Greater Portland Pulse:
Challenges to Measuring Racial Equity

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What is Greater Portland Pulse?

- A <u>regional (2 states; 4 counties)</u> initiative to develop a set of measurable, <u>consensus-based</u> outcomes and provide and maintain the associated indicators

- Project's Key Champions:
  - Metro (Portland area's regional government),
  - Portland State University, and others

- "***Measuring Results/Inspiring Action***"
  - Data (9 outcome categories), updated in "*<u>real time</u>*"
  - Dialogue

- A website and a set of indicators that measure progress toward the desired outcomes
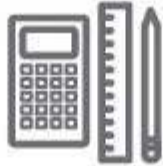
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Greater Portland Pulse Process

- Consensus driven
- Outcomes driven
- Top-down/bottom-up process
  - Top-down (Advisory Team) = 9 outcome categories; limited number of indicators
  - Bottom-up (Results Teams, 200+ participants) = articulation of the outcomes; identification of the indicators

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Greater Portland Pulse Outcome Categories

economic opportunity

education

healthy people

safe people

arts and culture

civic engagement

healthy natural environment

housing and communities

access and mobility

The question of Equity?
- Its importance
- Its meaning
- Its position

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The Position of Equity in Indicator Projects:
GPP Proposal A – its own outcome category

economic opportunity

education

healthy people
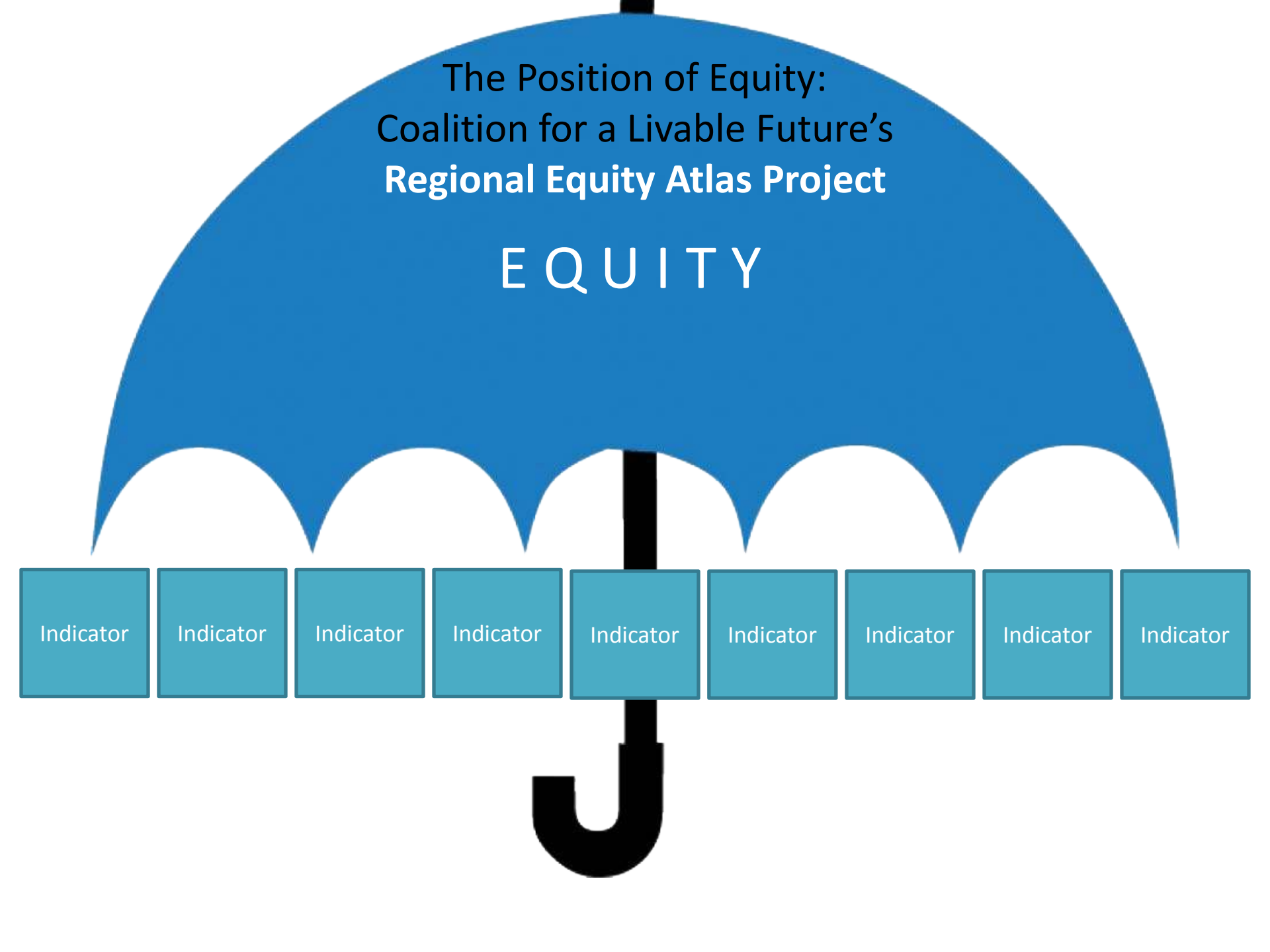
safe people

arts and culture

civic engagement

equity

healthy natural environment

housing and communities

access and mobility

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The Position of Equity:
Coalition for a Livable Future's
Regional Equity Atlas Project

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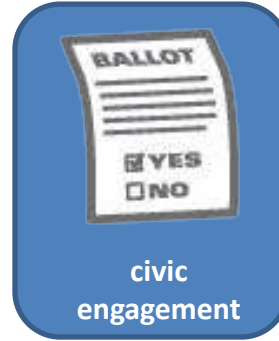
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The Position of Equity in Indicator Projects: GPP Proposal B
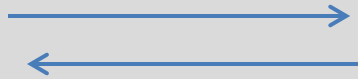
GPP's Adopted Definition of Equity

Equity means *that all individuals, regardless of "markers of difference" including but not limited to race, ethnicity, income, disability, and age, have equal privilege and opportunity to access the basic needs, services, skills and assets required to succeed in life. This includes affordable* **access** *to healthy food, adequate and appropriate housing, quality jobs, safe neighborhoods, transportation and mobility options, education, civic engagement, health services, natural areas, and opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities.*

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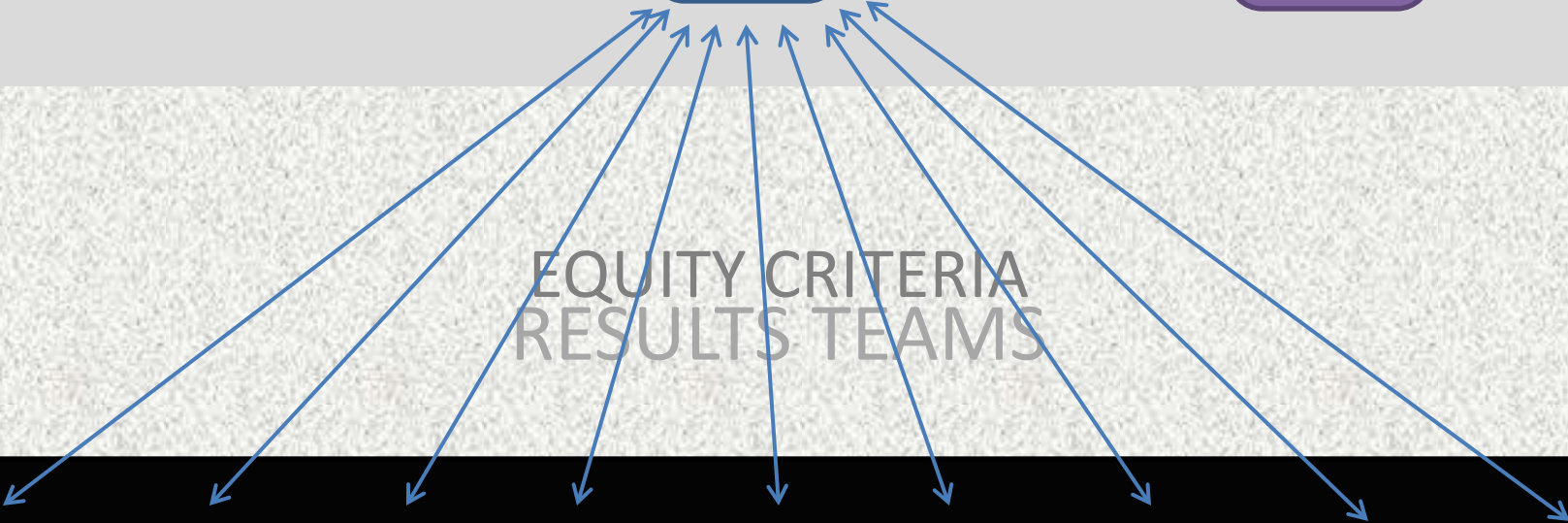PULSE

Equity Panel's Criteria

- <u>Disaggregation</u>: *whenever possible the indicator data should be broken down by race, ethnicity, age, and income*

- <u>Mapping</u>: *to understand the effects of place-based issues, it is critical to map as many indicators as possible to a neighborhood level*

- <u>Data Availability</u>: *to address the lack of disaggregated data at the neighborhood level, a list of "aspirational" indicators should be developed*

- <u>Community Perspective</u>: *the issues must be seen from the perspective of diverse communities*

Equity Panel

Advisory Team

EQUITY CRITERIA
RESULTS TEAMS

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"Learning Dialogues"
General Topics and Key Struggles

- What are <u>equity indicators</u> (including *importance* or prioritization and *meaning*)?

- The <u>lack of disaggregated data</u> and the appropriate geographies (and cross state data collection discrepancies)

- Having to use <u>proxy measures</u> and the challenge of interpretation

- The need for <u>cross-category use</u> of the indicators and <u>triangulation</u> for measuring equity conditions

- For some, the <u>priority of equity</u> generally

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"Learning Dialogues" Examples

- Economic Opportunity team:
  - What should <u>economic opportunity outcomes</u> be from an <u>equity perspective</u>?
  - Is income distribution relevant from an equity perspective?
  - Is homeownership an appropriate measure for wealth?
- Education
  - The "paradox of choice" (<u>too much data</u>)
  - Too <u>little data</u> from an equity perspective
- Housing and Communities
  - The <u>*importance and meaning*</u> of the <u>segregation or dissimilarity index</u>
  - The <u>inadequacies of quantitative data</u> to tell equity stories
  - The question of homeownership as a <u>proxy</u> for wealth
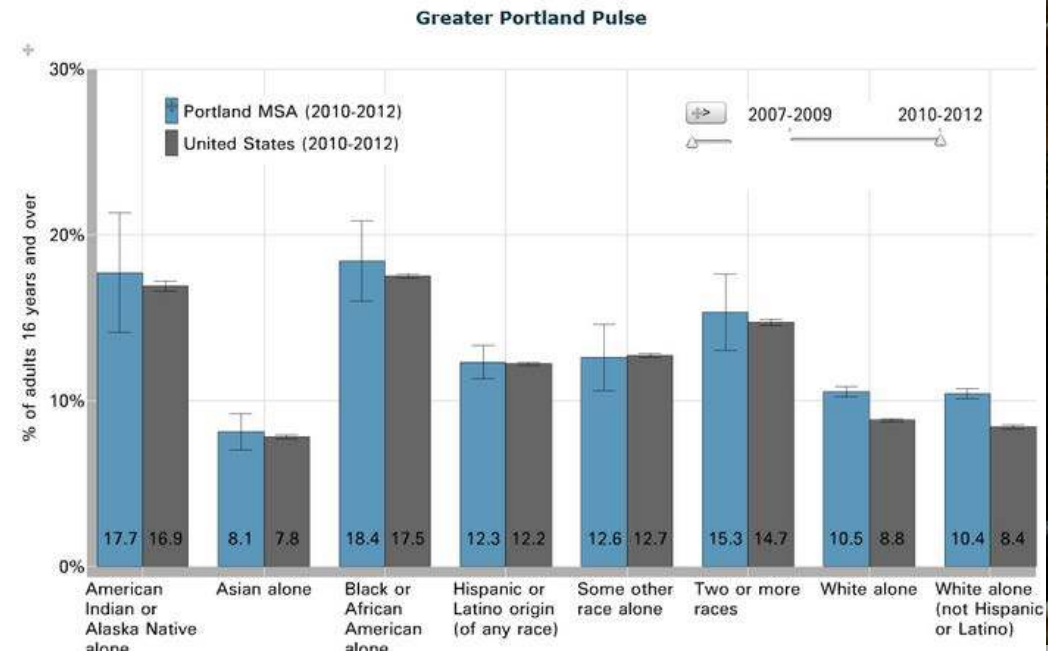
Equity Dialogue Outcomes

- Profound <u>learning experience</u> for the participants
  - Appreciation for the complexities of the issue
  - Awareness of the trade-offs related to the indicators
    - Temporal vs spatial resolution
    - The lack of adequate data
    - The need for triangulation, cross category integration, imprecise and inadequate measures
    - The importance of advocating for "aspirational" measures
- Impact on the GPP indicators
  - <u>Disaggregation</u> (generally at the MSA and county levels only)
  - <u>More sub-county level data</u>

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Re-Thinking the Position of Equity in the Context of Consensus-based Outcomes

- Indicators can influence policy outcomes by "*expanding awareness and focusing attention*" (Cobb and Rixford, 1998)

- *The single most important factor in determining the success of indicators whether they are designed with a purpose in mind – more specifically, a political purpose. The formation of a political purpose requires an ideology, which simply means a set of ideas or theories about what works and doesn't work… In short, without an ideology, there is no story, and the absence of an effective story is a recipe for political failure.* (Cobb, 2000:15)

- Invisible unless specifically called out

Unemployment by race and ethnicity, Portland MSA and United States, 2007-2009 and 2010-2012, three year estimates

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