of this plan on a broader scope than just the Methow Valley.
- Recognizes that the plan is the beginning of an ongoing and evolving process.
 - ~ Example: a living document for the first six months as additional input and feedback is received that is set to be updated every three years based upon the progress of goals and community input.
- Acknowledges the responsibility of developed societies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions the most.

Addressing Hate

- Acknowledging the role of systemic racism and discrimination within the Methow Valley and describing solutions to dismantle embedded biases.
- Acknowledge positionality of those involved in the task force, planning team, drafting, and implementation of the plan.
- Prevent siloing and stereotyping of groups or individuals.
- Create a survey for the task force and planning team to get background information on their views, which would allow for quantitative data and room for understanding any existing microaggressions.

Community Engagement, & Accessibility Outreach

- Begin with the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Ensuring enough time to have an equitable process.
 - ~ Having meetings, enough time to collect data, enough time to sort through data
 - ~ Adjust the timeline as necessary.
 - ~ Be aware and adjust outreach to accommodate more essential events (harvest season, Covid-19, etc.).
- Outreach to multi-generational families.
- Practice reciprocity and compensate folks for their time, especially when gathering input from marginalized communities.
- Strengthen community pride and build public trust by ensuring that pertinent information and success stories are widely communicated, and resident comments and observations are welcomed.
- Recognize how political the climate has become and look at things that may be a controversial form of different perspectives.
- Continue to make strides towards more inclusive and transparent decision-making practices.
- Make planning and public engagement fun and enjoyable whenever possible.
- Use images representative of all community members but avoid tokenization.
- Translate plans and outreach materials into multiple languages.
- Hold meetings in multiple easily accessible locations.
- Use multiple avenues for outreach such as mailings, radio, and tabling at grocery stores, especially considering the internet is not accessible for all people.
- Diversify leadership, especially as the next phase of community engagement, begins.
- Consider an alternative name for the plan emphasizing resiliency.
- Cultivate the next generation of local leaders by encouraging the sustained engagement of youth in civic life.
- Form focus groups that include representation from these entities:
 - ~ Community Leaders
 - ~ Elected officials
 - ~ Agencies
 - ~ Business owners
 - ~ Agriculture leaders
 - ~ Indigenous leaders, people, or community members
 - ~ Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
 - ~ Descendants of the Methow Band
 - ~ Groups led by People of Color.
 - ~ Schools
 - ~ Continue engaging young people to contribute their ideas to the plan
 - ~ Health officials
 - ~ Non-Profit groups:
 - ~ That work with low income and other vulnerable populations
 - ~ That work with people who have physical and/ or mental disabilities
 - ~ That work within the Latin-X community
 - ~ Room One
 - ~ Food Banks
 - ~The Cove

Economic Development

- Addresses economic development by making it a goal to focus on green jobs that are local, difficult to outsource, and support sustainable livelihoods.
- Retrofitting buildings to replace on-site fossil fuel combustion with modern electric systems will support HVAC technicians, construction workers, electricians, and plumbers.
- Creating a food recovery and organic waste reduction goal/ program.
- Creates an increased demand for compost management and regenerative material sourcing, and strengthens the infrastructure for edible food recovery, all of which can create jobs.
- Efforts to support the reuse and repair economy with deconstruction, community repair facilities, and training help grow the demand for repair and reuse workers.
- Prioritize the distribution of funds to most vulnerable populations.

Education

- Educate readers on the importance of equity within the plan.
- Educate the public about the importance and urgency of climate change and carbon emission reduction.
- Actively coordinate with local schools to improve climate literacy with an emphasis on climate justice and equity.
- Connect community members with local organizations that host educational programming.
- Recommend that local stores carry products and materials such as native plants, rain barrels, compost bins, etc. and have educational signage.

Employment & Labor

- Support programs that enable local contractors to diversify and compete in new markets that help ensure growth in the industry.
- Ensure that disadvantaged communities are aware of and adequately trained to meet the needs of jobs in the new green economy.
- Connect community members with job opportunities that result from actions in the plan.

Environmental Justice

- Strategies to reduce carbon emissions and other implementation efforts designed to accommodate and support residents with a variety of backgrounds and identities, including those with less financial capacity than the surrounding region.
- Implementation includes targeted investments, particularly in areas that have seen under-investment in the past.
- Prepare proactively for heatwaves, forest fires, ice storms, and other types of natural disasters to mitigate their negative impacts.
- Include mapping showing social justice typography
 - ~ Where are underrepresented and minority groups located compared to the second homeowners compared to the average/
majority people/ families are
 - ~ Highlight different amenities available

Food Justice

- “Greening” of public spaces and increased usage of community gardens.
- Ensure that all food purchased by the local government has limited carbon emissions and maximum health, equity, and local economic benefits.
- Help ensure the health and safety of local farmworkers.

Health

- Acknowledge that health is connected to the environments that people live in--meaning that access to clean air and water, nature, and fresh and nutritious food vary dramatically based on where individuals live.
- Work with vulnerable populations to create specific adaptation strategies to address public health risks.
- Develop or enhance natural disaster-warning systems.
- Provide more opportunities for local health care, specifically for low-income groups.

Housing

- Adapt to climate change without exacerbating the displacement of housing-insecure and cost-burdened residents.
- Lower energy costs, improve energy efficiency in existing homes, lower the risk of damage to homes from flooding or fire, and ensure that as much affordable housing as possible – including low, very low, and extremely low-income households.
- Build and maintain a diversity of housing options throughout the city to support economic vitality and meet the evolving needs of residents.
- Maintain an abundance of affordable housing for rent or purchase, and strive to maintain the relative affordability of housing.
- Ensure that all residents have a safe and secure place to call home.
- Ensure that all residents have equal access to fair housing.
- Create avenues for part-time residents with additional resources to support community housing needs.
- Create incentives for the sharing of second-homes.

Identifying Opportunities of Change

- Identify ways to actively support disproportionately impacted groups and set up programs to create structural change.
- Be cautious of renaming/naming things and places without recognizing the original names associated with the area and addressing how indigenous groups feel about specific word usage.

Transportation

- Provide more affordable and accessible public transit.
- Promote transit-oriented development, make walking and biking more accessible, encourage car share and carpool options, improve fleet efficiency, achieve higher fuel efficiency standards, switch to cleaner fuels.
- Encourage organizations and companies to make the switch to more efficient or hybrid vehicles for company transportation.
- Support the creation of the Winthrop-Twisp commuter trail, and others like it.
- Continue gaining new perspectives on community design in relation to changing land use.

Youth Development

- Provide training opportunities for local youth to build wealth and avoid displacement in communities.
- Continue engaging a cohort of high school students to prepare climate action recommendations.



Background Picture taken by Ducan Mullen

Guidelines

- Define Equity before anything else
 - ~ Provide working definitions of sustainability, resiliency, mitigation, and others
- Know your readers
- Organizing the plan in a way that is inclusive and understanding to all
- Writing in short precise sentences
 - ~ Remove extra words
 - ~ Avoid clustering of nouns
 - ~ Avoid passive voices
 - ~ Turn nouns into verbs
 - ~ Avoid jargon-heavy language
 - ~ Avoid Acronyms
 - ~ Use more straightforward words/ wording
 - ~ Explain all processes
 - ~ Highlight main points
- Use lists
- Don't include a glossary; if you need to define a word it isn't equitable to use
 - ~ Terms such as resiliency are considered jargon. Jargon should be identified within the text when it is first used or when it is most prevalent to define.
- Write in a way that you will read.
- Add colors, pictures, images, graphs, and tables to break up heavy text.
- Should include an Equity/ Diversity section.
 - Include subsections addressing language, inclusion, justice, immediate need, transparency.

Monitoring & Evaluations

The proposed benchmarks hope to open up dialogue and facilitate actions to ensure that the current Methow Valley Climate Action Plan does not directly or indirectly burden communities of color, Indigenous tribes, low-income communities, or others. These benchmarks should ensure that the Task Force is writing the Climate Action Plan to be constantly aware of how historical and systemic inequalities have presented themselves. It is crucial to be mindful of the historical systemic disparities that have presented themselves and can be seen in other climate action plans. By being mindful, historical systemic inequalities will be avoided as the plan is written, and resources will be leveraged to improve disparities and burdens.

The project's success will be evident in the extent to which the plan is accessible to all the diverse communities within the Methow Valley, especially communities of color, low-income communities, people of various genders, and any others that might otherwise find themselves underrepresented. The success of integrating equity into the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan will be evident not only in how accessible the plan is but also based on the extent to which the actions of the plan empower communities of color in meaningful ways that take the cultures and histories of each community into account. Including equity in the plan will be a success if it is used as a vehicle for leveraging resources and advancing other equity issues.

If this plan is going to be a success, it must also take the current priorities of underrepresented communities into account, and create methods of communication and collaborative partnership so these priorities can be expressed within the plan. A successful plan will not only create spaces for collaboration, but it will also facilitate long-term avenues of communication to create a more inclusive decision-making process. A successful plan will allow for diversity in leadership and those that implement the plan. Finally, this plan will be successful if it is held accountable for the inclusion of vulnerable communities to ensure they benefit most, rather than furthering inequalities that already exist.

One way in which this success can be monitored is through direct feedback from the community via surveys or other forms of communication.

Budget

While no specific budget has been created or is necessary for the implementation of the recommendations and guidelines, we highly recommend that specific funding is secured for the implementation of equity within the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan. These funds should be applied towards compensation of engagement and participation, especially for those whose time and knowledge is particularly valued. Funding can be utilized to support many other recommendations as well, including but not limited to supporting youth programming, sustainable development of infrastructure benefiting low-income families, and providing assistance to the most vulnerable populations in the face of forest fires and other climate disasters. As the planning process moves toward completion and implementation, every opportunity to secure funding for mitigation actions and resiliency building which take equity into consideration should be prioritized.

Conclusion



In analysing multiple Comprehensive and Climate Action Plan examples, along with interviewing various stakeholders, it has been discovered that equity can be approached in a multitude of ways. Through creating benchmarks based on eight plans, we were able to gather multiple examples of equity being incorporated into the categories of accountability, addressing hate, community engagement, outreach, and accessibility, economic development, education, employment & labor, environmental justice, health, housing, identifying opportunities for change, transportation, and youth development. These examples along with input from interviews were consolidated into our recommendations and guidelines for the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan. Recommendations coincide with the benchmarking criteria mentioned above and is summarized here;

Accountability: Honor the land and respect Indigenous knowledge by learning and listening without pushing an agenda. Work with the Colville tribe and compensate accordingly for their time and expertise. Scrutinize suggestions that impact natural resources farther downriver and recognize the implications of this plan beyond Methow Valley. Recognize the plan as a living document.

Addressing hate: Acknowledge systemic racism and discrimination and the position of power held by the taskforce in drafting and implementing the plan. Prevent stereotyping of groups or individuals and microaggressions in the plan.

Community Engagement, Outreach, and Accessibility: Begin with the needs of the most vulnerable and ensure enough time for an equitable process, transparency, and communication in multiple languages across multiple avenues. Represent the community without tokenization through diversifying leadership, remain aware of various political perspectives, and form diverse focus groups.

Economic Development: Focus on jobs that are local, difficult to outsource, and support sustainable livelihoods. Create a food recovery program, promote the reuse and repair economy, and prioritize funding projects that help the most vulnerable populations.

Education: Educate readers on the importance of equity within the plan, the urgency of climate change and carbon emission reduction, and coordinate with local schools to improve climate literacy with an emphasis on climate justice and equity.

Employment & Labor: Support programs that enable local contractors to diversify and compete in new markets, ensure disadvantaged communities are aware of and adequately trained to meet the needs of jobs in the new green economy, and connect them with green job opportunities.

Environmental Justice: Support residents from a variety of backgrounds, identities, and financial statuses. Invest in areas that have been under-invested in, prepare for natural disasters, and highlight the different amenities available.

Food Justice: Limit carbon emissions from food transport, focus on health, equity, and local economic benefits of food by increasing community gardens and ensuring the health and safety of local farm workers.

Health: Acknowledge that health is connected to a person's environment. Address public health risks by providing more opportunities for local health care, specifically for low-income groups, and enhance natural disaster-warning systems.

Housing: Adapt to climate change without exacerbating the displacement of housing-insecure and cost-burdened residents by lowering energy costs, improving energy efficiency in existing homes, increasing affordable housing, maintaining diverse housing options, and incentivizing second homeowners to support community housing.

Identifying opportunities for change: Support groups disproportionately impacted by climate change, set up programs to create structural change, be cautious of renaming/naming things, and places without recognizing the original names associated with the area.

Transportation: Provide affordable, accessible public transit, make walking, biking, and carpool options more accessible, switch to more efficient or hybrid vehicles for company transportation, and support new trail development.

Youth Development: Provide opportunities for local youth to avoid displacement and continue engaging students in climate work.

Guidelines are summarized as follows.

- Provide working definitions of equity, sustainability, resiliency, mitigation, and others.
- Organize the plan to be accessible and easily understood by all potential readers.
- Clearly understandable by all potential readers by writing in short, precise sentences, removing extra words, etc. Explain all processes, highlight main points, use lists, add colors, pictures, images, graphs, and tables to break up dense text.

The integration of equity through these recommendations and guidelines will allow the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan to be more holistically sustainable.

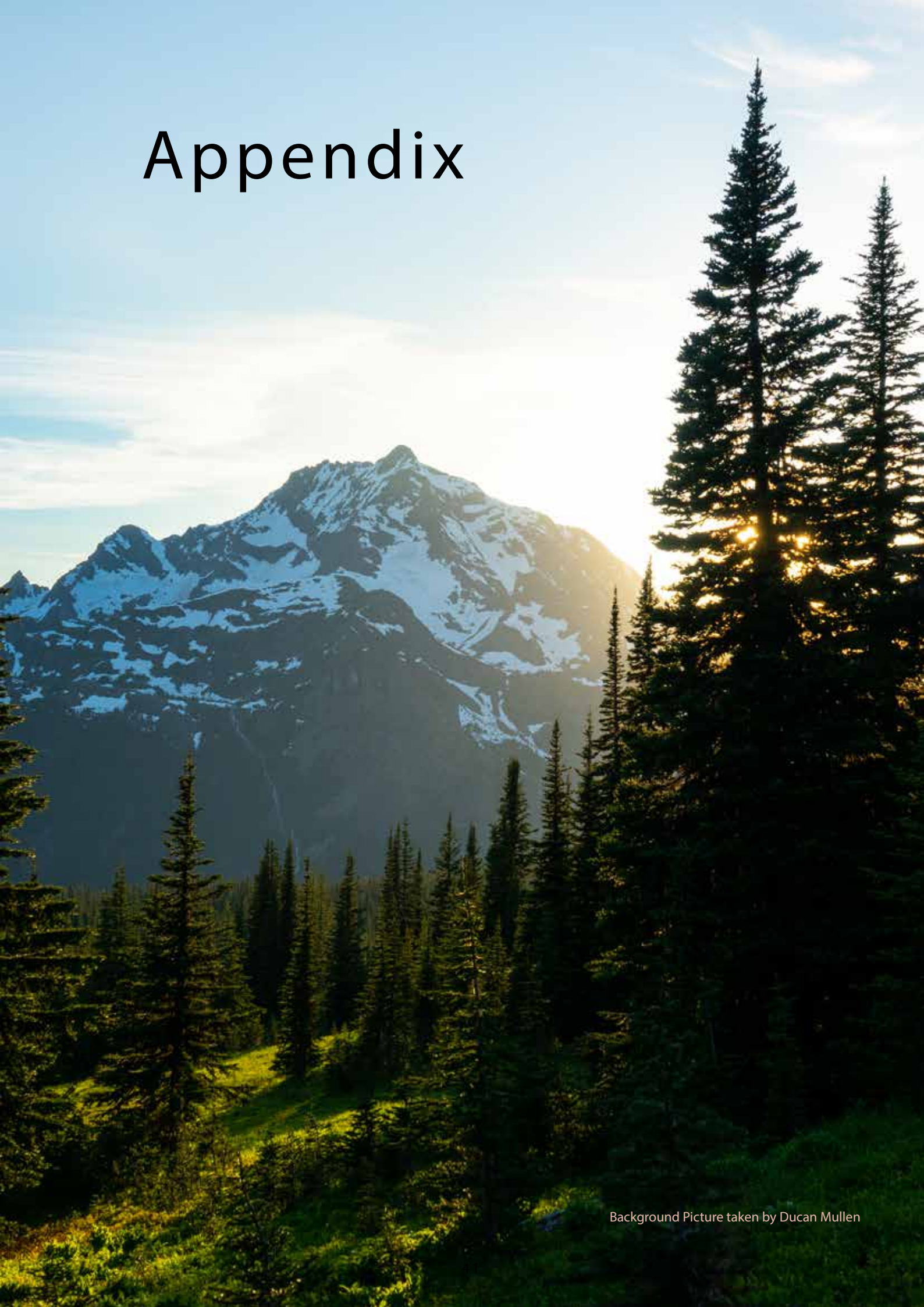
Background Picture taken by Ducan Mullen



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Appendix



Top Recommended Plans to Read

Portland, Oregon

<https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2019-07/cap-equity-case-study-web29jul.pdf>

Oakland, California

<https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Oakland-ECAP-07-24.pdf>

Additional Resources

The Avarna Group

<https://theavarnagroup.com/>

Environmental Justice Resources

<https://www.ejnet.org/>

Dismantling Racism

<https://www.dismantlingracism.org/>

Indigenous Green New Deal

<https://ndncollective.org/app/uploads/2019/09/Position-paperR2.pdf>

Background Picture taken by Ducan Mullen



Information Gathered via Stakeholder Interviews:

Joshua Porter & Drew Katz

Success within the planning process would take a holistic approach, look at the consequences and feedback of anything that's proposed, create opportunities for more robust connections and collaborations with those in the community, and apply scrutiny on suggestions that impact natural resources further down the river. There is also a level of transparency that would be a measure of success.

Although equity was named early on and essential to incorporate, there is no agreed-upon definition or standard that the Task Force and Planning Team has identified for equity. There also seems to be an underlying pressure to act for the climate, but incorporating and emphasizing equity would change the pace of writing the plan. The team is also looking at approaching and incorporating equity by using multi-solving solutions.

Equity is already a part of the climate action plan in ways such as acknowledging bias, outreach efforts, including continued outreach to members of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and having the mayor of Pateros on the task force. Equity continues to be strengthened within the plan because it identifies the need for equity and identifies missing parts, pieces, and people.

Equity is further going to be incorporated by taking initial data about the climate adaptations and bringing it to the community for input, as well as making opportunities for people to give their input easier and more accessible. "We can not get too caught up in the process, that equity is not taken into account."

Concerns revolving around equity and the process of incorporating it include that the plan will be pushed forward with flaws concerning equity, keeping an agenda first, and lacking the inclusiveness desired. These are significant worries because privilege can creep in and burden people who may not have the funding or time to take to give the plan consideration and voice their concerns.

The Climate Action Plan should accessibly incorporate equity by not rushing the process, inspiring the community to be more engaged, being visually dense, not being thick with text, having translations, and writing in a way that is easily absorbed by many.

Community outreach should encompass equity as well, Drew and Joshua sees this as engaging diverse stakeholders, making connections with those that have not been reached out to in the past in terms of climate change, building deeper relationships, and using those voices and listening to inform our work—adding on to that by trying to adapt to the challenges of COVID, realizing how political climate has become and looking at things that may be controversial from different practicing perspectives. This all implies a different timeline as people need education before being asked questions.

Sarah Brown

Sarah was able to give us more context around issues of equity within the Methow Valley along with what is being done to address them. Most of the community engagement opportunities that came up were education oriented youth programming such as the third grade ski program, the youth leadership council through Room One, and similar youth engagement programs through Classroom in Bloom, Twispworks, and the Methow Conservancy. To her knowledge none of these programs implicitly address climate or use an intentional equity lens. More links between health and the environment need to be made within these programs. The biggest challenge however, lies in how to educate and engage adults in the Methow Valley. Accessibility and equity issues were identified within the Okanogan bus service.

Some of the thoughts that Sarah had on the inclusion of equity within the Methow Valley Climate Action Plan revolved around bringing people along, outreach to multi-generational families, making the language of the plan accessible, climate education, and representation of diverse groups within photos. Increasing polarization of people living in the Methow Valley in relation to political, social, and socioeconomic status has been observed. It was noted that the middle is often missing, even though that is what should be aimed for. Writing must be done for both sides of the spectrum without siloing certain groups of people.

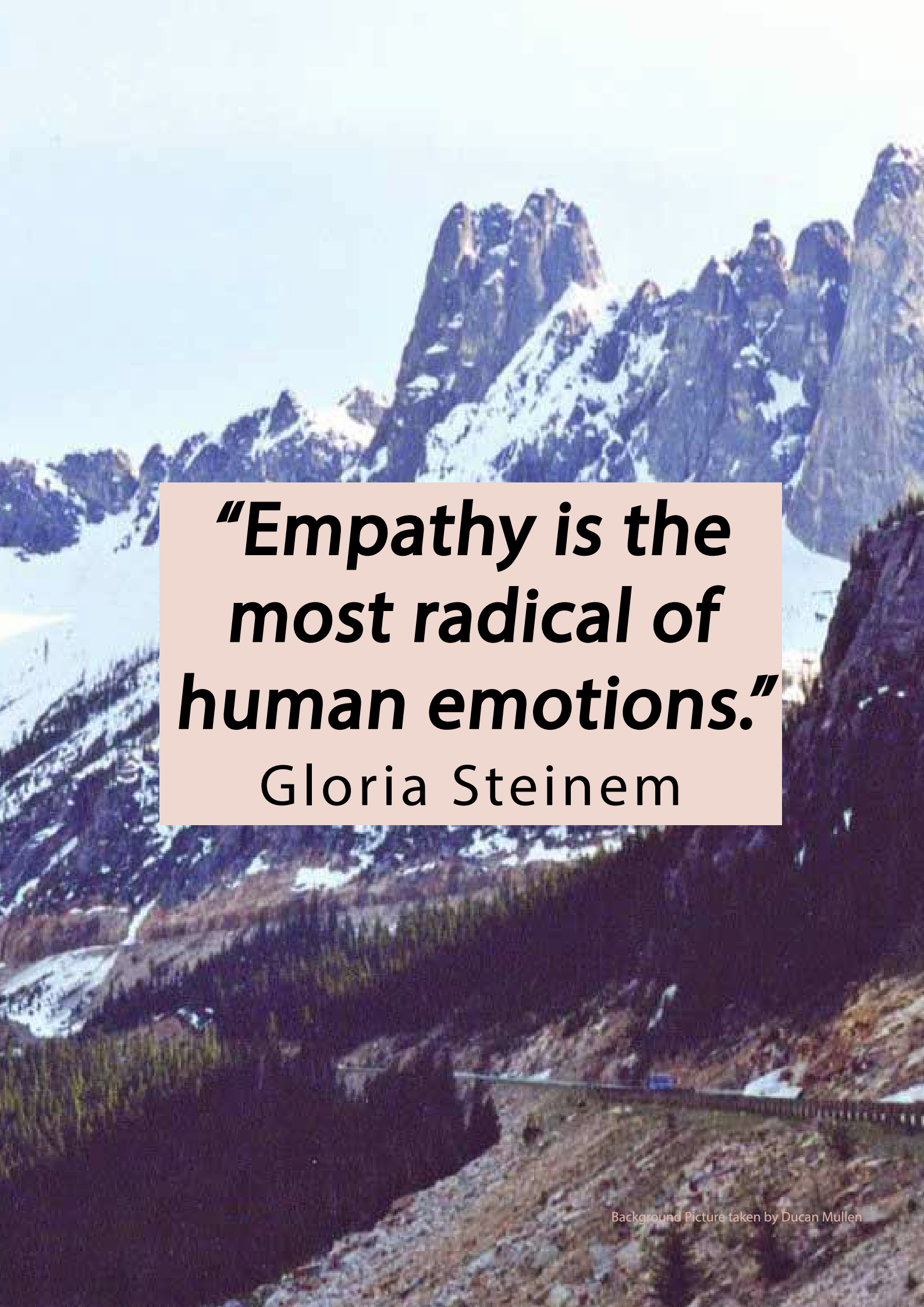
Sarah also spoke to the disproportionate effects of wildfire smoke on those with older homes or outdoor jobs. She suggested that more money should be distributed in advance to populations most vulnerable to climate change to allow proactivity in preparing for wildfire season. Sarah's last suggestion was possibly changing the name of the plan to be less off putting to those who may not believe in climate change.

Daisy Purdy

Daisy spoke on climate action plans lacking awareness of current disparities and pushing off addressing those into the future. Some suggestions she had included creating a survey for the task force and planning team to get background information on their views, which would allow for quantitative data and room for understanding any existing microaggressions. A survey could also create communication on how to incorporate minoritized groups and amplify voices that are not already existent within the plan, the task force, and the planning team by making sure it addresses minoritized groups, especially inclusion of these groups as a part of the decision-making process. This includes supporting the Colville tribe's climate action plan. The plan should be designed to be similar in structure/ template to existing plans.

When writing the plan, the team needs to be cautious of renaming things and places without recognizing the original names associated with the area (we were not here first), which will mean addressing how the tribes feel about certain word usage. This is a part of visibility. The plan will also need graphics that are representative of the area, but that avoid tokenizing photos. The plan itself should define how equity and sustainability are being used within the plan. Identify those most impacted groups and focus on hearing their opinions. Daisy also recommended making sure we map with equity in mind (what exactly is the space we are writing about, who lives within that space, how are they represented within the plan, and are their ideas about that physical space represented).

If you are going to have groups or individuals tell you their opinions, you need to pay for their time, so they are able to participate, so their participation is justified. They may not have the leisure time to be able to give their very important and needed opinions. Daisy also suggested taxing second homeowners. Equity should be its own pillar within the plan. With its own timeline related to what actions are going to be taken and when to ensure equity is included within the plan. There needs to be enough time for appropriate outreach.

A scenic view of a mountain range with snow-capped peaks and a forested valley. The mountains are rugged and jagged, with patches of snow on their slopes. The valley below is filled with dense evergreen trees. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

***“Empathy is the
most radical of
human emotions.”***

Gloria Steinem