



Climate Action Plan Working Groups

Equity & Outreach Working Group Meeting Notes #3 – January 8, 2020

Meeting date and location – January 8, 2020, City Hall Annex

Attendees: Selisha Mohammed, Tari Ayala-Keating, Keren Abina Sotomayor, Tom Zinckgraf, Jamie Ding, Heidi Fabian, Christian A. Palaguachi, Alisha Park, and Kate Lawrence

1. Introductions

- The objective of meeting #3 was to review the responses from the Equity Assessment Forms for each sector and discuss and agree upon a list of equity concerns, possible solutions, and outreach opportunities for each sector's objectives.
- Alisha Park, a new facilitator for the group, introduced herself.
- Alisha reviewed how the feedback from the Equity Assessment Forms had been compiled in a spreadsheet so that areas of concern were highlighted.
- Kate Lawrence, Director of the Office of Sustainability and Planning, noted that Hardeep Singh, the former facilitator, finished his internship and would unfortunately no longer be attending meetings.
- Kate handed out copies of the results from the Equity Assessment Forms for the group's review.

2. Sub Group Discussions

Everyone broke out into their sub groups to discuss the results from the Equity Assessment Forms.

3. Larger Group Discussion

The group reconvened to discuss key points.

Energy (Tom, Jamie, and Heidi)

- The Energy Sub-Committee felt that there needs to be more short- to medium-term energy efficiency measures.
 - 3-5 year goals
 - Some progress needs to happen quickly
- The City needs to provide resources that will help people understand benefits of programs
 - Translated materials *and* bilingual city staff need to be accessible in order to overcome language barriers in marginalized populations.
 - Outreach needs to be tailored to reach varying communities in Jersey City. City staff should answer questions in various languages.
- Find ways to protect renters, like is done through tenant landlord relations
- Have City lead by example on energy actions

- Overall, energy efficiency incentives should benefit marginalized populations not the already wealthy.
 - Incentives should be prioritized for low-income homes and owner-occupied homes
- Specific notes on action items are below:
 - Action 1.4: Incentivize transition of existing buildings to electrified heating.
 - The group is concerned about how disruptive this action item will be. For example, will people be displaced because of this?
 - Action 1.5: Encourage local businesses to employ substitutions for hydrofluorocarbons when possible.
 - The group is not familiar enough with hydrofluorocarbon usage to determine who will be affected.
 - Additionally, white roofs are an affordable solution that yield energy-savings.
 - Action 2.5: Utilize taxes, bonds, permit expediting, public relations, zoning (e.g., density bonuses), and any other available municipal implements to incentivize the reduction of energy usage and carbon emissions in all buildings, as well as the development of renewable energy projects.
 - How will this action be implemented? Efforts to educate the community must be made.
 - The generated funds should be redirected to marginalized communities and not used to plug holes in the city budget.
 - Action 5.1: The municipality should advocate for low cost loans/financing for Distributed Energy Resources.
 - This action item overlaps with item 2.5. An outreach plan needs to be developed.
 - This action must prioritize low-income and marginalized populations and owner-occupied housing.
 - Action 6.4: Assess feasibility of maximizing the use of source separated organic waste for energy production and encourage anaerobic digestion for electricity production or natural gas pipeline injections.
 - Where will the infrastructure be placed and whom will it affect? Smell, noise, and pollution must be considered in the planning process.

- Action 7.3: Work with NJ Board of Utilities and NJDEP to identify opportunities for micro grids and locating renewable energy with storage at critical facilities.
 - Where will the facilities be located?
- Action 8.1: Maximize community-led solar rooftop and community solar development in urban and Low- and Moderate-Income communities using the local workforce where possible.
 - “Using the local workforce where possible” leaves room for interpretation.
- Action 9.2: Work with NJ Transit to prioritize use of first-available electric or hybrid vehicles in high-density urban areas like Jersey City.
 - Overall, the group disagreed with this action. Bus routes and service expansion should be prioritized before switching to electric or hybrid vehicles.
- Action 9.5: Work with the NJ Board of Public Utilities, NJDEP, and PSE&G to identify options and develop projects that will help grow a market-driven, renewable energy economy in Jersey City.
 - The group is concerned that utility costs will rise for low-income communities. Utilities should be a public good, not dependent on market pressure.

Waste (Selisha, Tari, and Keren)

- Pay as you throw – like idea of having people be responsible for the trash they produce. But what are repercussions for low-income households?
- Don’t exempt multi-family buildings from Pay as you Throw – not equitable
- Don’t ignore certain communities when providing opportunities like materials reuse
- Example, seniors. How are seniors getting to a place
- Education needed to get community buy-in
- How does each action item support front-line communities – hard to tell without more details
- Lots more detail needed – for example with zero waste plan
- Be careful about fines and how the keep people from participating in activities/programs
 - Incentives should be prioritized for low-income homes and owner-occupied homes
- Specific notes on action items are below:
 - Action Item #1. Explore a Pay-As-You-Throw program.
 - According to the EPA’s website, multi-unit buildings are exempted.
 - Homeowners and property owners already pay for waste removal in their property taxes. This action will trickle down to renters.
 - What if residents cannot pay the extra fee? As a result, people may dispose of their trash in neighboring receptacles to avoid fees.
 - In order to roll this out successfully, research must be done on how other states/cities have implemented a Pay-As-You-Throw system.

- Additionally, senior citizens should have this fee waived.
- Waste Action Item #2. Facilitate material reuse and exchange opportunities throughout the community.
 - This action may result in a focus on certain neighborhoods and exclude some communities.
 - Each opportunity must be tailored to fit the needs of different wards and communities.
- Waste Action Item #5. Institute construction debris recycling and reuse diversion policy for construction.
 - This action will require rigorous outreach by the City to the community.
 - Community Treasures and yard sales can help facilitate this action.
 - Hiring practices? Cultivate the workforce from the communities.
 - This action item has potential but there is no detailed plan to engage communities.

Transportation and Land Use (Christian, Alisha, and Kate)

- Prioritize affordable housing near transit lines
- Rapid bus transit should only be on major streets
- What is the emissions reductions potential of action 3.1 – establish policies to optimize urban freight movement (e.g., time of delivery, location consolidation)?
 - Look at truck routes to reduce congestion
- Incentivize alternative transportation of goods such as by bike, rather than just focusing on making vehicles “clean”.
- Make sure green space benefits are equitably distributed
- For placement of porous and pervious surfaces, target major public areas with high pedestrian traffic such as train stations
- Use of vacant lots: what does community really need? Not the same for every neighborhood. Who is making decision?
 - Arlington/Union lot – some people in community feel like it was better as a basketball court than as a community garden
 - For green roofs and cool roofs, keep in mind limitations for older buildings
 - Vacant lots should be used for community gardens. Certain lots may not be suitable for a community garden, but it should be converted into something useful for the community.
 - Giving up parking spaces or shared spaces.

4. Next Steps

- Kate and Carolina will type up notes and distribute them to all working groups along with results from Equity Assessment Forms.
- Everyone has until next Wednesday, 1/15, to add any additional notes.
- The other working groups will meet on January 29 to discuss feedback from Equity & Outreach and to refine their action items.
- The next Equity & Outreach Working Group will likely take place in February.
- The next Public Meeting will take place in late February.