

Equity Tool

Our Climate Equity Commitment

Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person's quality of life outcomes in our community. The City of Austin Climate Plan Revision Process recognizes that racial inequity is wrong and solving climate change is impossible without racial equity. In Austin, this means our Climate Plan Revision Process will only succeed if we center racial equity in the goals, strategies, and plans developed through the Revision Process. We realize that City of Austin infrastructure, policies, and investment have historically and systemically neglected and harmed low-income communities and communities of color. The City acknowledges these injustices and the need to right these wrongs by changing its institutions and creating a culture of equity. We recognize:

- Low-income communities and communities of color are the most impacted by extreme weather, and climate change will worsen existing harms and challenges.
- Low-income communities and communities of color must be prioritized to receive the disproportionate benefits of the transition to a pollution-free society.

- If we design and implement programs to serve low-income communities and communities of color, we will positively impact all residents in the Austin area.

Because of this, we have created the following themes and associated Equity Tool with Screening Questions to ensure our climate plan will increase racial equity: Health, Affordability, Accessibility, Just Transition, Community Capacity, Cultural Preservation & Accountability.

Objectives

Health - Strategy improves health (physical and mental) outcomes for low-income communities and communities of color. The strategy upholds the fundamental human right to clean, healthy and adequate air, water, land, food, education, transportation, safety, and housing.

Affordability - Strategy lowers and stabilizes costs related to basic living needs (housing, food, utilities, healthcare, transportation, etc.) for low-income communities and communities of color.

Accessibility - Strategy increases access to jobs, housing, transportation, funding, education, healthy foods, and a clean environment for low-income communities and communities of color. Strategy removes barriers through city infrastructure, policy, and investments.

Just Transition - Strategy ensures economic justice so that low-income communities and communities of color are prioritized in the benefits of the strategy and are protected from any potential negative consequences.

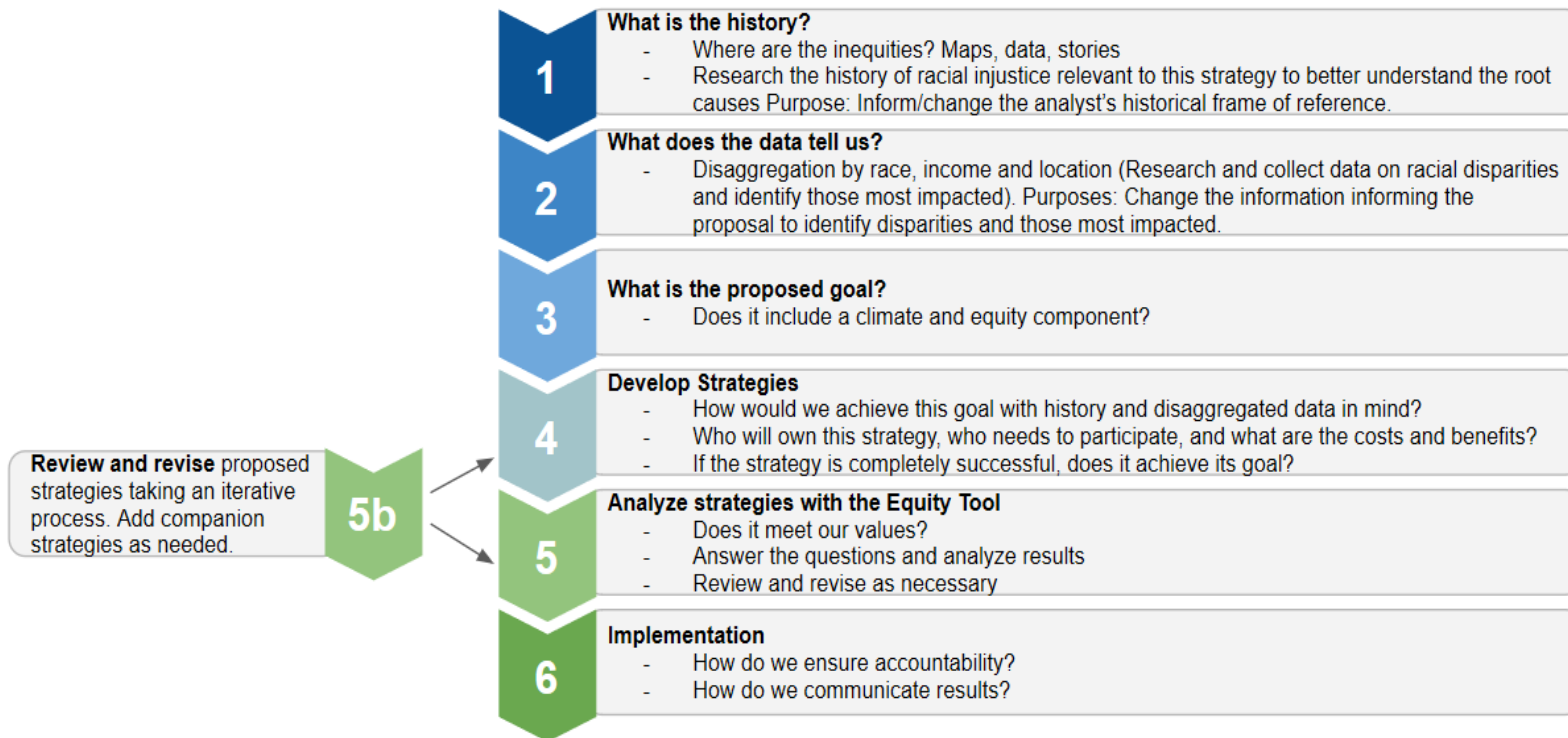
Community Capacity- Strategy elevates the voices of low-income communities and communities of color by developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, and resources that a community needs to survive, adapt, and thrive.

Cultural Preservation - Strategy deliberately and respectfully honors cultural relevance and history to maintain cultural heritage from the past and present for the benefit of all generations.

Accountability - Strategy ensures that low-income communities and communities of color can hold governments and institutions accountable for equitable implementation.

Recommended process for advisory groups

Please refer to the following 6 steps for building racial equity, adapted from GARE, as you develop goals and strategies:



Using the Equity Tool Questions

+, -, 0 (positive impact, negative impact, neutral or not applicable)

- Negatives are not acceptable, modify your strategy
- Score all the questions, discuss
- End with an assessment of 0+ score for all 7 themes (improving conditions)

Track impacts over time. Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders. Document unresolved issues.

Theme 1: Health Strategy improves health (physical and mental) outcomes for low-income communities and communities of color. The strategy upholds the fundamental human right to clean, healthy and adequate air, water, land, food, education, transportation, safety, and housing.	Impact		
	Harm -1	Neutral or N/A	Benefit +1

Does the proposed action reduce air pollution (Ozone, VOC, NOx, etc.) and reduce asthma and other respiratory-related hospital visits?		N/A	
Does the proposed action extend expected longevity and/or quality of life for populations experiencing health disparities?			+1
Does the proposed action reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, i.e. improve mental health?			+1
Does the proposed action help restore or protect ecosystem health (air, land, water, soil)?			+1
<p>Overall response to these questions with justification: Strategies address multiple pathways to increase availability and access to pro-climate, pro-health food which has benefits to the environment (i.e., regenerative agriculture decreases GHG emissions, increases carbon sequestering,) improves mental health due to decreased food insecurity and associated stress, and supports good physical health in connection to reduced risk for chronic disease.</p>			

	Impact
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Theme 2: Affordability Strategy lowers and stabilizes costs related to basic living needs (housing, food, utilities, healthcare, transportation, etc.) for low-income communities and communities of color.	Harm -1	Neutral or N/A	Benefit +1
Could this limit the displacement of residents and small businesses when surrounding property values rise?			+1
Is the proposed action affordable to all residents, and/or does this offer inclusive financing strategies that prioritize the most income-burdened populations? (be specific about whether you're financing through an organization or the city, etc)			+1
Does the proposed action reduce cost burden and the number of families that are cost-burdened by housing (including utilities), transportation (defined as spending more than 33% of income on H+T)?		N/A	
Does the proposed action generate burdens (including financial, health costs), either directly or indirectly, to communities of color or low-income populations? If yes, are there opportunities to mitigate these impacts?			+1

Overall response to these questions with justification:

Goal and strategies are intentionally focused on increasing access and affordability of the food system for all Austinites.

Theme 3: Accessibility Strategy increases access to jobs, housing, transportation, funding, education, healthy foods, and a clean environment for low-income communities and communities of color. Strategy removes barriers through city infrastructure, policy, and investments.	Impact		
	Harm -1	Neutral or N/A	Benefit +1
Does the proposed action expand access to healthy/clean transport systems, such as walking paths, bike routes, and public transit in order to access essential services (hospital, school), amenities, and/or jobs?		N/A	
Does the proposed action improve amenities and essential services in traditionally underserved geographies/neighborhoods? essential services: hospitals, schools, and groceries Amenities: parks / green spaces			+1
Does the proposed action increase equitable access to information/education around climate, i.e. impacts, benefits, and programs?			+1

<p>Does the proposed action remove any barriers that might prevent individuals in low income communities and communities of color (<i>consider language, gender, socio-economic status (SES), digital inequality, LGBTQ status, (dis)ability, employment status, immigration status, education level, geography, environment, religious beliefs, culture, history of incarceration, etc.</i>) from benefiting fully if this strategy were implemented as written?</p>			+1
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Overall response to these questions with justification:
 The focus on increasing equitable access to pro-climate, pro-health food in all Austin communities means that those communities that are underserved will be prioritized for funds and programming across all strategies. In addition, by engaging and empowering communities to direct programs, interventions, and funding, appropriate resources will be allocated or developed, as determined by each community.

<p>Theme 4: Just Transition Strategy ensures economic justice so that low-income communities and communities of color are prioritized in the benefits of the strategy and are protected from any potential negative consequences.</p>	Impact		
	<p>Harm -1</p>	<p>Neutral or N/A</p>	<p>Benefit +1</p>
<p>Does the proposed action support communities of color and low-income populations through workforce development, contracting opportunities or the increased diversity of city staff? *internal* or support training programs prioritizing low-income communities and communities of color? *external*</p>			+1

Does the proposed action create local opportunities for livable wage jobs for low-income communities and communities of color?		Neutral/+	
Does the proposed action place responsibility on institutions to address historical disparities in contributing to climate change?			+1
<p>Overall response to these questions with justification:</p> <p>While the strategies offer an opportunity for low-income and communities of color to benefit from livable wage jobs created as a consequence of these approaches, this may not be guaranteed. Overall, each strategy explicitly addresses the need for solutions to be driven by and tailored to each community, and emphasizes a systems approach rather than placing responsibility for action on the individual.</p>			

<p>Theme 5: Community Capacity Strategy elevates the voices of low-income communities and communities of color by developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, and resources that a community needs to survive, adapt, and thrive.</p>	Impact		
	Harm -1	Neutral or N/A	Benefit +1

<p>Does the proposed action engage and continue to empower communities of color and low-income populations in a meaningful, authentic and culturally appropriate manner? Does it respect community-based knowledge and is it based on community identified needs and input/feedback?</p>			+1
<p>Does the proposed action help build community capacity through funding, educational opportunities, and/or other resources?</p>			+1
<p>Does the proposed action help foster the building of effective, long-term relationships and trust between diverse communities and local government? (by leveraging resources and building collaborative partnerships) Does this action strengthen community relationships and partnerships?</p>		Neutral	
<p>Overall response to these questions with justification: Community knowledge and the social capital of both individuals within the community and the community itself, are pivotal to all strategies. By building programs, systems, and funding mechanisms in collaboration with community members, relationship and trust-building are prioritized and integral to the process.</p>			

	Impact
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Theme 6: Accountability Strategy ensures that low-income communities and communities of color can hold governments and institutions accountable for equitable implementation.	Harm -1	Neutral or N/A	Benefit +1
Does the proposed action have provisions to ensure ongoing collection of data (that can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity/income) and public reporting of data? Can this data be validated qualitatively by community members?			+1
Does the proposed action have clear markers of short-term and long-term success as well as timelines for meeting markers of success? If so, what are the mechanisms we will utilize to ensure that goals are met (successful implementation and enforcement)?	-1		
Does the proposed action address consequences if goals are not met? Is there a process for those impacted by the policy to express grievances or satisfaction and to ensure that concerns are met?		Neutral	
Is the proposed action adequately funded to achieve its designed goals?		Neutral	

Overall response to these questions with justification:

Data and outcomes of these strategies are generated by and for the community, and are explicitly and implicitly owned by those who have initiated, implemented, experienced, and measured these approaches. We acknowledge and accept our choice to focus on flexibility and aspirational goals at the cost of specificity and implementation enforcement goals

Theme 7: Cultural Preservation Strategy deliberately and respectfully honors cultural relevance and history to maintain cultural heritage from the past and present for the benefit of all generations.	Impact		
	Harm -1	Neutral or N/A	Benefit +1
Does the proposed action acknowledge/respect/honor the culture, historic assets, and traditions of low income and communities of color?			+1
Does the proposed action improve social cohesion (engagement and connection within/to the community) among low income communities and communities of color?		Neutral	

Does the proposed action's decision-making processes go beyond dollars and cents to address shared values and cultural differences in order to support implementation?			+1
<p>Overall response to these questions with justification:</p> <p>Any solutions imposed from outside the community are unlikely to adequately honor and preserve existing culture, history, or traditions. Therefore, these strategies require community involvement from beginning to end, in the hopes of ensuring more just and equitable systems to the benefit of all residents of Austin. These benefits are not measured in financial outcomes, but rather in a better and more equitable food system, improved health, and decreased GHG emissions.</p>			

Scoring

	Impact Score
Health	3
Affordability	3
Just Transition	2

Accessibility	3
Community Capacity	3
Accountability	0
Cultural Preservation	2
Total:	16