

CYCLING EQUITY
CO-LEARNING & ACTION TOOLKIT



Developed by Jay Pitter Placemaking through a collaborative process engaging eight cycling and active transportation organizations across Canada

Authored by Jay Pitter | July 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jay Pitter Placemaking acknowledges the important role that cycling advocates, working across a broad range of grassroots and professional contexts, have played in championing active and sustainable transportation.

Participating Organizations

8 80 Cities
Bike Hub
Cycling BC
Cycle Toronto
Ecology Action Centre
Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA)
The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT)
Winnipeg Trails Association

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WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This Toolkit is for everyone invested in moving around their communities in a manner that is more affordable, accessible, sustainable and joyful. Specifically, this Toolkit is written in a manner that primarily responds to the growth opportunities and possibilities of the following groups:

- Cycling organizations, volunteer groups and individual advocates committed to enhancing their internal organizational practices, policies and community engagement using an equitable and compassionate approach;
- Policymakers and land-use professionals—placemakers, urban planners, transportation planners, urban designers, engineers, etc.—committed to integrating an equitable approach in their respective fields, specifically as it relates to cycling and broader mobility infrastructure;
- Professors and teaching assistants working in planning, geography and other related fields who inform how next-generation land-use professionals understand and prioritize cycling and broader mobility infrastructure.

HOW DO I USE THIS TOOLKIT?

This Toolkit has been developed to prompt both personal reflection, professional development processes and organizational transformation.

It can be used by an individual, team or entire organization. Part One presents key concepts, framework and evidence-based information to support individual and group understanding of what cycling equity and broader mobility is along with several relevant frameworks. It is advisable to take the time to carefully review and internalize this section before proceeding to other sections. After doing so, you may engage with the Toolkit in a linear manner—meaning reading and completing consecutive pages—or you may opt to delve into specific sections most aligned with your interests and needs. The Toolkit is not prescriptive and leaves enough space for you to learn at your own pace and to chart your own learning journey. We encourage all individuals and groups to embrace the principles, concepts and precedents that resonate with them, and to reflect on why some sections may evoke discomfort or feel unaligned with your interests and needs. Also, it is advisable to focus on internal work—both individual and organizational—prior to engaging external groups as a way of building confidence and mitigating potential harm to others.

As with all equitable placemaking and personal growth work, it is important to allocate the proper space and reflective time for truly integrating the principles, frameworks and learnings derived from the Toolkit, along with your own expertise—both formal training and lived experiences. The following are additional suggestions for using this Toolkit:

- Each week, or every two weeks, unpack one section of Part One—Cycling Equity Principles, Intersectionality Framework, Mobility Equity and Freedom Framework—individually or with a group. This exploration may be carried out by dedicating regular staff meeting time, hosting lunch and learns or establishing a bi-weekly coffee meetup with friends and/or colleagues with shared cycling equity learning goals.
- Host a cycling equity action planning event, using one or more sections of the Toolkit such as the Organizational Policy Review, Equitable Community Engagement, Equity-Based Communications and Advocacy, and collectively develop an action plan for making three to five short-term changes within your institution or group. Also, you may opt to use this Toolkit to inform broader

strategic, communications and/or community engagement plans. Relatedly, sections of this Toolkit may be used to enhance existing cycling advocacy plans—both institutional and grassroots.

- Isolate sections unpacked in Part One—with written consent and clear attribution—such as the Cycling Equity Principles, Cycling Equity Policy Checklist, Equitable Community Engagement and/or any of Three Conceptual and Practice Frameworks for Achieving Cycling Equity and use as a learning tool at conferences and in classrooms.

Understanding that the changemaking process begins from within, this Toolkit may be used to create an individual learning agenda. Commonly used within institutional contexts to both identify and address knowledge gaps that may be impeding informed decision-making, change management efforts and progressive policy, the spirit of the learning agenda is applicable to individual growth and professional development. Identify core questions and be forthright with responses. Questions may include:

- What is one personal and one professional hindrance you have in addressing cycling inequity within your professional or advocacy efforts?
- What makes you most uncomfortable or reluctant to engage in practices and/or conversations focused on cycling inequity—particularly aspects related to racial injustice?
- What are your top three knowledge gaps? Knowledge gaps may include knowing how to respectfully engage equity-deserving groups, how to receive critical feedback from equity-deserving groups, and/or how to decentre yourself and/or moderate your emotions in cycling equity conversations?

These are just a few examples illustrating how this Toolkit may be used. Again, it is both non-prescriptive and flexible, so feel free to amend the recommended uses above and add your own.

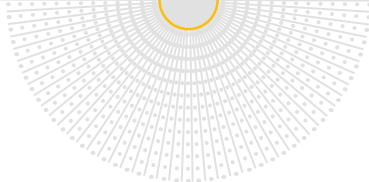


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
Who Is This Toolkit For?	2
How Do I Use This Toolkit?	3
Introduction	6
Methodology	9
PART ONE:	
Principles, Facts & Frameworks	
Acknowledging the Problems to Unlock the Possibilities	11
What Is Cycling Equity?	12
Cycling Equity Principles	14
Three Key Conceptual & Practice Frameworks for Achieving Cycling Equity	20
1. Intersectionality & Intersectionality Matrix	20
2. Mobility Equity and Freedom Framework	23
3. Equitable Placemaking	27
PART TWO:	
Organizational Policy, Roles & Precedents	
Organizational Policy Review	31
Cycling Equity Policy Checklist	35
Entrenching Equitable Approaches	35
Across Organizational Roles	36
Equitable Policy and Program Precedents	40
PART THREE:	
Community Engagement, Communications & Advocacy	
Equitable Community Engagement	46
Equitable Community Engagement Reflection	48
Equity-Based Communications and Advocacy	53
Cycling Equity Evaluation Framework	58



INTRODUCTION

How we move around our communities is as important as where we're going. "How" is intertwined here with numerous structural inequities such as roadway engineering that privileges cars, infrastructure investments across privileged urban geographies, and identities that have historically been granted greater amounts of social power. These and other forms of privilege have pre-determined, and restricted the movement of, equity-deserving individuals and groups for more than a century—diminishing genuine choice, joy and freedom.

Human-centred modes of movement—walking, rolling, skipping and cycling—have existed since our earliest explorations. However, for the past 100 years, these modes of movement have taken a backseat to the automobile, deleteriously impacting people and the planet.

Fortunately, advocates on the front lines of mobility equity and environmental movements have made significant inroads for decades in challenging car-centric culture and infrastructure. In recent years, racialized activists and those from other equity-deserving groups, both within and outside these movements, have called for a greater level of intersectional advocacy. This advocacy not only considers, but also centres, social justice analysis alongside infrastructure—responding to the ways that race, class, disability and gender profoundly increase barriers for individuals living at the complex intersections of these and other identities. While recognizing the importance of infrastructure and the bicycle itself, this Toolkit integrates urgently needed socio-spatial analysis across the cycling and broader active transportation landscape.

This Cycling Equity Toolkit—and perhaps more importantly the process which informed its development—is a long-awaited answer to that call. It is a result of a year-long engagement process with several cycling organizations across Canada. These

organizations, primarily white-led, are engaged in important advocacy work while acknowledging growth opportunities related to equitable principles, practices and policies. Core areas of capacity-building were identified and addressed in this Toolkit after insightful, spirited and sometimes uncomfortable conversations, along with transparent sharing of the inner workings of the organizations. Consistent with Jay Pitter Placemaking's approach, this evidence-based document contains cycling equity principles, frameworks, precedents and, most importantly, hands-on engagement prompts for not only thinking but doing.

The goal of this Toolkit is to contribute to the kind of change that will make the exhilarating, embodied and sustainable experience of cycling available to a larger and more diverse group of people, while deepening equitable approaches across cycling and the broader mobility sectors, and in powerful advocacy movements. It is our hope—and the hope of all of the participating organizations—that this resource builds capacity, compassion and momentum for integrating equitable approaches across all aspects of cycling and human-centred mobility advocacy.

In respectful solidarity,

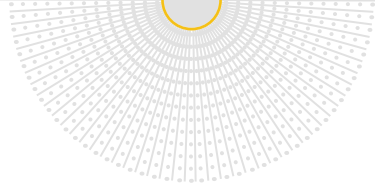
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Pitter". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a large, simple line drawing of a bicycle wheel.

Jay Pitter, MES

Principal Placemaker, Jay Pitter Placemaking

Adjunct Professor and Practitioner-in-Residence, University of Waterloo

Visiting Fellow, University of Windsor Law Centre for Cities



Methodology

This Toolkit was developed through a deeply participatory, co-learning process led by Jay Pitter Placemaking in collaboration with a diverse range of leaders committed to mobility equity across Canada. Key components of the process were:

- Developed a pre-session organizational one-page questionnaire to assess specific challenges, strengths and goals;
- Provided each participating organization with an equity-based placemaking policy review and a one-page personalized summary with recommendations, supporting immediate structural change within their capacity;
- Devised and implemented one cycling-equity training session that unpacked the socio-spatial history of the public realm; the discriminatory policies restricting free and joyful mobility; intersectionality theory within the context of cycling equity; and key cycling equity principles.
- Devised and implemented one equitable community-engagement session that unpacked various types and depth of community engagement; barriers to engaging historically marginalized groups; capacity-building through community engagement principles; and practice precedents exemplifying creative and equitable approaches.
- Co-ordinated a peer-to-peer training panel including special guests, Tamika Butler and Anthony Taylor, two of the foremost cycling equity experts in North America, alongside Canadian cycling equity leaders Simone Mutabazi, Armi De Francia, Christopher McGarrell, Sabat Ismail and Adrian Alphonso.
- Developed the framework for this resource, on which all the participating organizations commented; then integrated their feedback, practice expertise, research and precedents into this resource.

The background of the page is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous overlapping circular motifs. Each motif is composed of concentric circles of dots, with lines radiating from the center to the outer edge of the dots. The dots are arranged in a regular grid, and the lines are thin and light gray. The overall effect is a dense, textured, and somewhat organic-looking pattern that resembles a stylized sunburst or a complex mandala. The colors are primarily light gray and white, with some darker gray accents.


PART ONE:

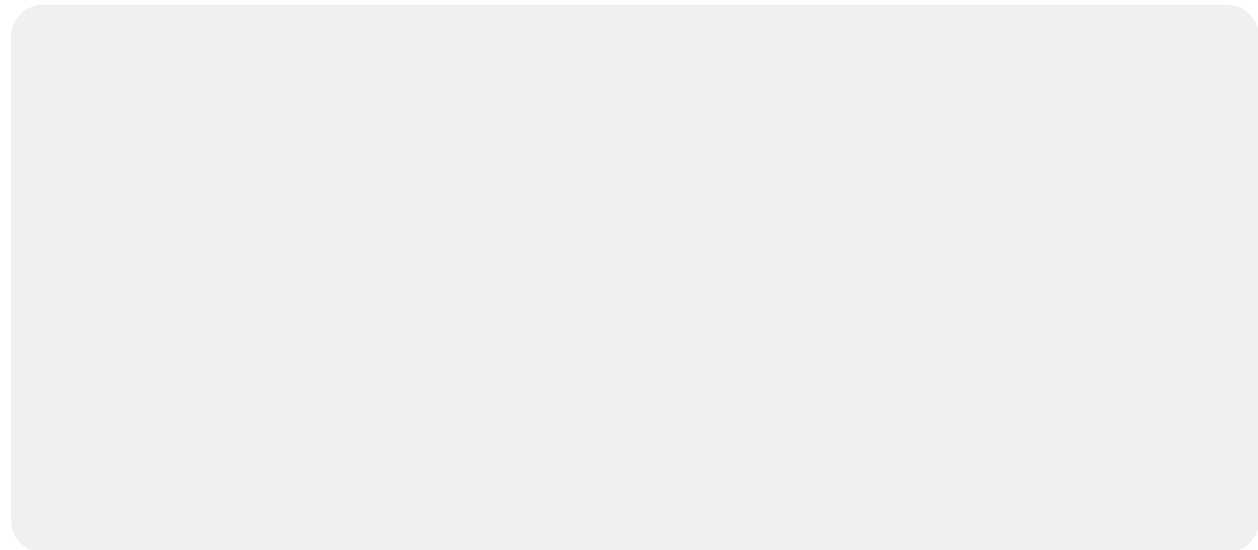
Principles, Facts &
Frameworks



Acknowledging the Problems to Unlock the Possibilities

Again, cycling advocates, working across a broad range of grassroots and professional contexts, have played an integral role in championing active and sustainable transportation. This work is often under-compensated, sometimes heart-breaking and always challenging. Cycling advocates should be commended for their important work contesting car-centric infrastructure, organizing ghost rides to humanize individuals killed by cars, or courageously challenging governments to advance active transportation policies, initiatives and investments. It is also true that like all land-use and land use-adjacent sectors, cycling advocacy has a significant growth opportunity when it comes to deeply integrating an equitable placemaking approach across all disciplines, types of initiatives and roles. Relatedly, the leaders within the sector rarely reflect the communities facing the greatest cycling equity issues and broader mobility equity barriers. However, a critical mass of cycling advocates working across non-profit, governmental and grassroots contexts are increasingly acknowledging these and other growth opportunities, and are rethinking what it means to deeply integrate equity into cycling advocacy to unlock optimal possibilities—social, environmental and health—for everyone.

 Before reading the content on the following page, take one moment to brainstorm—by yourself or with others—a few key concepts or definitions of cycling equity based on your expertise (both formal training and lived experiences).



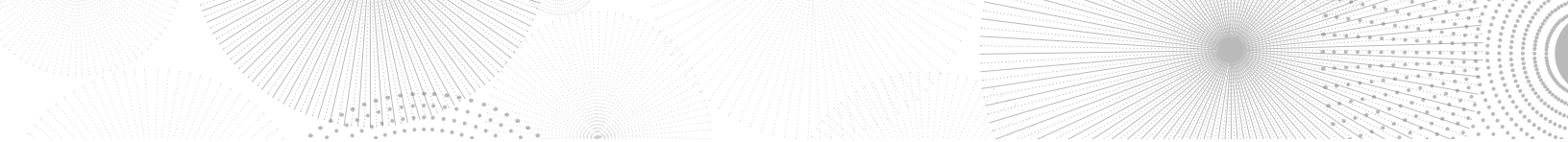
What Is Cycling Equity?

Like most terms, there isn't a singular definition for cycling equity. However, a recently published article, *The Pursuit of Cycling Equity*, provides the definition below, which is aligned with the shift towards more structural analysis and intersectional thinking among professional and grassroots advocates working within the cycling sector and related sectors mandated to advance active transportation. The following definition also recognizes a broad range of socio-spatial barriers related to cycling, including and beyond infrastructure, while centring community stakeholders.

“Cycling equity can be defined as a situation where cycling is a safe, secure mode of travel that improves mobility and accessibility fairly, enabling all people to participate in socio-economic life. To provide for cycling equity, planners and decision-makers recognize and address the needs and concerns of disadvantaged groups by including such groups throughout the entirety of the planning process, and by employing methods of analysis that assess a plan or project's potential to generate equitable outcomes. Plans and projects are prioritized in areas home to the most disadvantaged but are shaped under the consideration of key concerns and barriers such as physical safety, personal security, racism, policing and harassment, and fear of displacement from gentrification associated with cycling investments.”¹

The highlighted words and concepts above provide an excellent foundation for understanding the primary tenets of cycling equity. Additional context and analysis should include clarification that the “disadvantage” referenced above emanates directly from institutions that perpetuate structural discrimination, both inadvertently and intentionally, long-standing and present. Moreover, it's important to be explicit about *who* these “disadvantaged” groups are—Indigenous Peoples, racialized people, women, disabled people, and people living on lower incomes outside downtown cores. Additionally, it's paramount to clarify the structural barriers, such as policies that perpetuate car-centric infrastructure, prioritization of investments in downtown cores, urban planning bylaws and discriminatory policing practices. Moreover, an environmental analysis must be tethered to every equitable placemaking definition and framework.

1 Doran, A., El-Geneidy, A. & Manaugh, K. (2021). *The pursuit of cycling equity*. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 90, 1-9. p.8. https://tram.mcgill.ca/Research/Publications/Cycling_Equity.pdf



Using the definition above (with particular emphasis on the highlighted words and concepts) along with the subsequent analysis and additions, co-create your own cycling equity definition with colleagues and community stakeholders.

 **Cycling Equity Is . . .**

Cycling Equity Principles

While the socio-spatial and structural issues hindering cycling equity are complex, its aspiration is simple—all bodies moving joyfully and safely through place.

- Cycling equity issues are social justice issues—no single cycling equity initiative can address all issues but all of the issues can be respectfully acknowledged.
- Cycling is not strictly a recreational activity; many stakeholder groups rely on cycling as an essential mode of travel.
- Acknowledging social justice issues such as racism, gender-based discrimination and ableism in no way diminishes cycling advocacy efforts; to the contrary, aligning with other stakeholder groups and broader mobility equity issues strengthens the sector and movement.
- While all individuals on bikes are vulnerable due to unsafe car-centric infrastructure and entitled car-centric attitudes, this inarguable situational risk should not be conflated with historical marginalization, or with positioning all individuals on bikes as an equity-deserving group.
- Cycling equity is not strictly about the bike; it is primarily about people and benefits derived from the bike.
- Cycling equity is an important aspect of a broader mobility equity practice and conceptual framework.
- Many individuals and groups do not identify as “cyclists;” they identify as people who use and/or enjoy cycling—humans are typically multi-modal so the noun can be alienating for many.
- Perceptions of cycling have cultural dimensions as many individuals and groups, especially those who have been historically excluded, have bought into the single-family and car dream perpetuated by dominant, mainstream culture.
- Many individuals and groups, especially those disproportionately impacted by cycling and broader mobility inequities, have been leading this movement at the grassroots level; their courage and creativity are to be honoured.

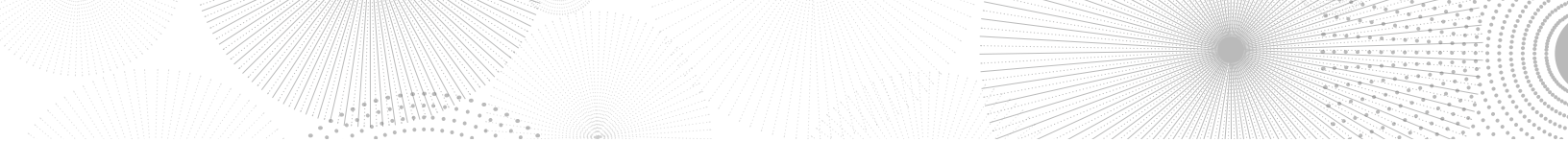
How do we know that there is inequity within the cycling sector and other sectors mandated to advance active transportation?

The following section, entirely predicated on academic research, contains so many citations that it would be unreadable if we used our usual method of footnoting. Instead, we have used in-text citations that we have greyed out to make them less disruptive to the text, and we have added a bibliography directly following this section. First and foremost, we know inequity exists because people from historically marginalized groups who are worthy of being believed have said so. However, as an evidence-based, placemaking Practice, we know that the word of community stakeholders is sadly often not enough for others. We also understand the power of situating the lived experiences of historically marginalized groups within formal knowledge-production processes. These findings—resulting from an in-depth, multi-disciplinary research process—illuminate the urgency and extent of the inequities that exist within cycling:

1. Cycling and Gender Inequity

A 2019 article in the U.K. newspaper The Guardian, titled “**Why are female cyclists targeted by aggressive drivers for abuse?**” (Jelly, 2019) is centred around one woman’s personal cycling experiences, backed by international research. Key points from the article include:

- Female cyclists are twice as likely to be abused and harassed (i.e., sexual harassment, including catcalling and verbal abuse) compared to male cyclists, according to a 2015 report.
- Individuals driving are more likely to pass closely (i.e., within three feet) of women cyclists than men, according to research from the University of Minnesota.
- While cycling can usually be considered a safe(r) way for women to travel—in comparison to walking or public transit—unsafe experiences for women occur more frequently during early mornings or late nights.
- “Women are told they must take responsibility for their own safety, and then challenged by the same forces when they try to do just that.”



The 2015 report, **“Cycling Near Misses: Findings from Year One of the Near Miss Project.”** (Aldred et al., 2015) which was cited in the above Guardian article, offers further details on those themes:

- Women cyclists have higher near-miss rates than men, although on average they cycle more slowly.
- Individuals driving pass more closely to women by 50% per mile, compared to men.
- Non-injury incidents, such as near misses from passing cars, are important to consider in data and cycling policy to better address cycling inequities, specifically aspects of safety linked to women’s ridership rates.

2. Cycling and Racial Inequity

A 2021 report, **“The Pursuit of Cycling Equity: A Review of Canadian Transport Plans.”** (Doran et al., 2021) outlines details from a series of studies about racialized harassment (of mainly Black and Latino/a people) while cycling. Among the findings:

- The Tampa Police Department issued 80% of its cycling citations to Black residents, who comprise only 25% of Tampa’s population. Also, Black and Latino/a people are subject to higher rates of profiling and police bias in stop, question and frisk encounters. (Mitchell and Ridgeway, 2018)
- Black people are disproportionately subject to harm and harassment from not just the police, but also road users. (Mitchell and Ridgeway, 2018) and (Goddard et al., 2015)
- Immigrant and racialized minority populations cycle more than their white, U.S.- born counterparts but are underrepresented in cycling advocacy groups. (Stehlin and Tarr, 2017) and (Barajas, 2018)
- Cycling advocacy by communities of colour is overshadowed by cycling advocacy from wealthier and pre-dominantly white groups. (Stehlin and Tarr, 2017)

3. Cycling and Disability Inequity

The brief 2020 Bloomberg article, "[When Street Design Leaves Some People Behind](#)," (Surcio, 2020) contains important insights on disabled peoples' experiences with streets made dangerous or inaccessible for them because of cycling infrastructure. These include:

- People who are hard-of-hearing face difficulty in picking up the quiet sound of cycling traffic, which can be especially dangerous in multi-use lanes and street crossings.
- Flattened curbs offer no distinction between a sidewalk and cycling lane for people who are blind or partially sighted.
- Dockless e-bikes and bikes left on sidewalks can lead to injury for blind or partially sighted, as well as people with mobility challenges.
- A 2017 survey conducted by [Wheels for Wellbeing](#), (Wheels for Wellbeing, 2017) a cycling advocacy group for disabled people in the U.K., includes key findings on disabled peoples' experiences with cycling:
 - » 69% of disabled cyclists find cycling easier than walking, contrary to some assumptions that cycling is exclusively for people without disabilities.
 - » While 57% of respondents said they received support while cycling, 36% of disabled cyclists encountered abuse or disability hate crime.
 - » More than 36% of respondents experienced being unable to park or store their bikes due inadequate facilities.

In addition, a 2020 report by the U.S. group [Shared Mobility Inc.](#) (Shared Mobility Inc., 2020) looked at how mobility can be inclusive for older adults and people with disabilities. Its major finding:

- "Following a discussion on e-bikes, nearly half of all participants surveyed from the project's focus groups said they believed e-bikes would help to increase their community mobility. Specifically, 60% of older adults surveyed agreed with this statement."

4. Cycling and Disparities in Infrastructure

The 2021 report cited earlier, "[The Pursuit of Cycling Equity: A Review of Canadian Transport Plans](#)," (Doran et al., 2021) also reviews the literature on cycling equity, with these major findings around the theme of disparities in cycling infrastructure:

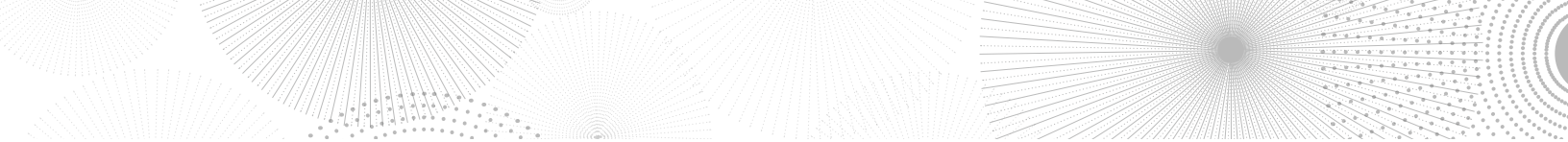
- The least safe forms of cycling infrastructure are often found in low-income, immigrant and racialized minority neighbourhoods. (Golub et al., 2016), (Grisé and El-Geneidy, 2018), (Tucker and Manaugh, 2018) and (Barajas, 2018)
- In New York City, pedestrian and cycling crashes were higher in census tracts with larger immigrant populations, possibly due to poor cycling and walking infrastructure. (Rebentisch et al., 2019) and (Rothman et al., 2019)
- Cycling infrastructure disproportionately emerges in gentrified neighbourhoods or can drive gentrification itself. (Ibsen and Olesen, 2018)

The article, "[How Toronto Fails its Racialized and Low-Income Cyclists](#)," (Yogarajah, 2021) looks at Toronto's cycling infrastructure, and unpacks the following important findings:

- Not only do policing ordinances disproportionately affect racialized and low-income people, but so does bike-sharing infrastructure. Most bike stations are concentrated in Toronto's downtown core, which leaves inner/suburban communities, which are increasingly populated by racialized and low-income people, to be underserved.
- In a recent proposed expansion on cycling infrastructure in Toronto, 15 bike lanes were to be added, but none of them were to be located in Scarborough, a largely racialized and low-income borough.
- Inadequate community consultations also hinder the success of implementing cycling infrastructure in racialized and low-income neighbourhoods. Such engagements do not consider participation barriers including evening working hours for essential workers, language diversity, technological literacy and child-care requirements.

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Three Key Conceptual & Practice Frameworks for Achieving Cycling Equity

While the socio-spatial and structural issues hindering cycling equity are complex, its aspiration is simple—all bodies moving joyfully and safely through place. To fulfil this audacious aspiration, three primary conceptual and practice frameworks are required: Intersectionality, Mobility Equity and Equitable Placemaking.

1. Intersectionality

Mobility equity challenges span an unwieldy range of historical eras, divergent geographies, place-based policies and legal contexts tied to our social identities. This is why no two demographic groups, or even individuals within the same demographic group, have the exact same mobility needs, experiences and aspirations. Intersectionality—a theoretical and analytic framework introduced by African American scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw—helps us understand this complexity. This framework illuminates the interconnectedness of social identities such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation and ability—and how they can overlap, deepening discrimination.

Translated to cycling equity, this means that while all individuals on bikes are vulnerable due to unsafe car-centric infrastructure and entitled car-centric attitudes, individuals who cycle who are racialized, women, disabled and/or the visibly poor face compounded vulnerabilities. Many individuals are inclined to lean into tropes such as “we have more in common than differences,” but it isn’t differences that we must be wary of—it’s the denial of differences. Differences are often wrongly conflated with divisiveness, but formidable activist and author Audre Lorde reminds us, “It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.” Within the context of cycling equity, differences in vulnerability among individuals who cycle certainly shouldn’t be accepted and/or celebrated but they should be recognized. Discounting the differences of bodies moving through place diminishes joy and safety, and ultimately makes the cycling sector and related sectors alienating for many individuals from historically marginalized groups.


Intersectionality Matrix





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Framework Reflection

 Which concept in this framework most resonates with you—both personally and professionally? Why?

 Which concept in this framework is currently being practised in your organization?

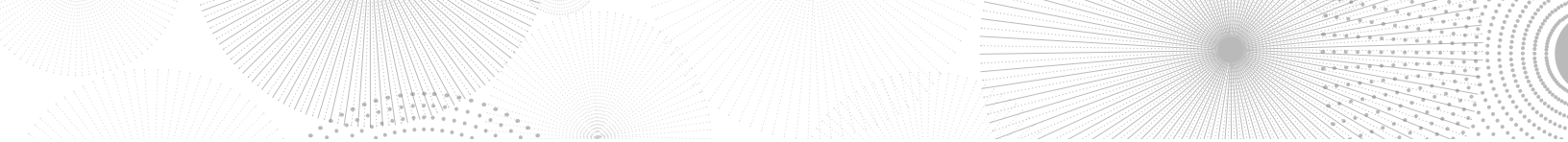
 Which concept in this framework could you employ to enhance equity within your current professional practice and/advocacy efforts?

 Additional Reflections

2. Mobility Equity and Freedom Framework

Mobility equity refers to the provision of transportation policies, funding, infrastructure and services that are responsive to diverse demographic needs and aspirations. This entails recognizing how state-sanctioned policies and planning approaches have significantly limited mobility options for Indigenous Peoples, Black people (particularly those descended from enslaved people), disabled people, 2SLGBTQ+ people and other groups. In addition to acknowledging and rectifying these fraught histories, mobility equity tenets include sustainable approaches that counteract car-centric infrastructure, require interdisciplinary knowledge exchange among scholars, and promote cross-sectoral and intergovernmental collaboration. Most importantly, mobility equity strives to ensure that everyone—regardless of race, class or any other social identity—is able to access safety, joy and prosperity with dignity while journeying. It is not simply about moving people from point A to point B. Mobility equity is freedom.

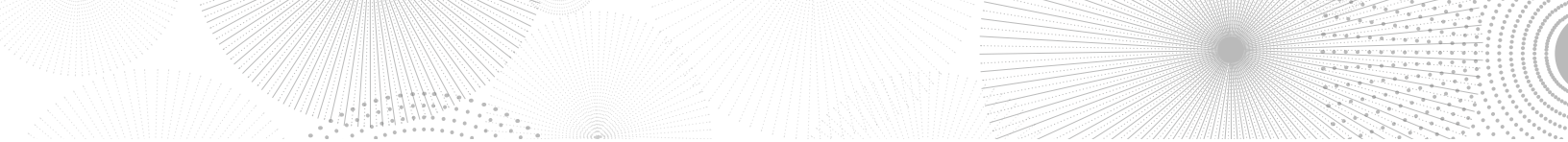




Planning, Placemaking and Development: It is impossible to enhance mobility-related services, infrastructure and policies without an understanding of the community's context. Far too often, strategic decisions and design approaches pertaining to mobility-related development such as street infrastructure investments or establishing new transit routes are informed by traditional, often quantitative data such as traffic counts, mode of travel, revenue, carbon dioxide emissions, and trip origins and destinations. While this data is extremely important, it is also essential to gather additional and under-collected data such as the social identities of community stakeholders, unsafe public realm pockets, sacred sites, commute complexity and the uneven power dynamics that mediate all bodies in motion. Responding to a broader range of mobility-related data requires an equitable and holistic placemaking approach, which considers social, spatial, cultural and policy factors that determine the mobility mode and quality of each individual's experience in the public realm. This approach will also reveal hidden routes and fraught histories that are not represented on a map or visible from a design studio. Given the complexity of this approach and the plethora of issues creating barriers to achieving mobility equity, cross-sector collaborations, within and beyond land-use professions, that optimize expertise—both formal training and lived experiences—and resources are required for positive change.

Collective Wellness and Prosperity: A body in motion enhances both health and mental wellness within a matter of moments. Numerous bodies in motion enhance a sense of community, improving our collective wellness and prosperity, while addressing growing issues such as loneliness, lack of civic participation and growing social divides. Equitable mobility contributes to this collective benefit in multiple ways, such as ensuring that local businesses and residents benefit from infrastructure projects, reforming the procurement process to create greater pathways for vendors from historically oppressed groups, and ensuring that community stakeholders can access opportunities and social networks across suburban neighbourhoods and not just downtown cores. Moreover, the quality of movement—in terms of feelings of joy, dignity and belonging—must be reframed from being a “soft” aspect of mobility to being central to realizing the audacious goal of freedom.

Environmental Justice and Sustainability: The vast majority of sustainability discourse, both policy and practice, is hyper-focused on mitigating the climate crisis. This is a time-sensitive issue and a collective concern. However, mainstream sustainability efforts must continue to centre this urgent collective concern while tethering it to an environmental justice lens, explicitly acknowledging a range of long-standing mobility-related environmental issues such as sacred Indigenous sites being paved over for roadways, numerous occurrences of racialized and poor




people residing dangerously close to health-diminishing highways (particle and noise pollution), and the adverse impact of tourism travel on natural ecosystems in developing countries. Also, economically just and supportive solutions that protect the livelihoods of everyday people need to be concurrently considered alongside environmental imperatives. This integrated approach reduces occurrences of relatively privileged advocates speaking over, or down to, the community stakeholders facing the greatest harms, while strengthening movements to heal and honour the Earth by creating greater pathways for co-learning, leading to increased positive behavioural change, knowledge co-production and hyper-local stewardship models.


Accessibility: For centuries, abhorrent physical accessibility barriers have restricted the movement of individuals living with a range of disabilities, elders and in some cases families with young children. In addition to addressing these issues—considering visible and invisible disabilities—it is imperative to consider how other aspects of accessibility can create barriers to free and joyful movement. An economic issue such as not being able to afford both food and transit fare, a social issue such as being racially profiled on public transit and streets, and a service issue such as residing in a rural community without a diverse range of transportation options, all constitute accessibility barriers. It is important to remember that these barriers are not mutually exclusive nor are they in competition with one another. Mobility equity requires nuance and a commitment to removing all forms of accessibility barriers.


Governance: Historically, numerous state-sanctioned policies were instituted to restrict the mobility of Indigenous Peoples, enslaved Black people, disabled people, poor people, women and other historically marginalized groups. These structural mobility inequities continue to exist while being compounded by an intractable and lengthy list of additional governance issues such as state- and corporate-sanctioned strategies promoting car culture, lack of pathways for community stakeholders to contribute to decision-making processes, and the proliferation of partisan politics obstructing transportation planning and development—all of which have created considerable mobility equity barriers. Addressing these and other mobility-related governance issues requires new governance models including the reformation of laws policing particular bodies, participatory policy development processes, and the institution of clearer social justice and environmental metrics.



Framework Reflection

 Which concept in this framework most resonates with you—both personally and professionally? Why?

 Which concept in this framework is currently being practised in your organization?

 Which concept in this framework could you employ to enhance equity within your current professional practice and/advocacy efforts?

 Additional Reflections

3. Equitable Placemaking

The overall quality of the public realm is largely defined by bodies in motion in terms of modes of travel, interpersonal interactions and synchronous spatial rhythm. A placemaking lens is required for fully understanding and responding to the body-motion-place proposition.


Placemaking is conventionally defined as a collaborative approach to the design, programming and policy of public and semi-public spaces. It brings community knowledge and vision to the forefront of public-realm design processes, historically going beyond the urbanism status quo and hierarchy. Equity-Based Placemaking—an approach largely advanced by Jay Pitter Placemaking in both academic and practice contexts—recognizes structural, historical and socio-spatial factors that shape the character of public spaces. This particular framework is informed by theories such as critical urban planning theory, spatial feminism theory, environmental justice and human geography, and place-based theories asserted by sociologists such as Henri Lefebvre and W.E.B. Du Bois. Although distinct, all of these theories pose questions related to power, equity and ownership while striving towards human-centred, sustainable and just approaches for co-creating places where everyone prospers. Key approaches include, but are not limited to, the following:


- Acknowledge the complex histories and socio-political dynamics of public spaces, and how they inform people’s mobility, safety and joy.
- Identify and address power imbalances and multiple dimensions of safety (physical, psychological and historical) through all stages of placemaking processes.
- Embrace multiple forms of community power, cultural expressions and assets.
- Develop strong social plans and programming that address competing interests among young families, elders, people experiencing homelessness, disabled people, sex workers and other groups that use and steward public spaces.
- Co-create public spaces where community members are not simply “user groups” but are respectfully recognized as stewards.
- Consider multiple dimensions of accessibility—physical, economic and social.
- Recognize that the character of a place is shaped through interactions with humans, other living beings and the natural environment.


By combining community knowledge with professional land-use and policy expertise, equity-based placemaking contests status quo urban design, planning and development.



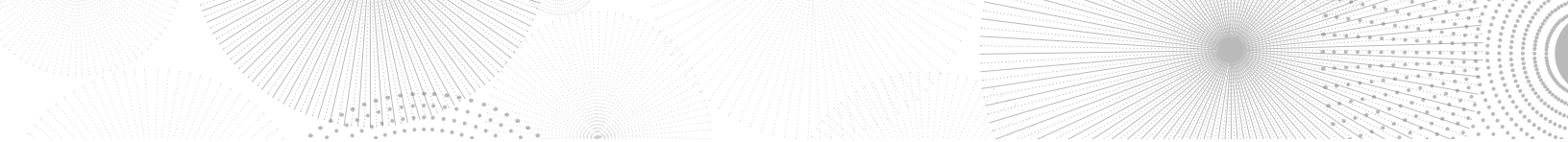
Framework Reflection

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 Additional Reflections



Together, the aforementioned frameworks address structural, personal and environmental aspects of cycling equity while contending with histories of harm. That approach is essential for working toward more equitable mobility futures. Together, these frameworks unearth the nuance of overlapping socio-spatial issues and invisibilized power dynamics that, if overlooked, can inadvertently cause tremendous harm. They may be used in conjunction with other frameworks, which also provide a premise for the type of ongoing structural analysis and self-reflection required for collectively achieving cycling equity outcomes.





PART TWO:

Organizational Policy,
Roles & Precedents

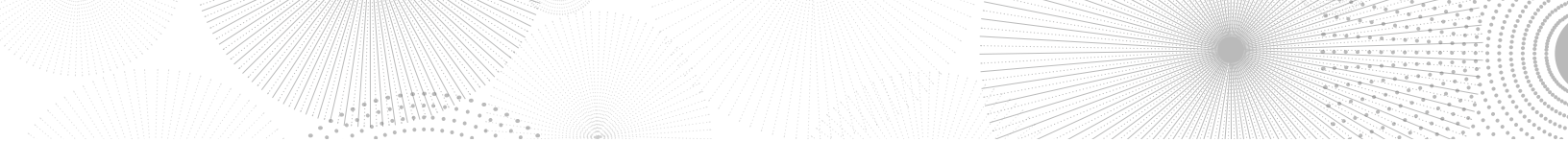
ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY, ROLES & PRECEDENTS

The vast majority of organizations and grassroots volunteer groups within the cycling sector and related active transportation sectors can attest to the need for all orders of government and funding bodies to address policies hindering the advancement of cycling equity. It's also true that cycling advocates themselves have a role to play in transforming policies within their own organizations and groups, because change almost always begins with reflexive self-interrogation and ground-up action. This section of the Toolkit begins by unpacking findings, themes and a cycling equity policy-transformation checklist informed by the examination of the policies of all participating organizations. Recognizing that policy transformation without action is both futile and performative, the Practice also presents a matrix unpacking equitable actions tethered to key organizational roles, followed by precedents (both policy and practice) indicative of the structural change required to move forward.

Organizational Policy Review

Again, as part of this project, Jay Pitter Placemaking undertook a review of organizational policies submitted by the project's participating groups. These included internal organizational policies, as well as policies and procedures related to community engagement and participation. The insights shared in this section reflect common growth opportunities that—while derived from the participating organizations—apply to a wider landscape of non-profit and advocacy-related organizations working in mobility at the city level.

Fundamentally, institutional policies articulate overarching tenets and values, which guide big-picture missions and strategies. Policy documents serve and reflect the goals of institutions, as well as consider the broader social, environmental and economic context in which the institution is operating. In many ways, institutional procedures reflect and respond to the same. The major difference between policies and procedures is that procedures are far more rooted in day-to-day operations and specific instances. Procedures are the opposite of big-picture or strategic; they are a step-by-step outline of how to respond in specific circumstances that may arise within the institution. Ideally, policies and procedures should be aligned with institutional vision, values and goals. They should also be flexible and responsive, although procedures are generally revised more frequently than policies. Moreover, policies are most effective when they are co-created with staff and community members, and tethered to financial resources and evaluation metrics.



Many of the policies reviewed, both within and beyond our participant group, did an excellent job articulating organizational values, vision and commitment to public good. Many of these policies demonstrated a deep understanding of workplace harassment, and a commitment to equitable and relational community engagement. The following themes are a summary of growth opportunities.

Overarching policy statements often extend beyond the scope of organizational influence.

The organizational policies reviewed often made claims about addressing intractable structural inequities well beyond the scope or capacity of the organizations. Clearly acknowledging structural inequities such as racism, gender-based discrimination and poverty faced by many historically excluded communities is a good thing. However, claiming to address these issues without clearly unpacking the aspects that can actually be addressed—based on the organization’s scope of influence and capacity—contravenes transparency and trust-building. While cycling programs open up a new, desperately needed transportation option, intractable issues such as unsafe infrastructure, racism, ageism, etc. may prevent some individuals from accessing articulated policy benefits or goals. Overpromising and/or not being aware of the aspects of large structural issues that a single organization with a cycling or active transportation mandate can undertake is a red flag for historically marginalized groups. To avoid setting up for failure both the community and organization, consider what constitutes the organization’s sphere of influence in creating structural change to increase cycling equity and develop policies within that sphere.

All organizational statements pertaining to equity should be reflected in policy.

Over the past few years, many organizations across planning and placemaking sectors have made superficial and/or performative equity-based statements. One way organizations that are genuinely committed to equity can distinguish themselves from this harmful and deceptive professional conduct is to couple all statements to tangible organizational actions. For example, claims such as being “committed to equity and diversity” or “being a learning organization” should be coupled with clear policy points that support these goals.

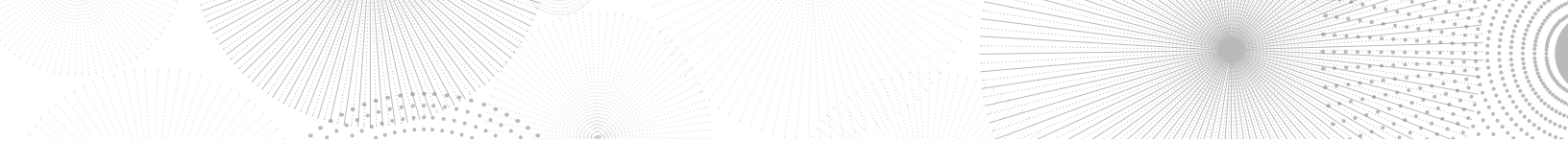
Policy statements should not conflate equity with diversity, inclusion or even equality.

Many organizations wrongly, and sometimes intentionally, conflate equity with diversity and inclusion. For clarity, diversity and inclusion are focused on the presence of different people with different perspectives, then creating the conditions for them to feel a sense of comfort and belonging. Equality is the practice of treating people the same without considering individual diversity, history and systemic marginalization. However, equity is firmly situated in the milieu of historical and contemporary structural inequities, and responds to specific group and individual needs, so people have fair opportunities to not only participate but to prosper, heal, make decisions, co-create and ultimately alter institutional agendas and cultures that are creating barriers in their lives. While equity is not mutually exclusive from diversity and inclusion, its goals are structural change, which can occur only when space is ceded, power is shared, past harms are reconciled, and professional reflexivity and compassion are transformed from soft skills to core competencies. This online article, "[What's the difference between diversity, equity, and inclusion](https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-engagement/whats-the-difference-between-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/),"² offers a clear delineation between all three concepts with correlating actions/examples.

Equitable policy does not diminish the agency and expertise—both formal training and lived experiences—of individuals from equity-deserving groups.

In an attempt to be more equitable, many organizations diminish the agency and expertise of individuals from equity-deserving groups. For example, policies that reference treating these groups "more favourably" in hiring processes or that overly focus on identity without recognizing expertise have unintended adverse impacts. Remember, prioritizing job applicants or community participants from equity-deserving groups isn't favourable treatment or special treatment; it's simply a removal of long-standing structural barriers. The assumption that these individuals lack core competencies (and other other skills and professional exposure derived from navigating structural barriers) or fall beneath organizational standards reveals implicit biases while stigmatizing the recipients of equitable policies. Also, this approach contributes to division and resentment between equity-deserving groups and those whose identities, ways of knowing and credentials have historically been centred

2 Pantic, Vanja. (2021, February 25). What is the difference between diversity, equity, and inclusion? Citizen Lab. <https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-engagement/whats-the-difference-between-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>



and embraced. Rather than over-emphasizing the trauma or lack, create balance by acknowledging historical exclusions and clearly amplify how structural barriers are being removed to accommodate equitable participation that will benefit everyone.


Do not shy away from naming racial injustice and discrimination.

While many organizational policies demonstrate a commitment to address workplace harassment and discrimination, particularly related to gender, there is a significant growth opportunity in recognizing structural racism, classism, credentialism, mental health stigma, and homophobia and transphobia as forms of structural discrimination. When outlining procedures related to addressing a broader dimension of workplace harassment and discrimination, striking gaps pertaining to resolution processes (within and outside policy documents) were observed. For example, many policies indicated that investigations would be carried out by managers and executive directors, discounting the possibility that individuals in these roles may be perpetrators. Also, in many instances, little consideration was given to the likelihood of staff people and/or community members fearing reprisal, breach of confidentiality and/or a traumatic process led by an individual lacking expertise in the various forms of workplace harassment and discrimination. Clarity, transparency and expertise are fundamental requirements for addressing harassment and discrimination policies, and organizational policies overall.

Cycling Equity Policy Checklist

The following checklist is intended to support organizations within the cycling sector and active transportation sector to develop, review and/or update their internal policies.

- Was this organizational policy developed using a participatory policy development approach—meaning a democratic process enabling all levels of staff members and community stakeholders to meaningfully contribute?
- Was this organizational policy developed with a specific purpose or vision in mind? If so, is it clearly stated?
- Was this organizational policy developed with the support of a cycling and/or mobility equity expert (formally trained and/or with lived experience)? If not, has it been reviewed by a cycling and/or mobility equity expert?
- Was this organizational policy informed by a review of similar policies within or beyond the sector to ensure good and emergent practices?
- Was this organizational policy developed as part of a knee-jerk reaction or a thoughtful response to cycling inequities?
- Does this organizational policy centre respectful asset-based, person-first plain language, and include accompanying definitions to ensure accessibility?
- Does this organizational policy reference culture, dress codes or professionalism in a way that could be alienating for stakeholders from equity-deserving groups?
- Does this organizational policy clearly state who are the impacted stakeholders as well as the stakeholders tasked with implementing it?
- Does this organizational policy align with other guiding organizational documents such as strategic plans, staff onboarding handbooks and board governance documents?
- Does this organizational policy reflect current priorities and practices?
- Does this organizational policy clearly state procedures for updates, revisions and approvals?
- Does this organizational policy include measurable goals and/or indicators; if so, how will it be evaluated?

 **Insert your own important equitable organizational checklist points below.**

Entrenching Equitable Approaches Across Organizational Roles

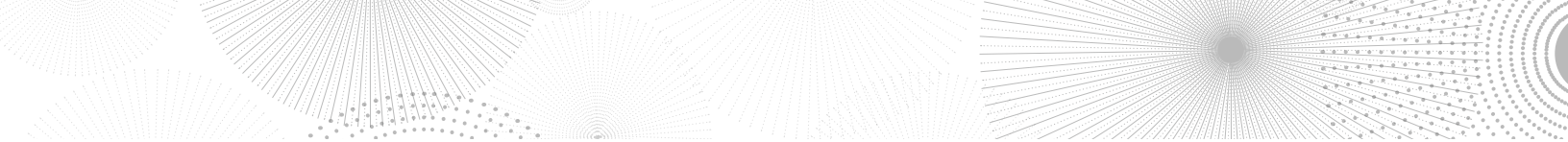
Roles and responsibilities must emanate from equitable policies as part of the organizational transformation process. The following unpacks high-level equitable approaches across key organizational roles, which organizations can build upon and use as a prompt to better clarify specific stakeholder contributions.

Individuals and Groups Who Cycle: In keeping with the equitable practice of centring the stakeholder groups being served, engaged and advocated for, individuals and groups who cycle must meaningfully contribute to increasing equity across the cycling sector and related active transportation sectors. Individuals and groups who cycle and are from equity-deserving groups may consider hosting informative pop-ups at community events such as cultural celebrations and community cleanups; invite peers to culturally responsive cycling groups such as Slow Roll, Black Girls Do Bike and PRiDEOUT; and use social media to share their distinct cycling experiences, if they are comfortable doing that. Individuals and groups who cycle but who do not belong to equity-deserving groups can host bike assembly and repair clinics in partnership with organizations located in low-income, racialized and/or rural communities; partner with no-waste groups to collect used bikes in good condition; and invite individuals from equity-deserving groups to cycling events that centre community connection rather than the bike.

Also, individuals and groups of all identities who cycle may consider using the term “individuals and groups who cycle” versus “cyclist” as a way of resonating with all people who use bikes.

Additional Ideas:

Board Members: Boards, oftentimes critiqued for being monolithic, play a significant governance and leadership role. Board members can contribute by benchmarking current equitable practices and assessing whether their cultures are flexible enough to embrace multiple ways of knowing and leading. They can also develop mentorship-



based succession plans focused on reaching out to new members from equity-deserving groups and embedding equitable practices within their board performance frameworks. Additionally, board members can raise or reallocate financial resources to both build the organization’s capacity to effectively implement equitable approaches across all aspects of their organizations and to create roles that are explicitly geared towards individuals with combined lived experiences and expertise. All of these and other efforts must be accompanied with a clearly allocated budget line for required accommodations such as child care, language support and professional development training to support everyone’s success.

 **Additional Ideas:**

Executive Directors and Other Leaders: One of the roles of organizational leaders working in close proximity with staff and community members is to model equitable practices in ways that are reflexive, humble and transparent on a daily basis. This does not mean having all aspects of equity figured out or being entirely comfortable amid change. What it does mean is having a simple plan for when missteps are made—it’s a matter of when, not if—openly sharing growth opportunities, creating safe(r) spaces for staff and community members to do the same, and not over-promising or rejecting bold ideas in a manner that destroys trust and hope. Also, organizational leaders should work with internal or external experts to entrench equity within the description of every role, every performance review and ongoing team meetings.

 **Additional Ideas:**



Community Engagement & Communications Staff: Although distinct, community engagement and communications roles overlap in terms of how they regularly represent their organizations within the public sphere. Community engagement facilitators/experts can enhance equitable approaches within their organizations by ensuring that equitable policies guide all community engagement initiatives. They can do so by including and compensating community members as part of their team, and by partnering with organizations with established presence and trust among equity-deserving groups. Working in close collaboration, communications staff/experts can develop asset-based messaging that highlights both community challenges and capacity, and that document and amplify engagements which amplify successes while earning trust. Communications staff/experts can also gather stories that infuse life into statistics and key messages encouraging cycling equity. Both of these front-facing roles require considerable emotional intelligence, empathy and reciprocity toward community members.

 **Additional Ideas:**

Program Team: In addition to board members, organizational leaders, and community engagement and communications staff/experts, every single team member has an important role to play in enhancing equity. Whether conducting administrative, program co-ordination, or policy-related tasks, each person has a responsibility to also model equitable approaches through professional reflexivity, humility and transparency. In addition to acknowledging inevitable missteps, this means being open to critical feedback, augmented job descriptions and embracing colleagues with vastly different lived experiences and professional perspectives. The latter is applicable to all organizational roles.



 **Additional Ideas:**

Volunteers: Although not contractually bound, volunteers represent and contribute to carrying out the important work of organizations. Some volunteers such as bike mayors and grassroots advocates play an integral role in amplifying the broader challenges and benefits of biking. Regardless of volunteer title or tenure—short, medium or long term—all volunteers should be apprised of organizational policies and practices pertaining to equity. This can be achieved through training sessions, succinct orientation guides and informal capacity-building experiences such as onboarding lunches. Volunteers may possess cycling equity capacities and insights, which they may be eager to share, if given the opportunity and respectful acknowledgment. Also, numerous individuals such as Indigenous Peoples, racialized people, women, disabled people, and people living on lower incomes lack the luxury of time and finances to volunteer. As such, it's important to extend honorariums, and accommodations such as child-care allowance and transit tokens whenever possible. Individuals of all identities should never have to pay to volunteer.

 **Additional Ideas:**

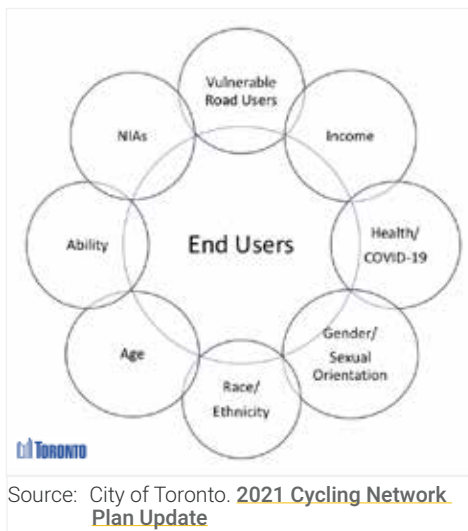
The aforementioned roles are both distinct and overlapping. No two individuals will carry out any one role in the exact same manner due to factors such as regional differences, personality variances and priorities. However, unpacking roles contributes to discerning when it is appropriate to lead and when it is appropriate to support, while also identifying a broad range of equally valuable contributions from the cycling and the broader mobility sector.

Equitable Policy and Program Precedents

The following policy and programming precedents reflect good and emergent practice intended to increase equity within cycling and broader mobility contexts.

Equity Analysis in Transportation Planning

Type: Equitable Program
Organization: City of Toronto
City: Toronto, Ontario



The City of Toronto’s Transportation Services Division has developed a “[Transportation Equity Lens Tool](#)” meant to help City staff “identify needs, remove barriers, and support a deeper dive into program impacts on equity deserving groups.” The equity-deserving categories they’ve identified are: vulnerable road users; geography-based equity; ability-based equity; age-based equity; means-based equity; race-based equity; gender-based equity; and health-based equity. The tool prompts City staff to methodologically consider the transportation barriers and the impact—both positive and negative—of its initiatives on various equity-deserving groups. There is also a section where City staff are prompted to consider negative-impact mitigation.

Four-Year Growth Plan

Type: Equitable Program
Organization: Bike Share Toronto
City: Toronto, Ontario



Source: BikeShare Toronto

Bike Share Toronto, a City program run out of the Toronto Parking Authority, integrated an equity lens in planning its [Four-Year Growth Plan](#), a document intended to guide its system expansion including the addition of 375 stations and 3,150 bikes. The equity component of the plan is intended to “identify areas currently underserved by mobility options and where people may have greater barriers to accessing services.” Analysis was drawn from the City’s Neighbourhood Improvement Areas as well as census data pertaining to low-income households. This shows that while some neighbourhoods considered low-income are well-served by the current system, there are opportunities to expand bike share access to other neighbourhoods with a high number of individuals from equity-deserving groups.

Safe Routes to School

Type: Equitable Program
Organization: Ohio Department of Transportation
City: Columbus, Ohio

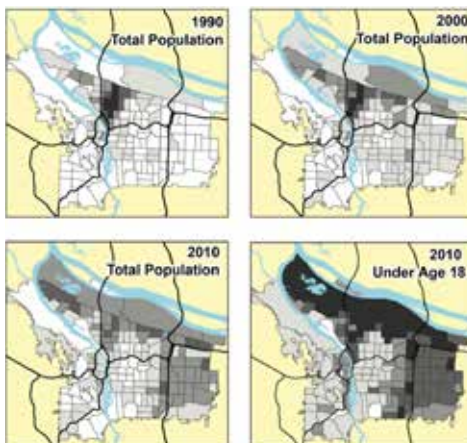


Source: Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Safe Routes to School

Recognizing the importance of creating safe routes for children and their parents to walk or bike to school, the Ohio Department of Transportation funds the **Safe Routes to School program**. It provides \$5 million annually for infrastructure projects within two miles of a school, reimbursing 100% of the project costs up to \$500,000. Importantly, the program also provides funding for education, encouragement and evaluation, such as campaign supplies, safety education programs and other program incentives. According to a **U.S. Department of Transportation 2016 White Paper** on equity in transportation planning, to receive funding from the program, schools must complete “school travel plans,” which include a socio-economic analysis of their students. In the City of Columbus, the program funds projects at two “underserved” schools whose students were shown to be 85% economically disadvantaged (compared to 48% statewide), and where children needed to cross active rail lines to get to school.

East Portland in Motion Plan

Type: Equitable Planning Policy
Organization: Portland Bureau of Transportation
City: Portland, Oregon



Source: **Racial Equity Strategy Guide**
Presented by Portland's Partnership for Racial Equity

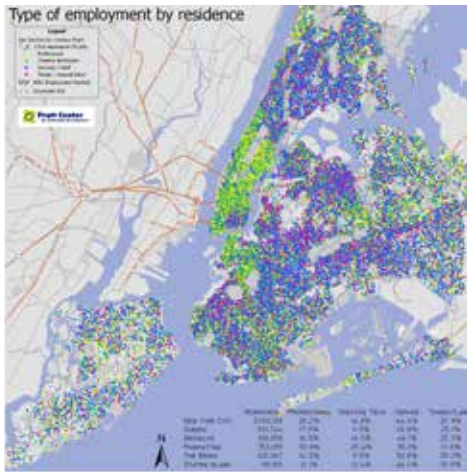
East Portland, a more ethnically and racially diverse area than the City of Portland as a whole, was found to be lacking in **safe cycling and pedestrian infrastructure**. In response, the 10-year East Portland in Motion Plan, led by the Portland Bureau of Transportation, identified equity as a priority. The **Racial Equity Strategy Guide**, co-developed by community stakeholders, highlighted primary goals, including the establishment of a racial equity strategy with measurable targets, development of tools to track progress and professional development. The municipality allocated nearly \$320 million over the decade to projects that included completing missing sidewalks, building a network of greenways, and installing pedestrian crossings. The program is still active today.

Transportation Equity Atlas

Type: Equitable Data Use, Equitable Planning

Organization: The Pratt Center for Community Development

City: New York, New York



Source: Pratt Center

The Pratt Center for Community Development, which has a long-standing history of addressing transportation equity, developed a **Transportation Equity Analysis**.

Through data visualization (mapping), it showed that lower-income, racialized communities were overrepresented in areas of the city where people spent more than 60 minutes commuting each way for work. The Center's Director of Policy, **Joan Byron**, notes that, "social, economic, and environmental justice advocates work on a vast array of issues and there wasn't a sense of ownership of transportation as a social justice issue. The disparity in commute times across race and issue showed how commuting time was, in fact, a racial and social justice issue." This initiative contributes to numerous powerful outcomes, including building on the data findings by forging partnerships with organizations such as Communities United for Transportation Equity to create a plan for a Bus Rapid Transit Network, which influenced the creation of the Select Bus Service program by the City of New York—including features of

the center's rapid bus plan. The City also adopted the Pratt Center's equity analysis in its plans to further review underserved transit areas.

Safe Oakland Streets

Type: Equitable Program

Organization: City of Oakland's Department of Transportation

City: Oakland, California



Source: City of Oakland : **City of Oakland**

Conceived in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic as a way to support physical activity outdoors, the City of Oakland's Department of Transportation now runs **Safe Oakland Streets** as a permanent program.

This change was spurred by the department's **own analysis of the program**, which noted "those responding to surveys are more likely to be white, have high incomes and live in North Oakland." Together with low-income racialized communities, the program prioritizes safety improvements at key places such as schools, libraries and health centres to create a network of slow cycling and pedestrian-friendly streets.

Two-Hour Timed Transfers

Type: Equitable Policy
Organization: Toronto Transit Commission
City: Toronto, Ontario



Source: [CBC News](#)

The Toronto Transit Commission, the public agency that operates Toronto's network of buses, streetcars, and subways, has a policy of **two-hour transfers** for passengers, allowing them unlimited use of transit within two hours of their first fare in any direction across the system. This cost-cutting and convenient intervention for its passengers is a result of considerable grassroots advocacy from powerful mobility equity advocates such as **TTC Riders**. Thought leaders such as scholar Anna Kramer **told the Toronto Star** that this policy change is "generally a fairly progressive, gender-supportive measure," due to the number of women using transit to carry out multiple tasks that require transfers such as grocery shopping and child-rearing activities. Similarly, Dr. Kara Santokie notes, "timed transfers would ease the burden on low-income women, who are disproportionately new immigrants or from racialized groups." Overall, this policy is responsive to all individuals living on low incomes who are dependent on public transit for essential daily travel.

Complete Streets Ordinance

Type: Equitable Policy
Organization: BikeWalkKC
City: Kansas City, Kansas



Source: [Kansas City](#) Public Works Department

Kansas City has a **Complete Streets Ordinance** co-written by the advocacy group BikeWalkKC. As part of the organization's work, BikeWalkKC built a coalition of organizations to help support the policy, including non-profits, hospitals, schools and community organizations. While this policy applies to the entire city, the ordinance states, "the City shall develop plans and set goals to prioritize and ensure successful implementation of Complete Streets in low and moderate-income neighborhoods, neighborhoods with poor health outcomes, and neighborhoods with diminished access to transportation options." The ordinance guides the implementation of a complete streets framework that works for everyone, including "pedestrians,

wheelchair users, bicyclists, public transportation users, and motorists, regardless of age or ability...." This initiative exemplifies the shift towards participatory policy development in partnership with community stakeholders.

Nice Ride Neighborhood

Type: Equitable Program
Organization: Nice Ride
City: Minneapolis, Minnesota



Photo: Raymond Boyd/Getty Images

Nice Ride, a Minneapolis-based bike share program, organized a successful three-year pilot program called “**Nice Ride Neighborhood**,” which focused on improving bike share services in underserved communities by tailoring the program to people with financial and cultural barriers to owning and/or riding a bike. It partnered with local bike shops and organizations such as St. Paul Women on Bikes to connect with stakeholders who would benefit most from the program. Rather than simply expanding bike stations and implementing their standard borrowing structure on a time-and-cost basis, Nice Ride Neighborhood gave bicycles—along with helmets, locks, lights, backpacks and educational materials—to participants for three months. Bikes and cycling accessories were distributed to different neighbourhoods and communities, such as North Minneapolis and Little Earth, an Indigenous community in South Minneapolis. All participants were eligible to

earn a \$200 voucher to a local bike shop by participating in a minimum of four groups rides and by riding their bikes at least twice per week (self-reported). While the pilot program has ended, Nice Ride continues to operate a bike share service in the city.



PART THREE:
Community Engagement,
Communications & Advocacy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY

A significant aspect of advancing cycling equity is effectively establishing two-way discourse with external stakeholders such as colleagues across sectors, community members and all orders of government. This section of the Toolkit provides three primary conceptual and practice frameworks required for addressing this aspect of the work: Equitable Community Engagement, Equity-Based Communications and Advocacy.

Equitable Community Engagement

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention proposes an unusually comprehensive and progressive definition of community engagement, calling it a “process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices.” A significant aspect of addressing these aspects of community engagement goals is “realizing the role of race, power and injustice.”³

According to Kip Holley, an Ohio State University researcher and civic engagement expert, when community members ignore injustices experienced by their neighbours, they risk alienating those whose lives have been shaped by those injustices. Important knowledge and wisdom that can help solve problems may be lost as a result. It is important therefore to address the history of racism, classism and unjust abuses of power. Power dynamics strongly influence the experiences in a community. For this reason, it is often impossible to change the power dynamic without first explicitly naming it and disrupting it. Moreover, some people, no matter how well-meaning, rarely give up their power without resistance. It is important therefore that community engagement processes honestly address resistance from traditionally powerful community members and organizations.

3 Holly, K. (2016). *The Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement, A Guide To Transformative Change*. Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University. p. 33. <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2016-05//ki-civic-engagement.pdf>


Equitable Community Engagement Principles


The following equitable community engagement principles and approaches consider the comprehensive definition of community engagement, power imbalances, social location, and histories of harm and exclusion:


- Urban design is not neutral; it either perpetuates or reduces social inequities.
- Always begin by asking: “Who’s not here?”
- The community itself should always be reflected on the community engagement team.
- There is no such thing as a monolithic community; seek the pluralistic publics within the public, including stakeholders who challenge the project and/or process.
- Provide and clearly communicate accommodations such as accessible community engagement spaces, meals, transit fare and child care, so everyone can participate.
- Everyone is entitled to express their “truth” during city-building processes as long as that truth doesn’t contravene history, systemic inequities, facts or hate speech laws.
- Deeply listen to a diverse range of viewpoints and embrace discomfort.
- Acknowledge the Indigeneity, complex histories and intangible cultural heritage of places.
- Don’t expect people to come to you; engage people within the community and incorporate creative tactics such as place-based storytelling, public walks and collaborative cooking.
- There is no such thing as a safe community engagement space; create safe(r) spaces.
- Avoid technical jargon and co-create a common vocabulary for all community engagements that responds to multiple communication styles and types of knowledge.
- Do not over-promise; outline the community’s actual scope of influence.
- Tangibly demonstrate reciprocity and accountability.
- Make the process **JOYFUL**.




Equitable Community Engagement Reflection

 Which of these equitable community engagement principles and approaches resonate with you and why?

 Which of these equitable community engagement principles and approaches specifically apply to your work?

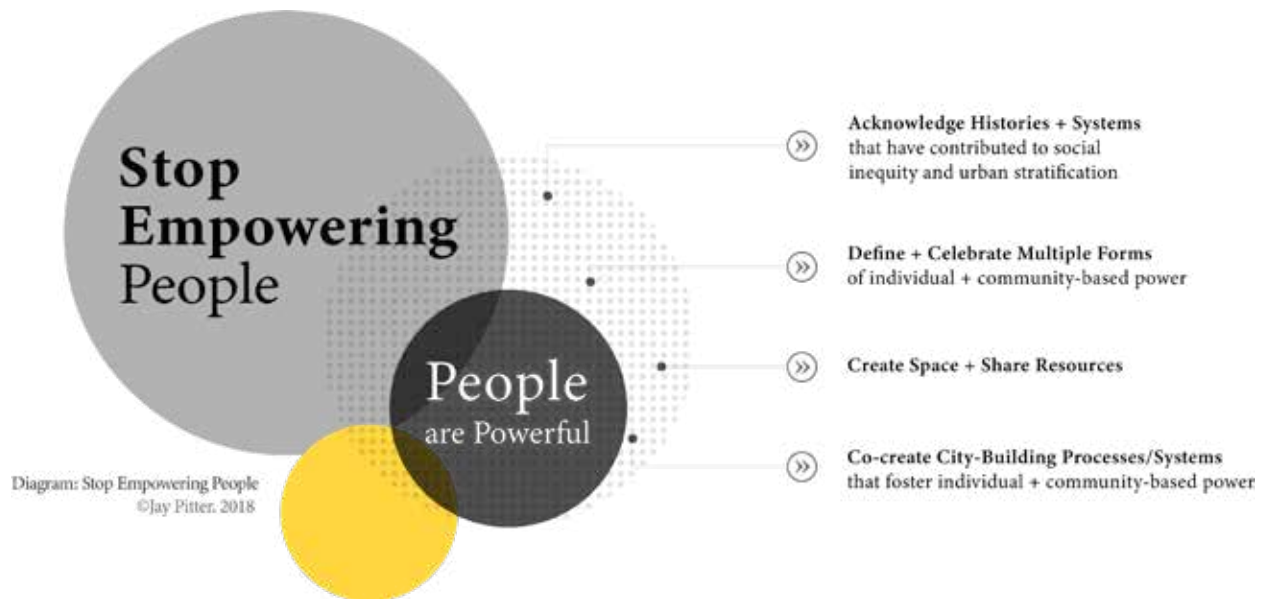
 Which of these equitable community engagement principles and approaches are you currently applying to your work?

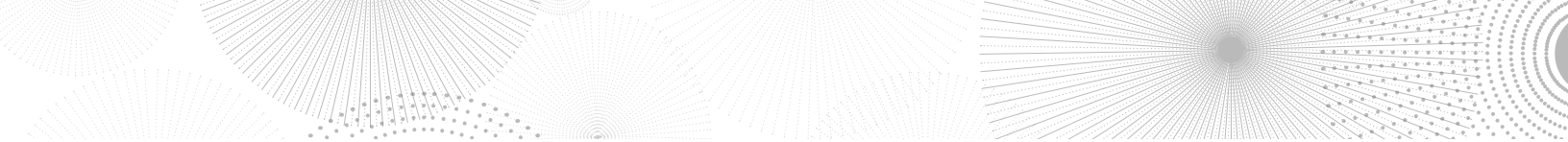
 Which of these equitable community engagement principles and approaches would you like to apply to your work but you aren't quite sure how to do that?


✎ What is one main barrier that prevents you from applying more equitable community engagement principles and approaches to your work?

ALSO, WE FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT **NOT** EMPOWERING PEOPLE.

While we take systemic power imbalances seriously and understand the well-intended sentiment of empowering people, this construct negates the fact that people—even those facing considerable social challenges—are inherently powerful. Instead of empowering people, it is preferable to share space, information and resources within urbanism processes.





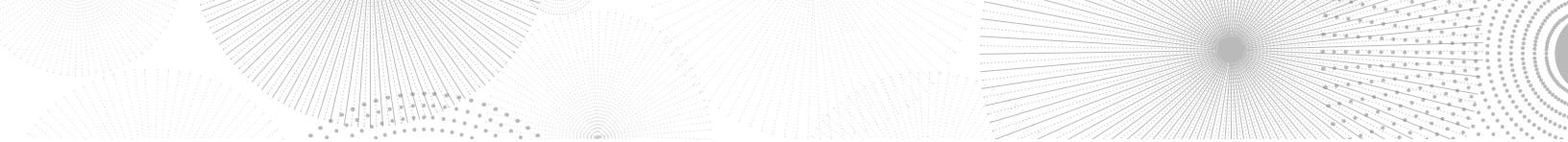
 How do you actively share space, information and resources during community engagement initiatives in recognition of inherent community power?

TRANSLATION IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS.

The success of the community engagement initiatives, and of this overall process, hinges on the team's ability to translate. The translation process is three-fold:


1. Translating technical land-use and design jargon to residents;
2. Translating the community's social context, concerns and desires to technical experts on the team;
3. Translating all inputs to the decision-making process, investments and final design.

 How do you translate and validate community engagement data?



The Nuance of Informality

Within the Practice, we believe that informal conversations are the first step toward earning trust with individuals who have been excluded, harmed and/or disappointed by formal municipal community engagement processes. Conversing over a shared meal or during a long walk creates an intimacy and an opportunity for deep listening that simply cannot be replicated in a large room with hundreds of community stakeholders, or through an online survey. It's imperative to create the time and space for nuance when exploring challenging, often divisive, city-building issues. This isn't to suggest that large-scale engagements do not serve a valuable function; they are simply not a good starting point for what we describe as human-scale community engagement.

 Are you currently integrating informal community engagement approaches in your work? If so, which types of informal community engagement approaches are you integrating? If not, why not?



Source: Jay Pitter Placemaking, Various Engagements Across North America

Equity-Based Communications and Advocacy

Internal communication refers to the processes, platforms and guidelines governing effective communication among a group of individuals within the same organization or participating in the same project. To ensure equity-based internal communication approaches are followed, consider the following:

- Encourage all staff and partners to bring forward practice approaches, stories, qualitative data and other types of knowledge to inform internal conversations.
- Build an internal story bank with a diverse range of images and personal narratives.
- Audit internal resources and references related to cycling and mobility equity to ensure that a diverse range of experts and ways of knowing are included.
- Gather evidence-based data, much like the content presented in this Toolkit, that responds to cycling and broader mobility equity barriers to build capacity and inform internal discussions.
- Assess whether internal colloquial and technical language is inadvertently discriminatory, disrespectful or based in implicit bias.
- Develop messages and tactics for collecting identity-based data in a manner that is democratic, flexible and supportive of equity goals.
- Practise having uncomfortable and complex conversations about social identity, social justice and socio-spatial issues on an ongoing basis.

External communication refers to processes, platforms and guidelines governing effective communication between individuals within an organization or participating in the same project, and external stakeholders. To ensure equity-based external communication approaches are followed, consider the following:

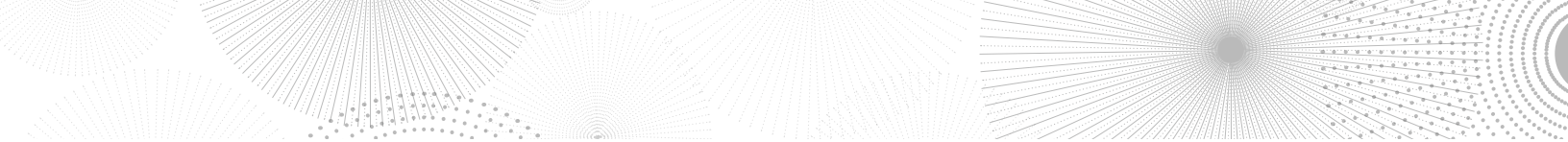
- Underscore the strengths, agency, power and resilience of individuals from equity-deserving and sovereignty-deserving groups disproportionately impacted by bicycling inequity and broader mobility inequity while making the case for change.
- Consider replacing the term “cyclist” with “individuals who cycle” or “individuals who travel using bikes” to resonate with a broader range of community stakeholder groups.
- Decentre the bike itself and build powerful messages around the benefits of cycling.

- Discontinue the hyper-focus on the daily frustrations and risks of cycling because this does not contribute to behavioural change; create balance by including asset-based messaging.
- Do not conflate all individuals who cycle who are situationally vulnerable while riding bikes—as they all are—with being an equity-deserving or historically marginalized group.
- Use person-first language and underscore structural challenges rather than the shortcomings of individuals, whenever possible.
- Use plain language, photos, infographics and easy-to-understand maps across various collateral to increase accessibility and meet the communication styles of a diverse range of external stakeholders.

Advocacy, a component of external communication, is distinctly and primarily focused on engendering support for a specific cause, recommendation or policy change. To ensure equity-based advocacy approaches are followed, these ideas with accompanying questions should be considered:

1. Ensure that goals, strategies and actions are co-created with impacted groups so that organizations are not advocating for people, but advocating with people.
 - Does this advocacy initiative include one or more individuals disproportionately impacted by the advocacy issue?
 - Is the advocacy goal defined in collaboration with numerous individuals and/or groups disproportionately impacted by the advocacy issue?
 - Have we allocated resources and accommodations for individuals and/or groups disproportionately impacted by the advocacy issue?
2. Collaborate with academic institutions, think tanks and community stakeholders to ensure that public education and research initiatives are grounded in theory, practice and everyday lived experiences.
 - Is this evidence-based advocacy initiative posing the right research questions, which were co-developed by individuals and/or groups disproportionately impacted by the advocacy issue?
 - Is the current advocacy-related research publicly accessible to individuals and/or groups disproportionately impacted by the advocacy issue?

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- Are statistics and theory cross-referenced by stories and are stories cross-referenced by statistics and theory to both validate accuracy and reinforce the complexity and urgency of the advocacy issue?
3. Identify external stakeholders across sectors that support, contest or are agnostic about your advocacy issue to proactively build solidarity and prepare for resistance.
 - Which sectors and organizations outside of cycling and active transportation more broadly are advocating for similar goals and benefits?
 - How can the advocacy issue be better presented to agnostic stakeholders who are currently apathetic and/or unengaged?
 - How can the advocacy issue be presented to resistant, and even problematic, stakeholders in a manner that is challenging without being unnecessarily alienating?
 4. Integrate emotional intelligence in advocacy initiatives to humanize the advocacy issue and model community care.
 - Are you attending to the emotional wellness and material needs of individuals on the frontlines of grueling, often-uncompensated and long-term advocacy initiatives?
 - Are there designated resources and accommodations in place to support staff and community advocates?
 - Do you have a formal structure for celebrating small wins, and publicly recognizing and celebrating advocates who are often unsung?
 5. Leverage creative, cross-platform approaches for branding your advocacy initiative and ensuring that it resonates with multiple target audience groups.
 - Who are the target audience groups for your advocacy initiative, and what are the online and offline platforms where they frequently engage?
 - Does your advocacy initiative clearly introduce external stakeholders to the advocates, rational and collective benefits?
 - Is your advocacy initiative interesting, creative and participatory?




6. Bringing multiple stakeholders along the spectrum of cycling equity advocacy issues requires public education and co-learning.

- Have you identified your professional and personal growth opportunities in relation to the advocacy issues?
- Have you developed public education materials formatted for various platforms, lengths and learning styles?
- Does your advocacy initiative include education pertaining to taking short- and long-term actions, at varying degrees of commitment, to achieve the advocacy goal?

7. As with all aspects of cycling equity and broader active transportation work, evaluation is paramount in terms of measuring impact, prioritizing initiatives and demonstrating accountability.

- Have you identified key metrics and milestones tethered to your advocacy initiative goal?
- Do you have multiple ways to measure impact, both tangible and intangible?
- What is your process for recalibrating and/or incorporating feedback—both positive and critical—into the advocacy initiative process?

 Which of these equity-based communications and advocacy approaches are most urgent to integrate into your work?



Sources:
(Top to Bottom & Left to Right)
Winnipeg Trails Association, 8 80
Cities, Cycle TO, colourbox, Zoë
Bennett, colourbox, colourbox

CYCLING EQUITY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The following evaluation framework contains substantive core content that can be built upon to design customized cycling equity evaluation processes.

METHODS

- » Annual Survey
- » Infrastructure Audit
- » Case Studies
- » Dyadic and Triadic Interviews
- » Bean Count Jars & Feedback Boards
- » Equity-Deserving Groups Cycling Experience Journals
- » Documented Informal Conversations
- » Collage-Making Focus Groups
- » Respectful Program Participation and Observation
- » Community Asset Mapping

KEY PREPARATORY STEPS

Prior to leading an equitable evaluation process, core actions should be implemented that include, but are not limited to, the following steps:

- » Reflect on your identity/social location and how that may both support and impede the evaluation process.
- » Assess your working knowledge of, and experience implementing, cycling equity processes. Secure additional support if required.
- » Secure resources, including honorariums for individuals from equity-deserving groups, and identify required accommodations for guiding an equitable and accessible process.
- » Assess and confirm the required administrative and logistical support.
- » Identify the key audience group(s) you intend to engage and the ways they may benefit from participating in the evaluation process to ensure respect and reciprocity.
- » Convene a small group of individuals with lived experience of the core issue or initiative you're evaluating to collaboratively clarify the key problem and/or growth opportunity. Co-create key evaluation questions with this group to ensure resonance and to proactively identify any risk, resistance and/or conflict of interest.
- » Select 2-3 accessible methods for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data.
- » Compose evaluation key messages and questions aligned with your 2-3 selected data-collection methods.
- » Identify evaluation indicators, milestones and validation approaches.
- » Create a critical path with firm yet flexible milestones.

INDICATORS

Equitable Organizational Practice Indicators

Equitable practice and policy indicators include, but are not limited to, the following:

- » Percentage of Indigenous and racialized staff occupying leading, decision-making roles;
- » Percentage of Indigenous and racialized staff, and those from other equity-deserving groups, who feel a sense of physical and emotional safety and who feel relatively safe to express their full identities at work;
- » Percentage of Indigenous and racialized staff, and those from other equity-deserving groups, retained in the organization for three or more years;
- » Percentage of overall staff and volunteers who have participated in cycling equity capacity-building processes and mutual mentorship;
- » Percentage of budget dedicated to professional development courses and experiences aligned with cycling equity capacity-building;
- » Percentage of board members who are reflective of the demographic diversity aligned with the organization's geographic mandate;
- » Percentage of staff and volunteers involved with co-creating organizational policies;
- » Percentage of workplace practices and other cultural norms that have been discontinued or amended to create a safe(r) environment for individuals from equity-deserving groups;
- » Percentage of statements about equitable vision, values and principles, supported by three aligned actions each, that the organization is taking to demonstrate that it lives its values.

Equitable Community Engagement Indicators

Equitable organizational practices indicators include, but are not limited to, the following:

- » Percentage of resources (time, budget and expertise) allocated to earning trust with Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups;
- » Percentage of time spent meeting Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups where they are and attending their community events outside of formal community engagement processes;
- » Percentage of paid community stakeholders from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups who have co-created, designed and/or co-led annual community engagement processes;
- » Percentage of individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups who experience a relative sense of physical and emotional safety while participating in your community engagement initiatives;
- » Percentage of individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups who experience a sense of agency and/or stewardship when participating in your organization's community engagement initiatives;
- » Percentage of individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups who participate in your organization's activities three or more times a year;
- » Percentage of community engagement events that are accessible and offer specific accommodations to individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups.

Equitable Communications and Advocacy Indicators

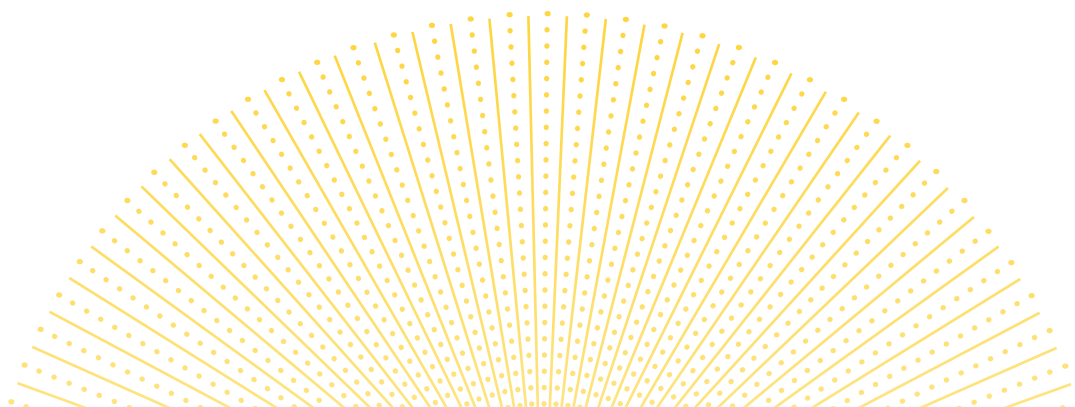
Equitable communications and advocacy indicators include, but are not limited to, the following:

- » Percentage of individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups who co-create communications and advocacy strategies;
 - » Percentage of stories and case studies featuring individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups that use a respectful asset-based lens to highlight both the challenges and the immense power among these groups;
 - » Percentage of individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups who are visually represented as community leaders and experts—not just clients—across your organization’s communication platforms;
 - » Percentage of public speaking opportunities—conferences, panels and media—extended to individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups so they can directly share their own lived experiences and insights;
 - » Percentage of advocacy initiatives assessed using a lens that considers potential, inadvertent harm to individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups;
 - » Percentage of individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups who take the lead on all advocacy efforts that are about or that disproportionately impact them;
 - » Percentage of individuals from Indigenous, racialized and other equity-deserving groups who confirm that advocacy efforts resulted in some degree of meaningful benefit to them in terms of community capacity-building, increased safety, access to resources and/or other indicators aligned with their urgent priorities and values.
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Additional Insights & Ideas

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Jay Pitter Placemaking is an award-winning, bi-national Practice mitigating growing divides in cities across North America. The Practice leads institutional city-building projects focused on public space design and policy, mobility equity, cultural planning, gender-responsive design, transformative public engagement and healing fraught sites. Additionally, Jay Pitter, Principal Placemaker, shapes urgent urbanism discourse through media platforms such as the Los Angeles Times and Canadian Architect. Ms. Pitter is a sought-after speaker who has delivered keynotes for organizations such as United Nations Women and the Canadian Urban Transit Association, and is also an urban planning lecturer who has engaged students at Cornell University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Princeton University and numerous other post-secondary institutions. Guided by Ms. Pitter's expertise, which is located at the nexus of urban design and social justice, the team translates community insights into the built environment and urban policy.

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