



# BREATHE

Reducing Emissions For A Resilient Region

## Equity Session

JUNE 17, 2025



# Agenda

- **RECAP of Equity Sessions to Date**
- **Building an Equity Framework:** Overview of the development of the framework and guiding principles and questions
- **Overview of a Proposed 'Outcomes Matrix'**
- **Small Group Activity:** Community Outcomes Matrix for Screening Climate Actions
- **Share Out from Outcomes Matrix Table Work**
- **Feedback on the Outcomes Matrix as a Community Tool**



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## RECAP of Equity and Community Considerations

# Key Takeaways and Themes from Previous Workshops (December and April 2024)

## Equity sessions have facilitated:

- Networking across sectors, stakeholders and community change leaders
- Expressions of values and principles relevant to climate change and action
- Development of equity considerations and guiding questions for climate action planning
- Creation of outcome measures and an evaluation matrix that can be used for screening climate actions based on the values and principles of equity

Additional words, themes or needs expressed: **dignity, hope, storytelling, connectivity, opportunity.**



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# Building our Equity Framework focusing on Process, Access and Benefits

Organizing equity considerations and recommendations in advance of implementation planning

# Equity in Process

## Shared Values and Principles

- Importance of social contracts and transparency.
- Involving community members early in the planning process and building on existing strengths and expertise can enhance trust and cooperation.
- Need for community autonomy and collective power in decision-making.
- Importance of trust and accountability across partners and sectors.
- Acknowledging and building upon the work and organizing efforts already being done; lift up what's working.
- **Using multiple 'channels' for communication and engagement using clear terms, shared language, and in different languages.**
- Youth Engagement: Involving younger generations in planning and decision-making can yield innovative ideas and solutions.

## Transformed

## Equity Framework Guiding Questions

Are the planned communication strategies and outreach activities accessible for all community members? Do they use shared and accessible language (including interpretation and translation into different languages)? Do they use direct communication channels and trusted messengers to reach target groups and communities? How do the engagement activities ensure safe and accessible spaces for community members?

# Equity in Process

How does the planning process intentionally include community education and participation? For example, are community conversations, workshops, town halls or other intentional outreach activities planned? How do the measure design and implementation activities include diverse voices of people experiencing climate justice issues?

Are the planned communication strategies and outreach activities accessible for all community members? Do they use shared and accessible language (including interpretation and translation into different languages)? Do they use direct communication channels and trusted messengers to reach target groups and communities? How do the engagement activities ensure safe and accessible spaces for community members?

How does the outreach strategy address diverse/conflicting perspectives on climate change and the need for action?

How does the planning process recognize that communities are capable of leading their own change?

How does the design process build upon local knowledge and other work already being done in communities?

How does the planning process balance data collection while also considering community and stakeholder fatigue around research and evaluation. Does the data collection and monitoring of outcomes have clear purpose, actionable steps, and resources for community partners?

How does the planning process consider which people or organizations need to be involved in climate action planning? When partnering with local organizations or change leaders, does the planning process provide sufficient resources and considerations for capacity building, meaningful participation, and compensation for time?

Are young people intentionally engaged for meaningful roles in participation? How are future generations being considered in the planning of climate action measures?

Are the people and organizations that have direct influence over public funding and decision-making working alongside communities to better understand their needs and desired outcomes? How is power being shared in decision-making?

How does the engagement strategy emphasize actionable and desired changes to make climate action more accessible and tangible?

# Equity in Access

How does the plan include financial resources and investment needed for long-term sustainable practices, infrastructure, and education initiatives? What are the ideas or mechanisms for addressing barriers for local small businesses and nonprofits, as well as individuals for accessing grants or financing for green infrastructure and other initiatives?

Does the measure increase access to innovation and/or clean energy technologies through affordability? How does the strategy address high upfront costs for energy efficiency upgrades, electrification, and solar installation likely to deter participation, especially for low-income households. What are the mechanisms for addressing limited access to financing and high interest rates make it challenging for contractors, homeowners and renters to invest in new technologies?

How does the plan or measure advance access to innovative or new technologies? For example, clean energy technologies like distributed energy systems and community solar?

What is the plan for ensuring community-ownership in innovation or technology when feasible and if desired?

How does the plan or measure specifically address inequitable access to resources, information, and new technologies, particularly for renters, low-income, disadvantaged, or historically disinvested communities?

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How are existing policies that interfere or are likely to interfere with successful implementation of the measure or plan being addressed? [For example, certain agricultural practices in urban environments, building codes, etc.] Are there strategies for promoting and adopting any new standards or policies needed for success? For example, incorporating resilience standards into new developments and adapting policies to support these priorities, including incentivizing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in housing developments.

If the plan or strategy is enrollment based, how does the coordination and communication address barriers to navigating and successfully accessing existing programs and resources?

How does the engagement strategy emphasize actionable and desired changes to make climate action more accessible and tangible?

# Equity in Access

## WORKFORCE

How does the plan or measure incorporate workforce development initiatives for training or capacity building to increase access to the clean energy workforce and quality jobs? How does the strategy build upon existing capabilities and programs and invest in needed workforce programs to ensure access for groups and populations underrepresented in the clean energy workforce? What is the strategy for engaging with, recruiting, and training youths to be ambassadors and stewards for this work in the future?

## BUILDINGS

How does the plan or measure expand the use of solar energy, particularly through community solar programs, to provide affordable, renewable energy options for low-income households. Other opportunities include offering property tax discounts for solar installations, incentivizing local solar manufacturing, and coupling solar installations with battery storage or vehicle to building (V2B) charging to improve energy resilience?

## TRANSPORTATION

How does the plan or measure improve accessibility and safe conditions for non-drivers while addressing poor pedestrian/bike infrastructure/inadequate shelter or safety at bus stops? Is the plan inclusive of low-income neighborhoods and people without cars already facing disproportionate climate impacts, as they often have limited access to safe, walkable streets, reliable public transit, and nearby grocery stores?

How does the plan address the financial barrier for accessing high cost of solar technologies, electric vehicles (EVs) and bikes particularly for marginalized communities and in rural areas, while limited EV infrastructure (charging stations) and lack of heavy-duty vehicle electrification amplify pollution in these areas?

# Equity in Benefits

## Health and Well-Being

How does the plan or measure reduce exposure to outdoor air pollutants such as emissions and toxic pollutants industries that pose health risks to nearby communities and their residents?

How does the plan or measure advance health and well-being outcomes for groups or populations on the frontlines of climate impacts, such as those living in historically disinvested neighborhoods, households in poverty, or those experiencing homelessness?

How does the plan or measure ensure benefits actually go back to the community?

# Equity in Benefits

## Affordability

How does the plan or measure address increasing energy and housing prices that put strains on affordability, especially for low-income households? For example, how does the plan or measure repurpose abandoned buildings for affordable housing or mixed-use development provides as opportunities to revitalize communities while addressing energy-efficiency and environmental justice goals?

How does the plan ensure that cost savings from energy efficiency retrofits accrue to tenants as well as homeowners and property owners?

How will the plan or measure benefit community members in tangible ways (food security, housing, utility costs, health, community resilience, air pollution)?

How does the plan or measure assess for and prevent gentrification and other forms of displacement? Does the plan or measure plan to evaluate then impacts of gentrification and displacement on local areas?

# Equity in Benefits

## Resilient Communities

How does the plan or measure assess and prepare for climate-related challenges, such as heat islands, floods, droughts, and wildfire risks that threaten local and regional stability.

How does the plan or measure address impacts of regional deforestation?

How does the plan or measure address flooding risks due to poor infrastructure, impacting roads and evacuation capabilities?

How does the plan or measure address urban sprawl and insufficient green space and urban heat islands? For example, does the plan or measure address lack of shade in different places across communities, including at bus stops and other places people gather?

How does the plan or measure address urban sprawl and increases in interstate congestion, air pollution, and other emergency risks?

# Equity in Benefits

## Economic + Workforce Development

How does the plan or measure identify and reduce barriers to any potential economic opportunities and ownership? For example, does the plan intend to assess for barriers during contractual negotiations and in training opportunities? How does the plan or measure work to include these benefits and workforce protections into procurement/contracts?

How does the plan or measure contribute to workforce training programs or apprenticeship programs to increase access and participation in new workforce opportunities? For example, who are the partners for training programs needed for solar panel installations or battery production to support economic resilience and create job opportunities?

# Structuring an Equity Framework

<b>EQUITY FRAMEWORK</b> Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Climate Change Action Plan: BREATHE Initiative for <i>Reducing Emissions for a Resilient Region</i>		
<b>PURPOSE STATEMENT:</b> <i>The purpose of the BREATHE CCAP Equity Framework is to ensure community members and stakeholders are able to meaningfully participate in the planning and decision-making of climate action strategies for the Knoxville MSA. The Framework also aims to ensure equitable distribution of benefits and burdens across groups, populations and neighborhoods.</i>		
<i>Framework Element + Question</i>	<i>CCAP Plan/Measure Design</i>	<i>CCAP Plan/Measure Implementation</i>
<b>EQUITY in PROCESS and PARTICIPATION</b> Desired Outcome: The CCAP aims to purposefully include voices of impacted individuals and groups in both the design, implementation and evaluation of CCAP Measures.		
<b>Guiding Questions:</b>  How does the planning process intentionally include community education and participation? For example, are community conversations, workshops, town halls or other intentional outreach activities planned? How do the measure design and implementation activities include diverse voices of people experiencing climate justice issues?  Are the planned communication strategies and outreach activities accessible for all community members? Do they use shared and accessible language (including interpretation and translation)? Do they used direct communication channels and trusted messengers to reach target groups and communities? How do the engagement activities ensure safe and accessible spaces for community members?		

# Equity Framework

Shared Values and Principles

Transformed

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- **Using multiple ‘channels’ for communication and engagement using clear terms, shared language, and in different languages.**
- Youth Engagement: Involving younger generations in planning and decision-making can yield innovative ideas and solutions.

Equity Framework

Guiding Questions

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Organized in Structure

EQUITY FRAMEWORK		
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How does the outreach strategy address diverse/conflicting perspectives on climate change and the need for action?		
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How does the planning process balance data collection while also considering community and stakeholder fatigue around research and evaluation. Does the data collection and monitoring of outcomes have clear purpose, actionable steps, and resources for community partners?		
How does the design process build upon local knowledge and other work already being done in communities?		



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## Overview of the Community Outcomes Matrix

# What is an Evaluation Matrix?

- Can also be referred to as a Decision Matrix or Outcomes Matrix
- An evaluation matrix is a tool that helps people compare and assess different ideas or initiatives by first defining what matters and then 'scoring' or 'screening' a set of options.
- An evaluation matrix relies on an agreed upon set of criteria or outcomes that drive the decision-making.
- A matrix can help identify the strengths and weaknesses of ideas while also identifying potential risks or consequences, short and long -term benefits, and impacts (positive or negative) on different groups or populations.

# 5 Equity Outcomes



## ***Environmental Resilience***

Climate action can provide benefits at individual, neighborhood and community levels through intentional planning of green spaces, improved preparedness and response to climate hazards and reduced exposure to increasingly frequent and severe weather events – such as poor air quality, flooding, and heat waves.

# 5 Equity Outcomes



## ***Access to Innovation***

This outcome captures community and stakeholder commitment to ensuring equitable access to innovative technologies, opportunities and partnerships likely to result from the proposed climate action.

# 5 Equity Outcomes



## ***Economic Opportunity***

This outcome includes economic benefits that accrue directly from the climate action, such as contracting opportunities for small, minority, and women owned businesses, access to quality jobs, workforce development and union work, and entrepreneur opportunities.

# 5 Equity Outcomes



## ***Community + Capacity-Building***

Climate action planning and investment involves both sharing knowledge and creating capabilities at all levels of community and across sectors, such as housing and transportation. This outcome area helps determine how a climate action values, builds upon, and advances local knowledge, and creates inclusive education, training and capacity building opportunities for all.

# 5 Equity Outcomes



## *Quality of Life*

This outcome captures the extent to which a climate action improves access for all to our basic life essentials including affordable, adequate, and secure housing and utilities, nutritious food, safe and reliable transportation, clean air and water, health and well-being, and other basic needs.

<b><u>ACTION:</u></b>																	
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	Environmental Resilience	Access to Innovation	Economic Opportunity	Community + Capacity Building	Quality of Life	Other Benefit:	Other Benefit:	Other Benefit:									
Likely Benefits:																	
Project Purpose Statement:																	
Key Partners: [Who needs to be included?]																	
Important Considerations and Unintended Consequences:																	
<b><u>CCAP Sector or Climate Measure:</u></b>						<table><tr><td></td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td>Recommend with Reservations</td></tr><tr><td>Recommend Moving Forward:</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>					Yes	No	Recommend with Reservations	Recommend Moving Forward:			
	Yes	No	Recommend with Reservations														
Recommend Moving Forward:																	

- Major potential benefits
- ◐ Moderate potential benefits
- Some potential benefits
- No anticipated benefits and might add burden

Across CCAP Sector Measures:	Environmental Resilience	Access to Innovation	Economic Opportunity	Community + Capacity Building	Quality of Life
<b>Measure B1:</b> Increase uptake of energy efficiency and weatherization of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.	○	○	○	○	○
<b>Measure T10:</b> Expand and improve public transit infrastructure to create safe, reliable and affordable options for the region.	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Measure E12:</b> Develop, invest in, and provide marketing outreach and education around distributed clean energy options, including onsite solar and community choice solar.	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
<b>Measure A18:</b> Create opportunities for, reduce barriers to, and increase education about small-scale farming and benefits.	—	—	—	—	—

# Instructions for the Outcomes Matrix Activity

- Work in 3-4 Groups Organized by CCAP Sectors (e.g., Buildings, Transportation, etc.)
- Use the Community Outcomes Matrix Toolkit handout for completing the Matrix
  1. Choose ONE of the 3 Proposed Actions for your Sector listed on Page 5
  2. Follow the Instructions for completing the Matrix on Page 4
  3. You will have 50 minutes to complete your Outcomes Matrix
  4. Please choose someone to share out from your group
- Please think about the Matrix as a tool when working through it and ways it can be improved.



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## Discussion: Feedback on the Outcomes Matrix as a Tool

# Feedback on the Outcomes Matrix

- Feedback on the Outcomes themselves:
  - **Environmental Resilience**
  - **Access to Innovation**
  - **Economic Opportunity**
  - **Community and Capacity-Building**
  - **Quality of Life**
- What would you change about the process or structure of the Matrix?
- Did the Matrix capture everything that needs to be captured at an initial stage of decision-making?
- How was consensus achieved? Does there need to be more guidance



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## Get Involved With Next Steps!

- August/September: CCAP draft released to working groups for comment
- October/November: CCAP publication

For more information, contact us at  
**[contact@knoxbreathe.org](mailto:contact@knoxbreathe.org)**

**Be on the lookout for  
Public Engagement Events in Summer 2025!**