



Local Governments  
for Sustainability  
Les gouvernements locaux  
pour le développement durable  
**CANADA**

# Equitable Adaptation

Slide decks presented by ICLEI  
Canada.



An illustration at the top of the slide shows the upper bodies and heads of several people of different ethnicities and ages, including a woman with braids and a man with a beard, all looking towards the right. The illustration is in a light, muted color palette.

# Inclusive Climate Adaptation:

## Considerations for Communities

**Friday, May 23, 2025**

Coastal Climate Resilience Collaborative Presentation

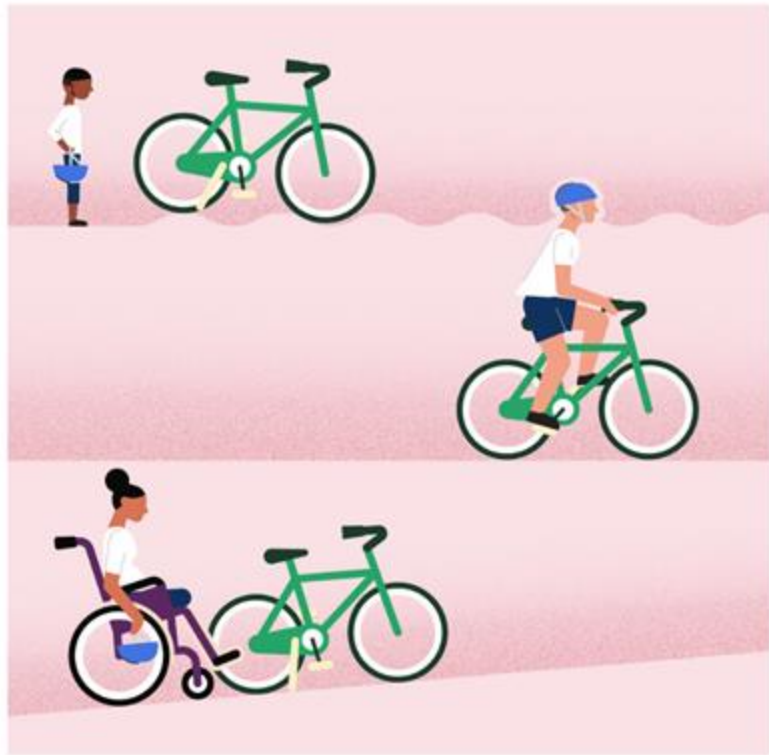
**The impacts of climate change will not be experienced uniformly.**

**“...Equity refers to fairness and justice ...[w]hereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.”**

(National Association of Colleges and Employers)

### EQUALITY:

Everyone gets the same—regardless if it's needed or right for them.



### EQUITY:

Everyone gets what they need—understanding the barriers, circumstances, and conditions.





### EQUALITY:

Everyone gets the same – regardless if it's needed or right for them.



### EQUITY:

Everyone gets what they need – understanding the barriers, circumstances, and conditions.



# Considering Maladaptation

*“According to the 2022 IPCC WGII Sixth Assessment Report: ‘adaptation planning and implementation that do not consider adverse outcomes for different groups can lead to maladaptation, increasing exposures to risks, marginalising people from certain socio-economic or livelihood groups, and exacerbating inequity.’”  
(Indigenous Climate Hub, 2022)*

**Maladaptation:** When actions intended to reduce vulnerability to climate change inadvertently increase it, either for the people undertaking the action or for others, now or in the future.

**Example:** Downstream impacts of coastal flood control measures might increase flood risk elsewhere or cause disruptions to water ecosystems

# Equitable Climate Adaptation:

Considerations for Local Governments



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## Equitable Climate Adaptation: Considerations for Local Governments

A resource to help guide you through equitable engagement processes for adaptation. It aims to support users in the following ways:


- To help **understand and address primary barriers** to centering equity in climate adaptation
- To **provide replicable case studies** of local government action
- To highlight **tangible and applicable tools** for centering equity and engagement in adaptation efforts.



## Equity(?) in Adaptation Planning

| <i><b>Present</b></i> | <i><b>Future</b></i>   |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Placation             | Meaningful Engagement  |
| Eroded Trust          | Relationship Building  |
| Perpetuation of Harm  | Community-Based Action |

# Making the Shift

- **Recognize the power dynamics** between decision-making actors and community members.
  - **Challenge patterns of behaviour** that perpetuate inequities and uneven patterns of participation in decision making.
  - Acknowledge **communities and marginalized members as active agents of change.**
- 

# Identifying Equity Objectives

## Procedural

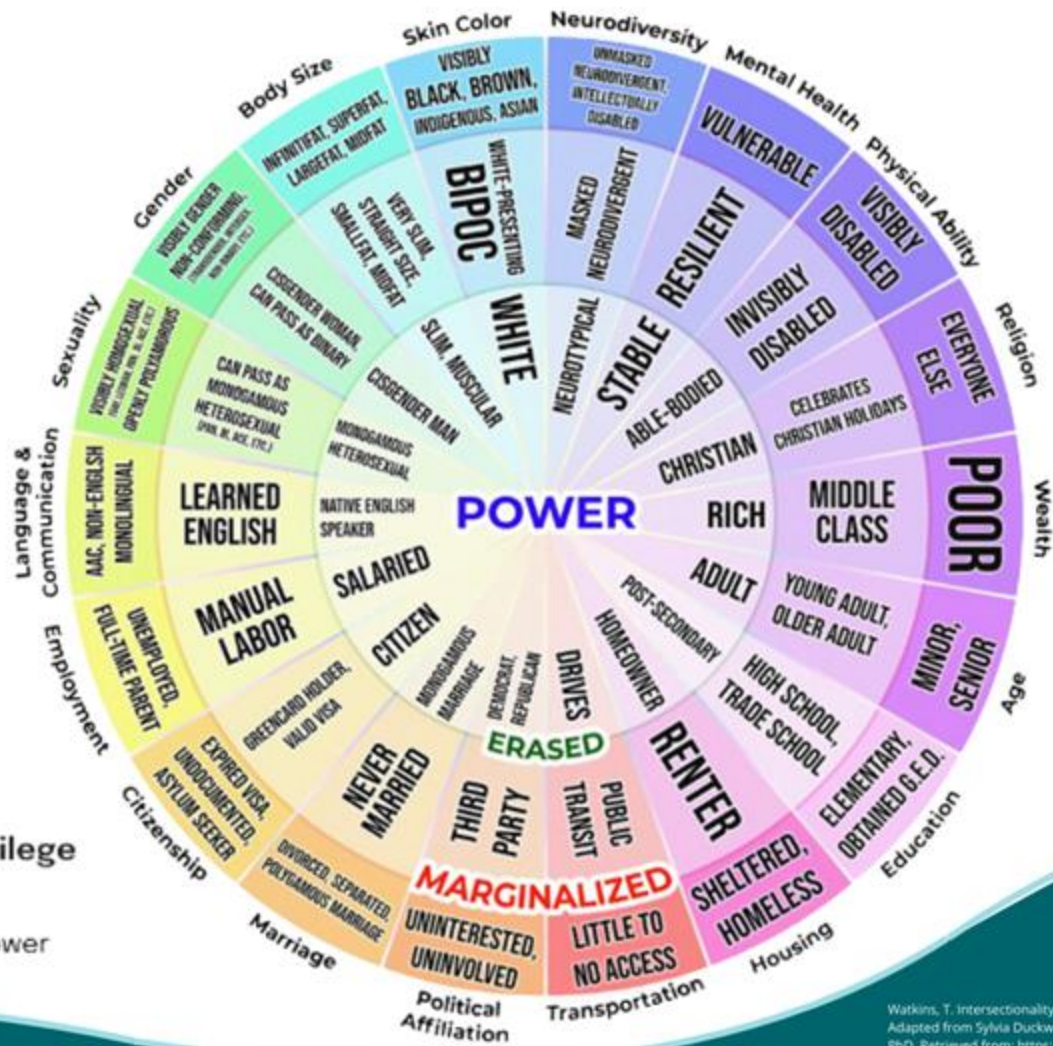
Process-oriented  
Emphasize equitable  
treatment  
Incorporate  
Engagement

## Distributional

Focus on resources,  
benefits, and burdens  
Equitable distribution  
and redistribution

## Structural

Systems-oriented  
Address root causes  
Community-led  
decision-making



## Examples of Privilege and Inequity

Figure 1: Wheel of Power and Privilege <sup>2</sup>

# Building the Case

- Identify your Audience
- Identify their Priorities and Concerns
- Identify Facts and Examples



Housing and Homelessness



Food Security



Green Infrastructure and  
Public Space



Energy Security



# Foundational Considerations for Engagement and Partnership

## BEFORE PROJECT INITIATION

*"Before engaging, have you assessed whether the project and associated engagement have the potential to benefit equity-deserving communities?"*

## PROJECT INITIATION

*"Have you developed staff, community, and political readiness with an understanding of why the project must centre equity and climate adaptation?"*

## PROJECT DELIVERY

*"Are you using methods to lower barriers to engagement?"*  
*"Are you regularly reporting back to the communities you have engaged with?"*

## Considerations for Three Project Types

Adaptation Infrastructure Projects

Adaptation Plans and Policies

Programming for Climate Adaptation

# Green Infrastructure and Public Space

Access to green spaces enhance community resilience to different climate events. Research by Nature Canada shows that neighbourhoods with lower household incomes and larger BIPOC communities have less access to trees and urban forests than wealthier and less culturally diverse communities

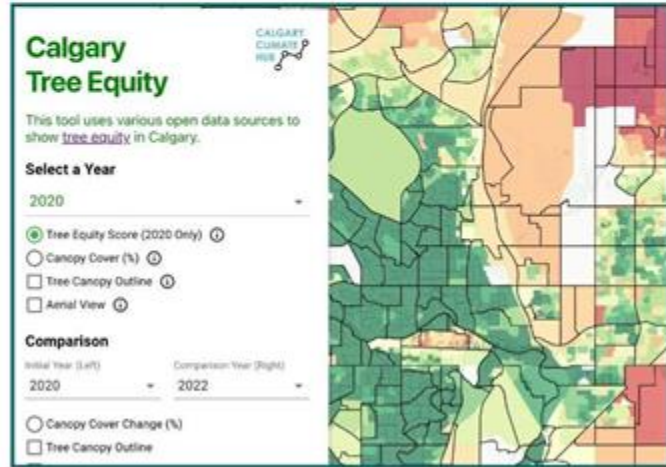


- Do your plans look at intersecting barriers experienced by equity-deserving communities? (i.e. tree canopy cover and income)?
- How can you communicate this information to prioritize support for equity-deserving communities?
- If you don't have this information, how might you gather this knowledge and in collaboration with whom? Who might be effective partners to help support this process?

# Community Engagement to Advance Tree Canopy Equity: Calgary Climate Hub Tree Equity Campaign

Sustainability Network and Nature Canada workshop investigated some of the work being undertaken to start advancing tree equity through public engagement:

## Calgary Tree Equity Tool



## Calgary Tree Planting Guide



# Affordable and Sustainable Housing

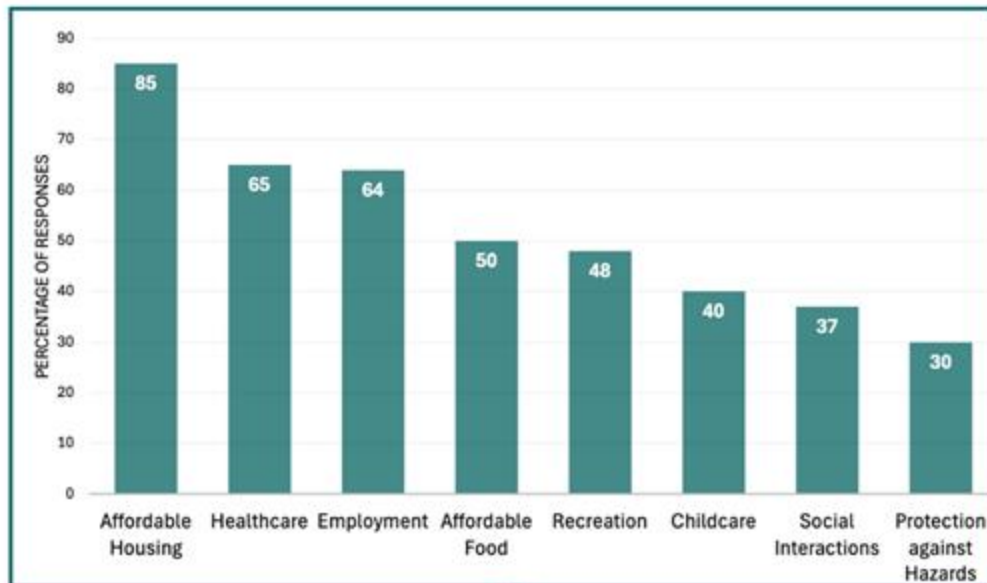
Access to quality housing with safe and upgraded infrastructure plays an important role in climate resilience. However, high quality and climate resilient housing is often more expensive or requires expensive retrofits that may be unaffordable for low-income households.



- Do your plans look at intersecting barriers of housing affordability and resilience?
- How can affordable, high-quality, and climate resilient housing be prioritized as a part of municipal resilience efforts?
- Who might be effective partners to help support this process?



# Risk Inequalities and Lack of Engagement: Thorncliffe Park, Toronto





# Engagement Barriers:

## Thorncliffe Park, Toronto



### Lack of Social Networks

- Immigrants
- Lack of connections



### Climate Unawareness



### Lack of Citizenship Rights

- Refugees



### Communication Barriers

- Language
- Cultural issues
- Livelihoods

# TRCA Sustainable Neighborhood Action Program (SNAP): San Romanoway Towers Revival

The project applied the **Participants to Leader model** which actively engages community members and fosters community leadership. A variety of engagement techniques were used to understand residents' needs, identify emerging leaders, and develop trust, through: outdoor events, focus group discussions, residents tours.

**Edible Backlconies**



**Urban Agriculture  
Project & Training**



**Building Retrofits**



An illustration at the top of the slide shows a group of diverse people from the chest up. On the left, a person with dark skin and short hair is seen in profile. Next to them is a person with light skin and two long braids. To their right is a person with dark skin and curly hair. On the far right, a person with light skin and a striped shirt is visible. The illustration is in a muted, greyish-blue color and is partially obscured by a dark teal wavy shape that separates it from the main text area.

**Questions?**

# Additional Resources

## Equitable Adaptation

The following resources complement the information shared in the “Equitable Adaptation” presentation. This was part of a four-part presentation series developed for the Coastal Climate Resilience Collaborative, a project that is supported by Natural Resources Canada’s Climate-Resilient Coastal Communities Program.

Presentation references:

- [Equitable Climate Adaptation: Considerations for Local Governments](#) 🎧 (ICLEI Canada)
- [Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning](#) 🎧 (USDN)
- [Wheel of Power and Privilege](#) 🎧
- [Potential Adverse Equity Consequences of Coastal Climate Adaptation Interventions in Canada](#) 🎧
- [Epistemic Justice in Flood-Adaptive Green Infrastructure Planning: The Recognition of Local Experiential Knowledge in Thorncliffe Park, Toronto](#) 🎧
- [San Romanoway Towers Revival](#) 🎧 (TRCA)



# Additional Resources

## Equitable Adaptation

### Other resources

- [Climate Change, Health Equity, and the Built Environment: Public Health Practice Guide](#) 🎧 (ORCCA)
- [Equity and Climate Synergies Resource Hub](#) 🎧 (CAP)
- [Beyond Inclusion - Equity in Public Engagement](#) 🎧 (SFU)
- [Inclusive and Empathetic Language Use Guidelines](#) 🎧 (Alliance for Healthier Communities)
- [For Our Future: Indigenous Resilience Report](#) 🎧 (NRCan)
- [From Risk to Resilience: Indigenous Alternatives to Climate Risk Assessment in Canada](#) 🎧 (Yellowhead Institute)
- [Equitable Climate Solutions for the Water Sector \(Water Utility Climate Alliance\)](#) 🎧
- [Calgary Tree Equity](#) 🎧 (Calgary Climate Hub)
- [Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics](#) 🎧
- [The Urgency of Intersectionality](#) 🎧 (TED Talk by Kimberlé Crenshaw)
- [Yale Experts Explain Intersectionality and Climate Change](#) 🎧

