

Healthy and Sustainable Communities
June 26, 2008
Universities at Shady Grove, Rockville, MD

Goal and Indicators Break-Out Session: Draft Notes

Draft Goal: Environmental Justice: Provide equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people regardless of race, income, culture and social class.

Draft Indicators: ¼ mile residential access to parks, ¼ mile residential access to public transit, residents living within one mile of locations that release toxic substances, all separated by low and higher income groups

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Draft Goal: Environmental Justice: Provide equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people regardless of race, income, culture and social class.

Group Comments on the Goal:

- If not equitable, not sustainable- Integration of the word 'equitable' is important to this discussion
 - Race correlation between people of color and environmental hazards
 - If equity lacking, sustainability is lacking
- Begin with set of principles to guide planning
 - * Specifically- income, race, sex
- This group and policymakers are uninformed about needs of low-income communities
- What are the environmental principles? (first, before addressing environmental justice)
- Members of the racial and socioeconomic backgrounds being discussed in this dialogue should be part of the dialogue
- Environmental Justice is about more than health issues
- Political power is important- people of low socioeconomic status have low political power
- Redefining what we mean by 'environment' is important in the environmental justice dialogue
- Inter-relationships between inputs and outputs need to be addressed
 - Communities of color and low-income communities
- Shared prosperity- jobs, wealth-building opportunities, business, public health, access to economic opportunity, education

- This is not just about people of color- environmental conservation, etc.
- Framing of the dialogue:
 - Philosophical articulation is needed
 - Disproportionate impacts
 - Establish communications and engagement process for ‘marginalized’ communities to be engaged in decision-making regarding environmental issues

Major Themes of Discussion on the Indicators:

1. Indicators across all the goals should have an environmental justice component
2. The draft indicators for Environmental Justice are inadequate
3. Effects of disproportionate access to parks and transit may not be able to be measured at the block group level, probably need community-level surveys to show actual distribution. Also, use race as an indicator in addition to income.

Additional Comments on the Indicators:

1. Unequal access to clean water and air and disproportionate access to health care are not included in the current indicators
2. Economic piece missing from indicators
3. Environmental Justice indicators are the confluence of several issues related to quality of life
4. The number of people who are represented/participating in process/accessing programs could be a good indicator.
5. Access to information would be a good indicator
6. Number of people represented in programs that County offers for energy efficiency could be a good indicator
7. All of the above indicators based on race should be included
8. ER visits per capita is a potential indicator
9. Community engagement that is inclusive is an indicator
10. How much affordable housing meets green communities criteria?
11. Overall income of school attendees is a good indicator
12. Per capita income and race of renters and owners is under regional poverty levels as defined by MWCOC)
13. Effective communication with minority communities is a strategy
14. Number of people in planning jobs and green jobs that are brought in from various economic levels, race, and sex
15. THE INDICATORS WE HAVE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT
16. These indicators are just examples, but not sufficient to measure environmental justice (need more indicators- with disaggregated data re: race, sex, income, culture)
17. Community should be involved in developing indicators
18. Need more thorough indicators, breaking it down by race and gender.

Additional Factors, Strategies and Partners (as handed in on participant notes forms)

Factors that POSITIVELY influence the trend	Factors that NEGATIVELY influence the Trend
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political want and willpower 2. Heightened publication and advocacy of the issue 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People affected are not empowered to speak out 2. Discussion isn't at level with all people (all people should be represented)

What are the most important FACTORS to address? What works?

Priority Factors	What Works (to do better)?
1. Redevelopment in built community must be equitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment does not leave out marginalized groups
2. Education of low-income/certain race groups	
3. Community participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassroots outreach
4. Cultural education (teach immigrant populations to not litter, etc., what our [America's] culture sounding environmental stewardship is)	
5. Access to efficiency upgrades	Subsidies
6. Access to clean water and air	Across the board changes (do not forget low-income when cleaning up)
7. Access (government's) to needs of the community	

Partners who can contribute and assets they can bring to the table
1. Community groups- translators in each group, community leadres
2. Academia (UMD JD Program)

Three Best Ideas on What Works (one no cost)
1. Political power and impetus
2. Legislation to strengthen redevelopment into green and equitable housing

3. If community inherits a neighborhood ‘burden’, need incentives for residents (like solid waster transfer station)

Other Comments on the Session:

This session involved a lot of confusion because the level of knowledge of the group was assumed to be at “planner speak” level. It was not understood exactly what “sustainability” meant, because people were making the case that environmental justice needs to feed into the environment and economy. The very definition of sustainability needs to be defined for the public on the website. Is it the UN sustainability definition from the Brundtland Commission? Graphics will also help people wrap their heads around the bigger idea of what exactly a ‘sustainable community’ is and should be.