

Puget Sound Equity Summit: November 2013

The Regional Equity Network and partners are planning a Puget Sound Equity Summit in November 2013. This is an action-oriented Summit that will bring together stakeholders across the region.

Background: The idea for a regional Equity Summit emerged from conversations during nearly three years of the Growing Transit Communities (GTC) Regional Equity Network. Equity Network partners desired to expand the focus beyond GTC (equitable transit-oriented development) to a more complete range of equity issues. The planning process and community organizing leading up to the Summit support the process to expand the Regional Equity Network. Our goal is to become a space that brings together and supports equity efforts across the region, and to be a platform for community leadership.

Summit goals

1. Identify shared issue areas and further develop key strategies to achieve healthy communities, building upon community organizing and work underway.
2. Create a structure for community, policy makers, philanthropy to jointly identify key issues and problem solve.
3. Connect various efforts and people in the region focused on equity/ equitable development and create a platform for community leadership.

Throughout the Summit, we will use two different scopes for organizing:

- **Policy:** key issue areas like transportation, jobs, redevelopment, affordable housing / displacement, etc – equity strategies or policy goals that can apply across the region.
- **Community:** Identifying or refining strategies that are priorities in particular communities and using the Summit to further build multi-sector coalitions and commitments for action.

Anticipated outcomes

- Identification of shared issues and key equity strategies to build upon and advance.
- Relationship building and information sharing – across communities (geographic and cultural), across sectors, and with private and public funders.
- Stronger community coalitions throughout the region.
- Increased public will around equity.
- Launch an expanded Regional Equity Network that brings together equity efforts around the region and provides continued support for collaboration, convening, and policy advocacy.

Summit Overview

The Regional Equity Summit will take place on **November 8-9, 2013** at Highline Community College.

Friday evening

The opening event will provide framing for the Summit, i.e. what equity is and understanding institutional racism, why we start with equity and how this orientation is in all of our interests, advancing strategies for healthy communities and a more equitable region. It will also create space and time for people to get comfortable and highlight the community organizing leading up to the summit. There will be networking time and a marketplace that will include community tables and issue/ policy stations. There will be some entertainment and a buffet dinner to bring people together. This will be followed by an opening program that includes a keynote speaker and report outs from communities (possibly a video presentation).

Saturday (full-day)

The day will open with a keynote speaker that can reinforce the Summit framing and speak to advancing equity strategies and increasing access to opportunity. The day will be split into two major components.

- The first half of the day will be issue area breakouts, allowing space for people from different communities and sectors to share and co-develop specific equity strategies. The issue areas/ policy strategies will be identified through community convenings and will be led or co-led by community experts who bring a draft to start the conversation and share some successes or work underway. The outcome will be further refined equity policy strategies, e.g. “jobs equity”.
- The second half of the day will be community breakouts, bringing together community representatives, elected officials, philanthropy, etc to identify priority action steps for their community. The logistics of how these breakouts will be structured will be further refined through the Summit planning. The outcome will be identifying 1-3 community-specific (place-based) strategies and some coalition building.
- The closing will include report-backs from community breakouts – what is your plan?

Convenings leading up to the Summit

Community convenings (now–September)

Resources are available to support local community convenings and participation in the Summit itself. A goal for the Summit is to focus on the equity strategies that are most relevant to communities and to elevate community-led work underway. When thinking about equitable development and healthy communities—what are some shared priorities, what are the opportunities, how can we work together and co-develop solutions that empower communities and increase access to opportunity and reduce racial disparities?

There will be opportunities to share priorities at the summit, through a community marketplace, networking time, and video presentations. These priorities will shape the Summit agenda by informing the issue area/ strategy breakouts that will be a focus of the first half of the day. Community experts will lead or co-lead these breakout sessions, providing an opportunity to share work underway and progress, and to also further refine equity strategies with peer communities and across sectors (policy makers, funders, etc).

Sub-regional convenings (September/ October)

In addition to community convenings, the Regional Equity Network will host several sub-regional convenings leading up to the Summit (roughly organized around the transit corridors: South, East, North). These will be further refined but could include basic trainings on equitable development and racial equity so that everyone is ready to participate in the Summit in November. These will also further support community coalition building efforts.

Post-Summit

The Summit provides an opportunity to highlight actions that build upon work already underway and support policy strategies that will create a more equitable region. After the Summit, we will continue to build upon this resource-sharing and relationship-building as communities, coalitions, and a region. The community priorities and organizing that are lifted up at the Summit will shape the vision and agenda for the next iteration of a Regional Equity Network.