



REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS

SIDNEY LEZAK PROJECT



 **Portland State**
UNIVERSITY
College of Urban & Public Affairs
Social Equity and Opportunity Forum



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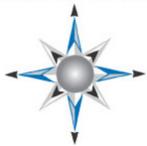
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About the Coalition for a Livable Future

The *Coalition for a Livable Future* unites over 90 diverse non-profits and businesses and hundreds of individuals to promote healthy and sustainable communities. By connecting issues, people and organizations, CLF empowers communities to take action together to shape the big decisions affecting the Portland region's future. The Coalition was created in 1994 by a diverse group of Portland area nonprofit organizations, including land use and transportation organizations, affordable housing providers, social justice groups and conservationists.

Since its formation in 1994, the Coalition for a Livable Future has worked to empower its 90+ member organizations find a common focus and forge partnerships by making clear the strategic linkages between and among the wide range of issues involved in creating a sustainable and just future for the Portland-Vancouver region.



About The Regional Livability Summit

The Regional Livability Summit is an annual gathering where regional leaders work to find a common focus and forge partnerships by making strategic linkages between and among the wide range of issues involved in creating a sustainable and just future for the Portland-Vancouver region. This year's Summit was on May 28th, 2008 and featured Maya Wiley from The Center for Social Inclusion as the keynote speaker.

About the 2008 Summit

In 2007, the Coalition for a Livable Future in partnership with Portland State University unveiled the ground-breaking Regional Equity Atlas. One of the first of its kind in the country, the Atlas examines how benefits and burdens of development are distributed in the region. It reveals where there are gaps in access to housing, quality education, parks, transit, and grocery stores – foundations for individual and community health and prosperity, foundations for sustainability. The Atlas and other research indicate that even in this region – an area with a reputation for livability and sustainability – basic needs and opportunities to get ahead are increasingly out of reach for the middle class as well as those who have historically been left behind. To achieve true sustainability, we must build upon our leadership in green development and get beyond it – toward full inclusion, toward reduced disparities, toward equality.

This year's Summit focused on discussing the ideas gathered from the community in response to the Atlas research and considering how to create an agenda for change – one that harnesses our desire for positive change, recognizes our interconnectedness, aspires toward equality and inclusion, and lives up to the promise of our people and our place.



Who made this year's Summit Happen?

The Summit Planning Committee

The Summit program was designed by a talented and committed group of volunteers and CLF staff. They include:

Linda Clingan - Sidney Lezak Project
Janet Hammer - PSU Social Equity and Opportunity Forum
Jill Fuglister & Ron Carley - CLF Co-Directors
Emily Hicks - LINKS Americorps Intern
Vena Rainwater - LINKS Americorps Intern
Allison Adcox - CLF Program Assistant

The Equity Action Committee

CLF's Equity Action Committee is made up of volunteers who are working with CLF staff and board to develop a Regional Equity Action Agenda – a blueprint for advancing equity through public policy change and other solutions. The committee helped to collapse, refine, and evaluate hundreds of proposals that were generated through community forums and presentations that involved nearly 2,000 people. The 2008 Summit served as another touch point in this process, where we further discussed draft action agenda strategies within six breakout topic areas. CLF expects to finalize the Agenda in fall of 2008. Committee members include:

Sonali Balajee - organizational development specialist
Sam Chase - Community Development Network
Sarah Chenven - Mercy Corps Northwest
Rosemarie Cordello - sustainable food systems advocate
Heather Gramp - Clark County Health Department
John Haines - Mercy Corps Northwest
Janet Hawkins - Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families and Community
Jim Labbe - Audubon Society of Portland
Martha McClennan - NW Housing Alternatives
Mary Kyle McCurdy - 1000 Friends of Oregon
Leah Nevada Page - Mercy Corps Northwest
Mart Perkins - Washington Mathematics Engineering and Science Achievement
Ron Ruggerio - SEIU local 49



The Process & Agenda

Daytime Program

Opening Keynote with Maya Wiley:

“Equity for Opportunity: The history and current context of our struggle for a better life”

Regional Plenary Panel:

“Regional Geographies of Opportunity: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow”

Framing Presentation:

“Regional Equity Action Agenda: Emerging Strategies and Point of Departure for Deliberation”

CLF shared preliminary strategies that have been identified in response to the Regional Equity Atlas. These draft strategies, developed with the input of hundreds of community leaders and residents, served as a point of departure for the breakout discussions.

Equity Action Strategy Breakouts and Caucuses Part I

Breakout discussion groups focused on proposed Equity Action Agenda strategies. Participants also caucused around ideas for regional equity action that were not part of the pre-planned discussions. Part I of breakouts included a briefing on proposed strategies followed by a discussion of strategy refinements as well as challenges and opportunities for moving them forward.

Storytelling Performance by Baba Wague Diakite

Equity Action Strategy Breakouts and Caucuses Part II

In Part II, participants rolled up their sleeves and considered how the unusual partners gathered in each group and other key community partners can move the strategies forward.

Conclusions

The day concluded with recaps from the breakouts and caucuses as well as a call to sign onto a Pledge for Regional Equity

Evening Program

Evening Keynote with Maya Wiley:

“Organizing for Change: Expanding the Sustainability Agenda”

Leadership Response Panel: “Moving The Regional Equity Agenda Forward”



“Every human, regardless of race or culture, is a leaf from one giant tree.”

Baba Wague Diakite

Who attended the Summit?

This year’s Summit brought together over 300 participants from non-profit, private, and public sectors and across a wide spectrum of diverse interests and backgrounds – including conservationists, advocates for affordable housing, economic development, urban design, transportation alternatives, education, public health, and social justice. Participants also included leaders from the faith community, college students, teachers, and community leaders, elected officials and concerned residents from across our region.



Excerpts from the Keynote Address by Maya Wiley

“The problem isn’t whether we make mistakes. The problem is whether we correct them. So what we need to do is look at the most marginalized communities to understand what the structural arrangements are so that we can shift them.”

“Part of why we think about race, and why we have to look at race, is because often race tells us how our structural arrangements are operating for all of us.”

“Policies matter tremendously. And nothing that we see in terms of the current patterns (we have around schools, around the environment, around housing, around jobs, around transit, around how we organize our communities) is inevitable.”

“The way we deal with the challenge of the carrying capacity of the planet is to enable people to make good smart participatory choices and that means political rights, civil liberties, and the creation of social policies that enable people to make good choices for themselves – because they will. And they have. And we have the research to prove it.”



“If we’re willing to look at race... if we’re willing to look at poverty... if we’re willing to look at the many forms of social inclusions to make sure that we are not reproducing them... what we will set up is the kind of flexible, smart, constant problem-solving that we are inevitably going to need.”

Maya Wiley



Regional Plenary Panel

Thank you to the Following Panelists:

Pam Phan - Moderator

City of Portland, Vision into Action

Nichole Maher

Native American Youth and Family Center

Nathan Teske

El Programa Hispano-Catholic Charities

Alfonso Lopez-Vasquez

Pacific University and Washington County Human Rights Commission

Ed Washington

Portland State University Community Liaison for Diversity Initiatives



"We know that the demographics are changing. We know that about 48% of our children in Multnomah county are children of color, are multi-ethnic. Our future looks very different than the way this room looks today... Looking at the data and truly using it, is going to require us to do things that may feel very uncomfortable. And we have to be prepared to do that if change is going to happen."

- Nichole Maher

"What the challenge is, is that we can't be afraid to step out of the box. All of us and our organizations get used to doing things a certain way, with certain groups of people, under a certain set of instructions. That just isn't the way it's going to be from this day forward!" - Ed Washington

"How do we convey the message of oppression, the message of poverty, the challenges that are really affecting our communities? One way that I feel we need to begin, is to look at social policy and put aside the deficit model that our institutions have used in portraying our experience and changing us to become in the white man's image. One of the things we need to begin to look at is to look at the assets of the cultural diversity of the people represented here and to use transculturalism, a new model of looking at society. How do we make a whole out of many pieces? Unfortunately in our society, we have become so individualistic that we have become almost narcissistic, we need to break that mold. We need to truly build communities of interdependence." - Alfonso Lopez-Vasquez





Breakout Sessions

The Equity Atlas Project measures access to opportunities like affordable housing, transit, and parks – it illustrates which people and places have the best access and which have the worst access to these important assets. CLF shared this research with thousands of residents in our region who proposed hundreds of solutions to the inequities that the Atlas identifies. These solution ideas were refined by CLF's Equity Action Committee, board and staff. The Summit breakout discussions were formed around preliminary strategies that emerged from this process.

Our overall goals of the breakout sessions were to:

- a. Identify what is happening in our region within the topic area and who's involved in building the collective intelligence.
- b. Identify specific things that CLF and its member and ally network are uniquely positioned to make happen in this topic area.
- c. Identify the key players we need to collaborate with to move the most promising strategies forward.
- d. Commit to act.



Breakout Topics

- Achieving Equitable Transportation & Affordable Transit-Oriented Development
- Encouraging Asset and Wealth Building
- Schools as Sustainability Centers
- Creating & Preserving Quality Affordable Housing
- Building a Sustainable Economy: Green Jobs & Green, Community-Owned Enterprises
- Accounting for Social Equity and Opportunity
- Equitable Climate Change Policy
- Health Equity

Highlights From Breakouts

Transportation Equity

Goals

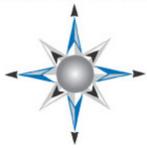
- I. Strengthen information sharing and outreach
- II. Advocate for Integration of Affordable Housing and Transit
- III. Investigate collaboration with private efforts – employers, individuals, unions, foundations, research institutes, private transportation systems (shuttles for schools, senior centers, etc.)

Strategies

- Plan and project tracking (especially Regional Transportation Plan, Columbia River Crossing, and future decisions which will have significant regional impact)
- Blog
- Systematic alerts to encourage more participation in public hearings
- Form Transportation Equity Working Group
- Tie public funds to provision of affordable housing near transit
- Encourage inter-agency collaboration (i.e. public and private housing providers, TriMet, and Metro)

CLF's Role

- Being an effective Speakers Bureau - getting the word out to neighborhood organizations
- Data research and tracking – creative ways of refashioning data
- Networking – increasing linkages
- Regional Transportation Plan advocacy
- Articulating vision



Asset & Wealth Building

Goals:

- I. Capitalizing/expanding on potential collective and sharing economies (tool libraries, car sharing, revolving funds)
- II. Increase resources in education for financial literacy; holistic (collaborative/cooperative) approach to providing these services to different populations; tap in to what already exists.

Strategies:

- Liaison with other organizations to expand financial literacy services. (E.g. help to reduce drop-out rates in BHCD's 3-year program).
- Identify and endorse alternative asset-building methods and diversify the funds which are used to pay for those services.
- Endorse creation of alternative individual development accounts (IDA) that recognize different categories of assets and new market funding (e.g. tax credits) at the state level as a new source of funds for IDAs.
- Support collective asset-building/sharing opportunities.
- Support an organization/agency that could provide a certification/standardization of technical assistance/lending providers for businesses.
- Examine rates of loan denial to people of color or other disadvantaged groups (add to equity data). We didn't talk about this but I would add also examine areas with high concentration of payday and check cashing services to see if correlated to low-income or high poverty areas.
- Expand loan products (e.g. Angel investor fund for micro-loans)
- Endorse efforts to require or refer persons who have been denied loans to go to a financial literacy program...second examination of the denial if completed.

CLF's Role:

- Advocate for alternative types of asset-building services outside of education, home ownership, small business that already exist (retirement, collective income, investment).
- Outreach – connect people/audience with the financial literacy programs already available...just listing organizations in a directory won't reach the populations in need.
- Increase participation in the coalition (and among themselves) by economic development/wealth-building organizations, particularly outside of Portland city center, to increase the geographic range of intervention potential.



Schools as Sustainability Centers

Goals

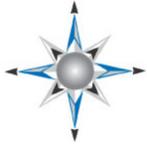
- I. Schools act as hubs of equity/sustainability
- II. The vision should balance education of individuals with the education of the community. Create educational opportunities with students that are diverse, have service learning opportunities, learn trade and craft skills. Range of experiences provided. Give back to the community.

Strategies

- Professional development – help teachers, students, parents, etc
- Coalition vision for equity and sustainability conveyed through teacher training
- Looking to schools for food learning, food growing; set standards for food education for each grade

CLF's Role

- Lobby for expansion of programs that are already successful, such as SUN schools, outdoor school, school gardens.
- Play facilitation role, actively seeking participation from diverse backgrounds. Focus on engaging everyone.
- Seek out ways to make schools community centers. Provides adult education, tele-communication for people that can not be there.
- Serve as ambassador to help schools network with professionals in the community. When we need a doctor, designer, dancer – who does CLF have in its rolodex?



Affordable Housing

Goals:

- I. Increase total affordable housing
- II. Bring in multiple players; build housing coalitions
- III. Innovative architectural models and urban design
- IV. Sustainability – social, economic, environmental

Strategies:

- Secure substantial ongoing revenue sources and affordable housing for low income people
- Secure resources from the Urban Renewal Areas
- Adopt a regional housing code and enforcement program for multifamily units
- Require or create incentives for inclusionary zoning
- Promote implementation of Metro's Toolkit for affordable housing strategies through education, regulation or public accountability mechanism like a report card.
- Messaging and value-based discussion
- Storytelling – past experiences

CLF's Role:

Areas of leadership for CLF:

- Inclusionary strategies
- Regional trust fund
- Equity impact statements
- Urban renewal money dedicated to affordable housing

Areas of support from CLF:

- Funding and incentives for affordable housing
- Strategic leveraging on funding
- Transit accessible housing vouchers and mortgages
- Lobbying state/fed agencies to get available housing

Areas of endorsement from CLF:

- Utility funded energy efficiency
- Partnership housing, flexible spending outside district
- Homestead exemption strategy
- Invest in research and development to lower cost of construction (health and green, sustainability)
- Housing code implementation – healthy homes
- Community land trusts (home ownership permanently affordable when developed)

Sustainable Economy

Goals:

Seek new development in the realm of private for profit

Major categories for Sustainable Economy:

- II. Environmental Services (ecosystem, soil & water)
- III. Build Environment (energy efficient)
- IV. Tech/Design & Reengineering
- V. Manufacturing
- VI. Energy & Water – Production and Conversation
- VII. Waste Recapture & Reuse
- VIII. Alternative Finance & Policies
- IX. Education

Strategies:

- Carbon Tax: revenue go to micro-enterprise based on sustainability parameters
- Start with the Built Environment: many branches into other areas/ industries and connects to education
- Replacing imported hydrocarbon (oil replacement) with windpower; entry level and economic development linked to education
- Make sure the people we refer to when we talk about equity are a part of the conversation
 - Through education scholarships, etc.
 - Through an inclusive forum to create public policy
- Shifting property tax onto value of land through a grassroots level. Not taxing on improvements made
- Diversity requirements and apprenticeships requirements for public development projects
- Education for entrepreneurship for diversity in business ownership as well as jobs supporting entrepreneurship in renewable energy.
- Waste recapture – use to make energy or green building materials
- Regional conservation corps
- Regional levy for green workforce development
- Work with at-risk and minority youth groups to do education and outreach on what is currently available
- Education for companies on benefits of supporting green jobs
- Identify relevant green jobs (that there is a need for multiple jobs) and then identify relevant organizations that can host these jobs... they identify proper training strategies.

CLF's Role:

- Advocate for social equity points integration into LEED
- Define a truly sustainable/green job define key points (i.e. truly sustainable industries vs/ greenwashing our old-polluting industries)
- Ensure that the community voice is at the table when green jobs programs are developed
 - Represent people in community (Apollo Alliance)
 - Green state legislation – policies directed toward communities
 - Stakeholder groups – work force training

Accounting for Equity and OpportunityGoals:

- I. Provide function of publicly declaring the goal, explaining its importance, and laying a foundation for implementation of policy in support of the goal.
- II. CLF should participate in decision-making points in Metro's growth management performance indicators of social equity.
- III. Monitor cities' comprehensive plans to ensure that equity is included.
- IV. Outreach to the planning staff of the cities and jurisdictions.
- V. Define community involvement that is meaningful

Strategies:

- Impact Assessments
- Social Equity Certification
- Bid Documents
- Community Benefit Agreements
- Triple Bottom Line Accounting

CLF's Role:

- Foundational work needs to occur to increase understanding of and support for equity and opportunity. CLF can play a key role in education and outreach about this topic
- Collect and disseminate information about the six equity tools
- Monitor opportunities for implementing/activating the equity tools
- Build community leadership and member capacity to implement tools
- Play a leadership role in advocating for inclusion of equity criteria in specific plans and policies
- Collect, share and assess data on poverty and demographics

Equitable Climate Change Policy CaucusImportant Points:

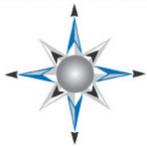
- It is critical for cap and trade solutions to require selling emissions permits to industry rather than giving them away.
- Energy efficiency measures should be pressed alongside Cap & Dividend, since the former are more politically popular.
- Revenues from these sales need to be recycled to low-income groups to counteract impacts upon them of higher energy prices.
- CLF can act as an organizer regarding equitable climate policy, including outreach through e-mail alerts, and through creating a short position paper reference.
- Promoting rail-based rather than auto and air travel is a key investment
- Need to improve renter access to programs such as energy audits (e.g. Energy Trust & Portland's Office of Sustainable Development)
- Look at models for we can look to for positive guidance in climate policy (e.g. British Columbia has a "Feebate" that appears on the utility bill, it gives an incentive to use less resources and the fee is recycled to low-income programs. Incentive structures such as "pay as you drive" auto insurance

CLF's Role:

- CLF can play a role by being an organizational hub for climate policy advocacy, education and outreach
- CLF could create a 1-page position paper to serve as a reference guide for its members, that summarizes optimal Equitable Climate Policy and connects with CLF Climate Smart CRC Campaign (E3 Network offers to create first draft for CLF review).
- Revive state-level efforts to start the leadership with state agencies, in calculating their carbon footprints.

Health Equity CaucusImportant Points:

- More focus on health dimensions
- Health Equity Action Coalition – linkages
- Funding equity & distributed resources



Evening Program: “Moving Forward: An Inclusive Agenda for Sustainability”

Evening Keynote

In the evening, Ms. Wiley shared her observations on the day’s progress through the lens of social inclusion. Here are a few quotes from this special evening talk about sustainability:

“What we’ve done is created this meaning around ‘Sustainability’ that is linked to what I would call a narrow view of the environment. If we say ‘sustainable’ what we mean is: ‘are we reducing carbon emissions?’, ‘are we recycling garbage?’, ‘are we dealing with storm-water runoff?’, all of which are huge important issues (it’s not about the minimization of those issues), but ‘sustainability’... when we say ‘sustainability’ what are we really talking about? Why do we want to sustain the planet? Is it so that we can have a museum-like physical environment that we can not touch, participate, and live in? No – because we recognize that we are actually deeply part of an environment – people are part of the environment. If people thrive, in the way that we should thrive, we should be able to do that in a way that the planet thrives... but yet we’ve created this narrow view of sustainability that actually excludes people from the equation.”

“The trick now is to figure out the entry points that get us working together, building our infrastructure in communities including communities of color, so that we can start working on this collectively across race – but without ignoring the salience of race.”



Leadership Response Panel: “Moving the Regional Equity Agenda Forward”

Thank you to the following Panelists:

Lawrence Wallack - Moderator

Dean of Portland State University College of Urban and Public Affairs.

Sam Brooks

Portland Business Alliance Board Chair, President and Chairman of Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, and founder of S. Brooks and Associates

Barbara Dudley

Adjunct Professor, PSU in Hatfield School of Government, former Executive Director Greenpeace USA and Assistant Director Strategic Campaigns National AFL-CIO

Michael Jordan

Metro Chief Operating Officer

Chuck Sheketoff

Executive Director, Oregon Center for Public Policy

Jeri Williams

Environmental Justice Activist

“On social equity, on social justice, on economic equity – we don’t even have a common language. Maya mentioned we have difficulty talking about these issues – and a lot of the aspects of those difficult conversations I totally agree with but quite frankly one of the things I struggle with is I don’t even know how to talk about this to people. I don’t know what words I can use that will resonate with you or with any other audience. I don’t know what language resonates with my bosses, my elected officials, I have seven bosses... I can’t figure out how to formulate the public policy questions to put before them because we don’t know how to talk about it. So there are some very fundamental conversations that we have to have so that we can catch up with the other bottom lines that we’re starting to make progress on... we in the public sector, those of us who try to formulate public policy and think about a triple-bottom line are struggling, mightily, with this part of the equation. Some structural challenges we face, not only do we not have a common language... but how do we account for progress in our organizations? Our accounting system is entirely based on finances. There is no accounting regime for a triple-bottom-line. That’s just one example of these really deep structural issues in this country.” – Michael Jordan



Next Steps in Collaboration - Moving the Equity Action Agenda Forward

The discussions that took place at the Summit are helping inform CLF's work to craft a Regional Equity Action Agenda. This agenda will articulate regional equity objectives and provide a blueprint for how to achieve the objectives through public policy change and other innovative solutions. We hope that it will spark a movement for regional equity that aims to ensure the right of every person to have access to opportunities for meeting basic needs and getting ahead as we pursue a sustainable future.

We hope you will consider participating in one or more of the working groups that will be convened in the next couple of months. These working groups will focus on advancing specific strategies, and we will need your help to make them successful. This is an exciting time to get behind a collaborative effort to advance equity in our region.

If you're interested in receiving periodic e-mails about events, reports, and action alerts, please join the Equity Atlas listserv at equityatlas.org. We also encourage you to share your ideas and stories about your work for regional equity through the online forums also found at equityatlas.org or feel free to contact us through e-mail or phone. For a full participants list, please go to:

With equity at the fore, together we can make the greater Portland-Vancouver area a resilient, prosperous, and multi-cultural region, one whose exceptional quality of life is accessible to all who live in it.

A Special Thank You to Our Volunteers

Kelly Haines Carolyn Fasholz Collin Roughton Luke Adcox
George Zaninovich Allison Adcox Vena Rainwater Natalie Ullman
Jenny Leis Daniel Campbell Amy Koski Nicolette Slagle
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Multnomah County Health Equity Initiative
Washington County, Commissioner Dick Schouten (from the
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United Way of the Columbia-Willamette
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