

DISCLAIMER: This is a summary of the meeting and is based upon the written notes and memory of individuals from the Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Green Ribbon Commission. The notes are intended to capture only the main points made in the meeting, and they reflect comments on work-in-progress. The notes do not imply a specific opinion or commitment on the part of any individual or organization represented at the meeting.

Notes for CFB Social Equity Meeting June 11, 2018

It is important to be able to communicate scientific and technical information to a general public audience: "Bring science to the sidewalk"

Climate action planning will be inadequate and even have counterproductive results if we do not deal with equity and faith-based input from the outset of the planning process

Equity must be "baked into" analysis and planning, and especially into the actual implementation of energy and climate policy

All greenhouse gas mitigation strategies must be viewed through the lenses of race, class, and gender

Public health costs and benefits (indoor and outdoor air pollution, active transport, etc.) are important to consider in the context of greenhouse gas mitigation.

The concept of health should include notions of not only personal health but also community health, health of the built environment, health of the natural environment, and the health of home/community as a base of operations.

Healthy buildings are an important equity concern.

The loudest voices often receive the most attention in city planning. It is important to ensure that the quiet and silent voices are also represented in the planning process.

There exists a false dichotomy between technical analysis and social equity analysis. It is important to be very intentional in regards to including equity from the start; if not, then unintentional and sometimes undesirable outcomes will occur

It is important to always be asking the "who" when assessing the benefits and costs of mitigation on equity; what specific communities or groups of people feel the benefits and costs?

Example: Upgrade of all residential buildings in Boston – then rents will go up and people will be displaced. A definitive indicator may not exist; mapping impacts may help to elucidate the impacts to vulnerable communities.

It is important it is important to identify the scale of harm (and benefit), and a potential policy's

ability to affect it.

Potential displacement should be a central issue in the equity assessment of greenhouse gas mitigation policy.

What are the unintended consequences and side effects of a particular action, e.g., the impact on neighboring towns of a decision or action taken in the city. For example, if Boston's waste is set to another town and processed there, that could simply be shifting the location of a negative impact. Do any of these side/unintended effects have no opportunity to cure?

How does a policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions interact with other policies? For example, if electric vehicles are incentivized or mandated, then where are the charging stations going to be located?

Feasibility and enforceability should be characterized for every proposed policy.

Agency and Ownership: How does the policy affect the decision-making power of the community? The power of the users over the resources? How does community ownership of the resource work? Who are the groups that need to be part of the conversation?

It is important to identify the data and indicators needed to monitor and measure the effectiveness of a policy once it has been implemented. How do we do this with limited data?

Can a policy support grass roots pilots and accessibility across sectors, including non-environmental interest groups?

Once it is designed, how can the "equity impact matrix" actually be used? Consider a scoring system based on potential policy advantages and social equity risks.

Important to identify positive spillover effects of a policy. Does a policy enhance, jobs, mobility, etc.

Where possible look to decentralized strategies; Example: in the waste management area, there are major actors who are invisible to decision-making: the individuals who harvest valuable materials from curbside bins on recycling days. How can they be empowered and "brought into the light"? Extend this thinking to all sectors.

Important to democratize the process and benefits of mitigation. Can you structure investment and finance that generate local benefits? Can you construct local ownership of assets?

Trust and trauma have some very deep historical roots. Large scale changes are triggers. Communities often anticipate the next major trauma.

Define social equity explicitly, and distinguish it from other similar terms such as equitable.

Do not fixate on costs or negative impacts mitigation; it also provides opportunities that,

properly leveraged, can generate benefits as well. Big changes due to adaptation and mitigation can enable big changes to make lives better.

Intergenerational equity is important to consider in the development of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions today.

Interested parties will want to know how about the process that produced the list of policies that are being evaluated as part of Carbon Free Boston.

It is important to identify conditions and forces that exist today that mitigation policies will have to confront. For example, gentrification, a decline in investment in public transit, rising asthma rates, etc. These forces create inertia that exacerbates inequity.

Ensure access to new technologies such as heat pumps, new transportation services. Education is needed to promote access.

Implementation of mitigation strategies involves some tradeoff between short-term and long-term goals. This should be acknowledged, identified, and transparently assessed wherever possible.

Participant List

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