



# Equity Framework

**Presentation to Council**

**July 20, 2021**



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Photo by Vancouver Archives VANOC

# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW



**PART 1: Report Recommendations**

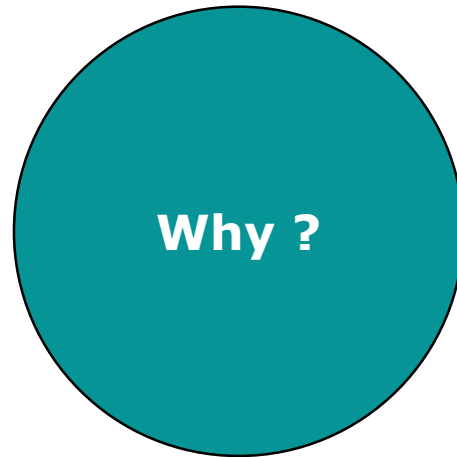
**PART 2: What do we Mean by Equity?**

**PART 3: Why Equity Matters for the City of Vancouver**

**PART 4: What is an Equity Framework?**

**PART 5: Next Steps**

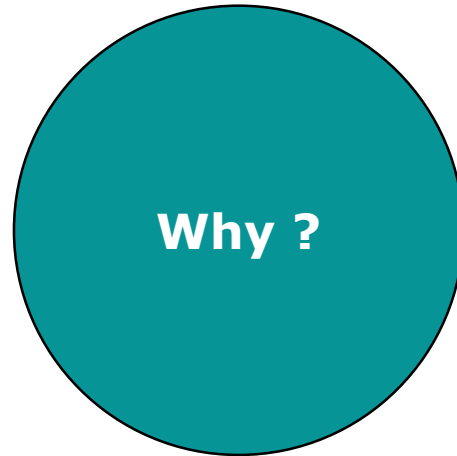
# PART 1: Report Recommendations



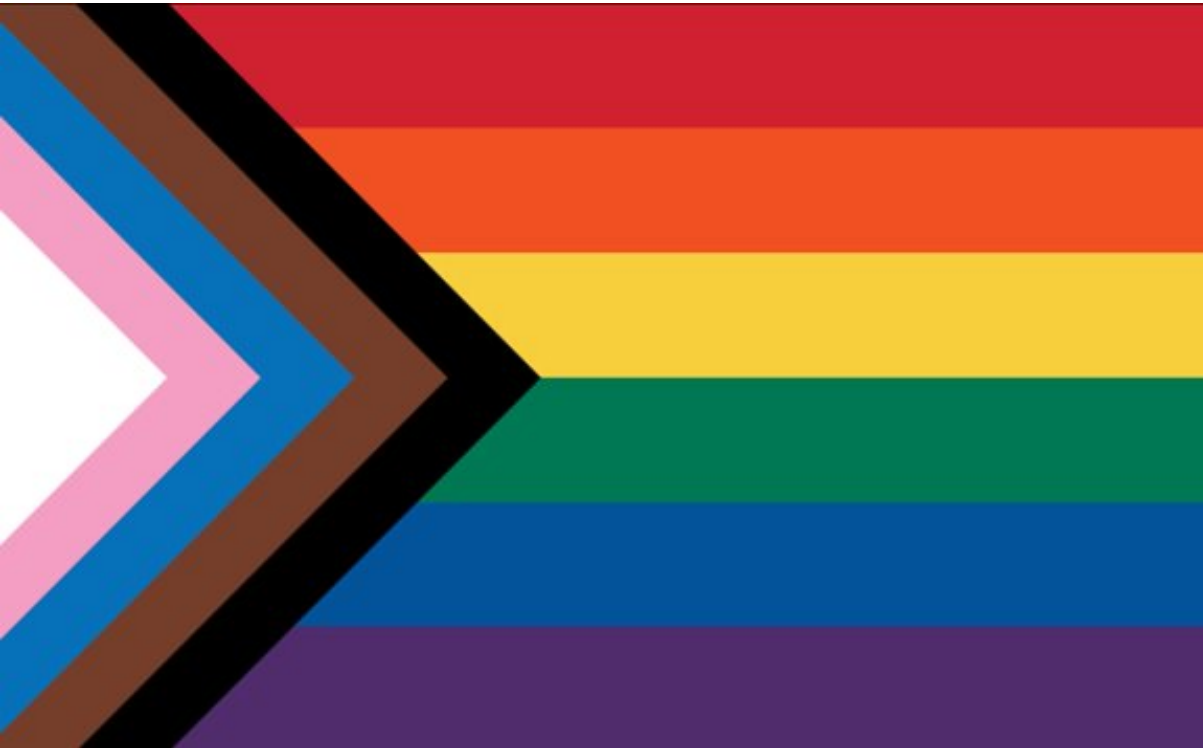
# Report Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve the proposed Equity Framework, which provides common understanding and a united approach to equity, to be used by all City departments
- B. THAT Council direct the Equity Office to conduct a benchmarking and goal setting exercise in the Focus Areas identified in the Equity Framework, work collaboratively with departments to identify actions and tracking procedures, and provide an update to Council on progress on an annual basis
- C. THAT Council refer the Equity Framework for consideration of adoption to Vancouver Public Library Board, the Vancouver Police Board, and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

# PART 2: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EQUITY?



# What is Equity?



## **EQUITY IS BOTH AN OUTCOME AND A PROCESS**

Equity as an outcome is the condition that would be achieved if one's identity no longer predicted how one fares.

Equity as a process is the replacement of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes or fail to eliminate them.

# How do Equity and Equality differ?

## Equality



## Equity





# PART 3: WHY EQUITY MATTERS

**Who  
Benefits ?**

**Why ?**



# Valuing our Strengths...

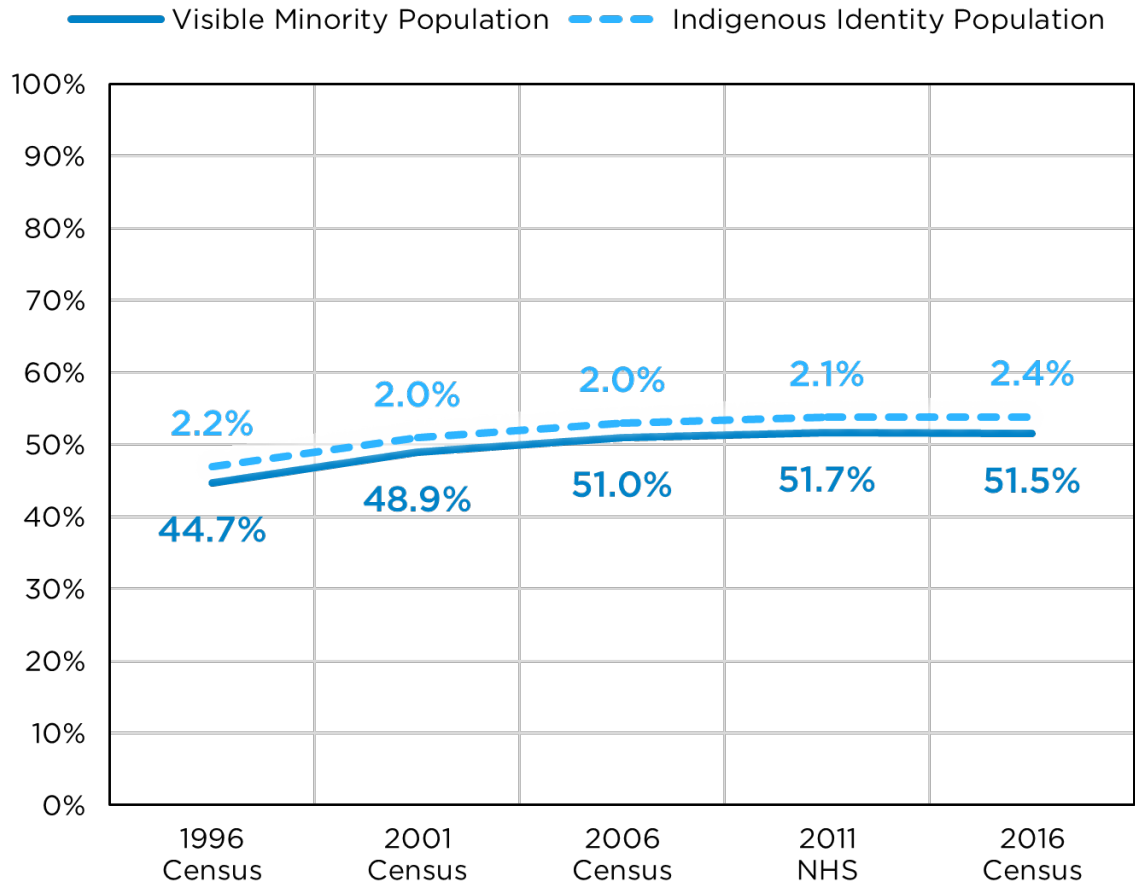
## **Vancouver is defined by its:**

- Natural surroundings
- Strong economy
- Diverse population



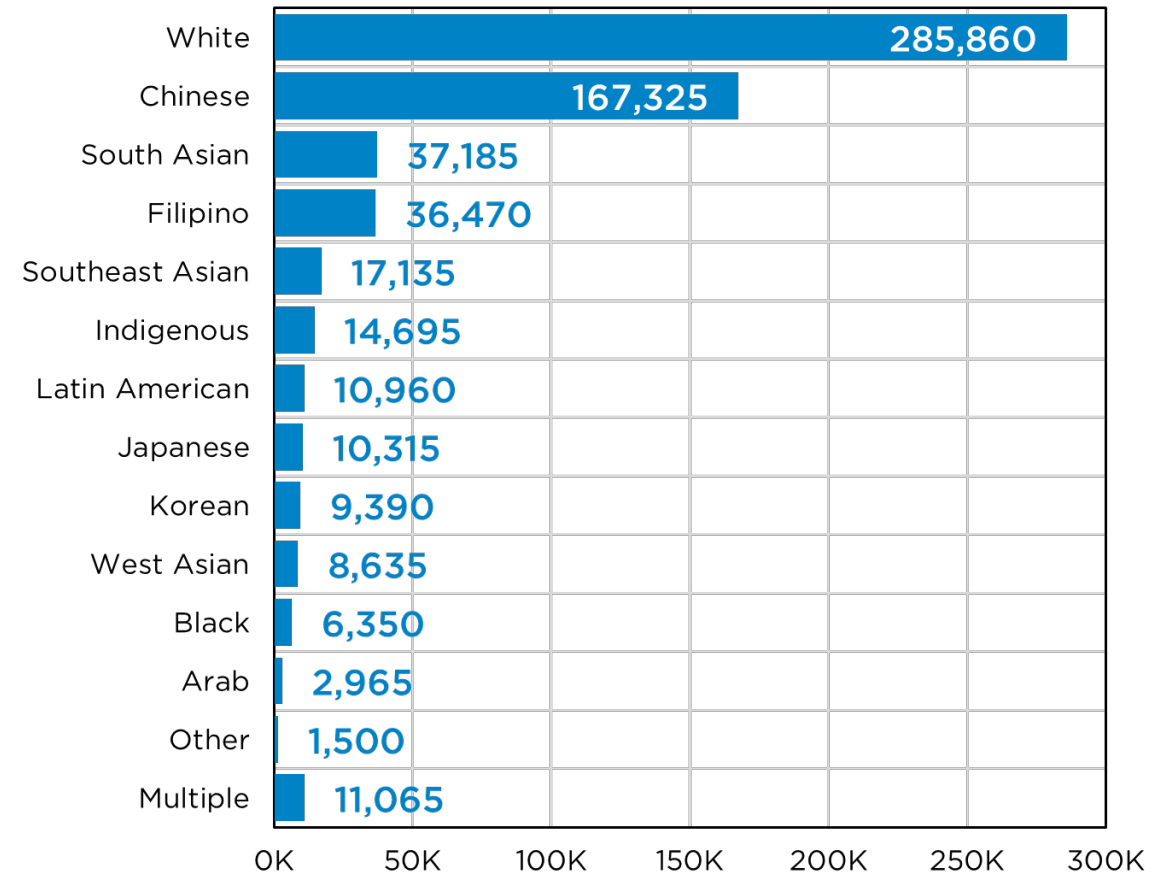
# Valuing our Strengths...

## City of Vancouver Indigenous and Racialized Population, 1996-2016



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population and 2011 National Household Survey

## City of Vancouver Population Estimates by Population Group, 2016



Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

# ...and Addressing Challenges

## We need to be ready to address major challenges:

- Growing gap between rich and poor highest across Canadian cities
- High poverty rates
- Increase in homelessness
- Increase in racist activity
- Aging population
- Climate change
- Affordability is an issue for most people



# The Roots of Systemic Inequities

## Colonialism

Process by which settlers from Western Europe sought to replace Indigenous laws and take Indigenous land, for the purpose of building wealth.



# The Roots of Systemic Inequities

## White Supremacy

System of thought and organizing based on construction of white as “the most beautiful race of men” and *superior* to all others, used to justify dispossession of Indigenous Peoples’ lands, enslavement of African peoples, racial segregation, gender oppression, and denial of personhood and political power.



# The Roots of Systemic Inequities

## Ableism

System of thought and organizing based on construction of disabled bodies and minds as *inferior*, used to justify neglect, abuse and disposal of people with disabilities who were seen as having less value in capitalist society.



- **Vancouver, BC and Canadian colonial history has created lasting harm**
  - **Both in the past:**  
Built on unceded Territories of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-waututh, Chinese Head Tax, Japanese Internment, Komagata Maru incident; Viaducts & Erasure of Hogan's Alley.
  - **And in the present:**  
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls, lack of supports for cultural spaces and businesses, inequitable access to green space and recreation, etc.

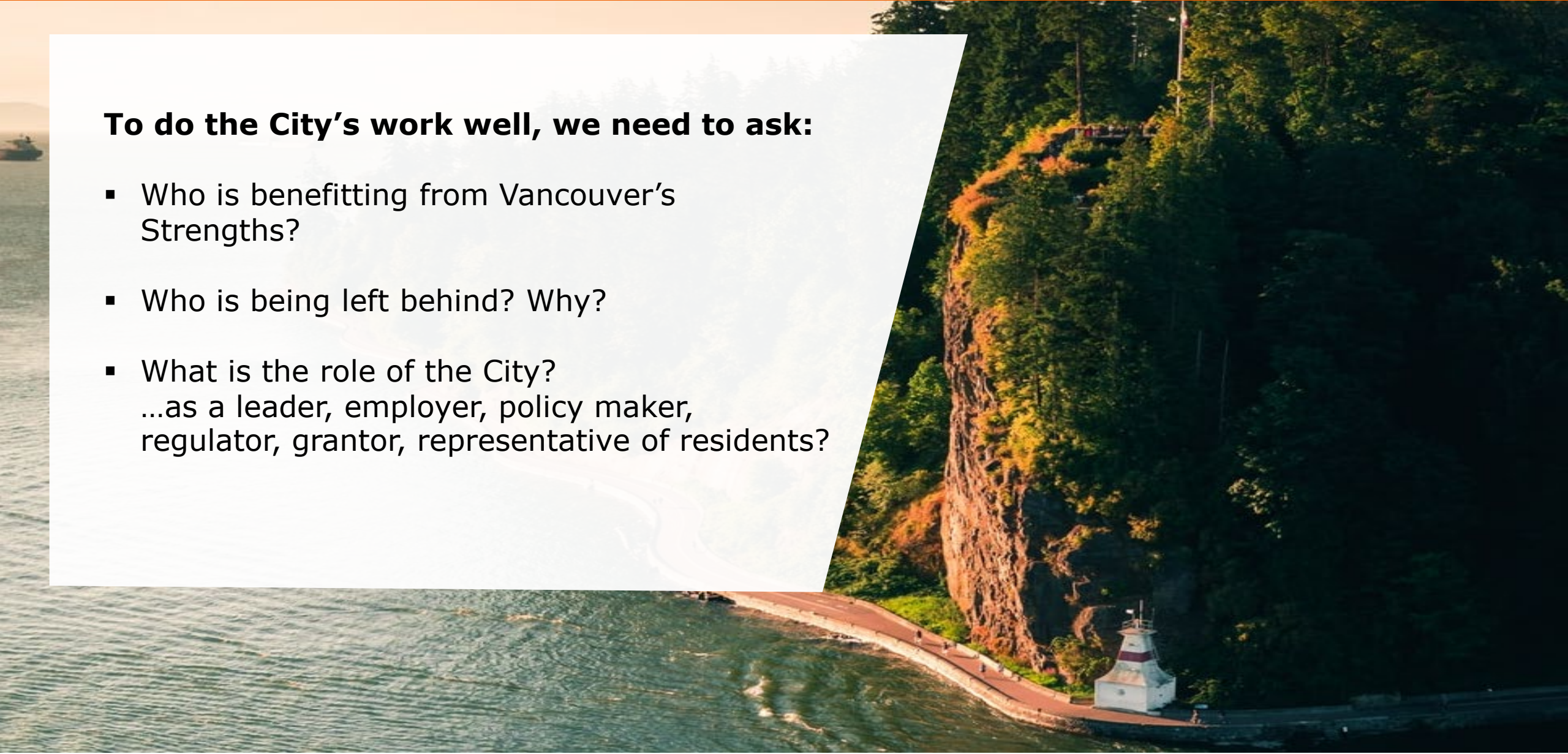


- **Inequities impact us all**
  - Barriers to equity means that groups of people with significant capabilities are unable to live to their potential; which in turn impacts individual and community wellness, health, resiliency
  - Violates individuals' and groups' inherent human rights
  - Perpetuates intergenerational trauma, poverty, violence, illness
  - Human tragedy and financial costs
  
- **Public expects our 'house to be in order' to respond to inequity**
  - Opportunity for reflection on - how City decision making, policies, investments may disproportionately benefit some groups over others; how the City as an employer reflects the population that it serves; and reflect on our relationships with equity denied groups (or where these are lacking).

# Questions that are Central to Equity

## To do the City's work well, we need to ask:

- Who is benefitting from Vancouver's Strengths?
- Who is being left behind? Why?
- What is the role of the City?  
...as a leader, employer, policy maker,  
regulator, grantor, representative of residents?



# PART 4: WHAT IS AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK AND HOW WILL IT GUIDE OUR WORK?

Who  
Benefits ?

Why ?



Photo by Mentatdgt



Photo by John Vicente

The Framework development was a collaborative process that involved internal groups across City departments and external partners.

## Internally

- City Leadership team
- Internal Advisory Team
- Affinity Staff Groups

## Externally

- External Advisory Committee, including MVAEC
- Council Advisory Committees

# What is the Equity Framework?



The Framework is a **bold declaration** that says “we’re doing equity work, and this is our orientation to it.”

- A relationship-centered and responsive document that articulates the City’s **overarching approach to equity**.
- Provides the **conceptual underpinnings** for the City’s approach to equity;
  - articulates **core commitments**,
  - maps out the **relationship between this** and other City **Frameworks/Strategies**,
  - identifies **broad priority areas** in which work needs to be done,
  - provides a set of **common definitions** and
  - offers **resources/tools** that elaborate on some of the **core concepts**

# Why we Need this Framework

- The community has called upon us to “get our house in order.”
- This work is complementary and supporting to the Reconciliation Framework and does not replace it.
- The adoption of this Framework solidifies the foundations for significant internal work that the City needs to do to have equitable outcomes for communities.



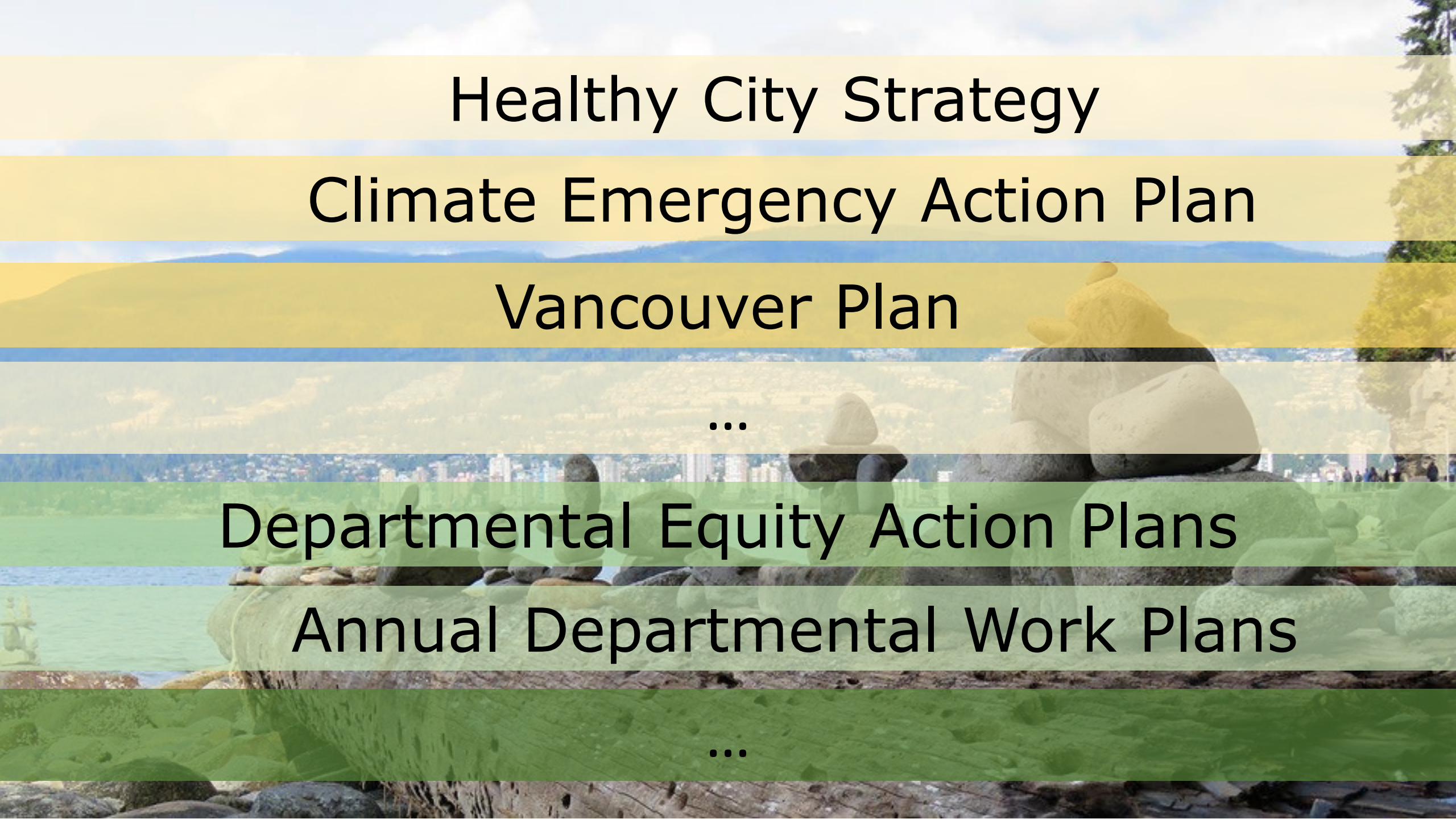


**Trans and Gender-Diverse  
Inclusion Strategy**

**Women's Equity Strategy**

**Accessibility Strategy**

**Anti-Racism/Hate Action**



Healthy City Strategy  
Climate Emergency Action Plan  
Vancouver Plan

...

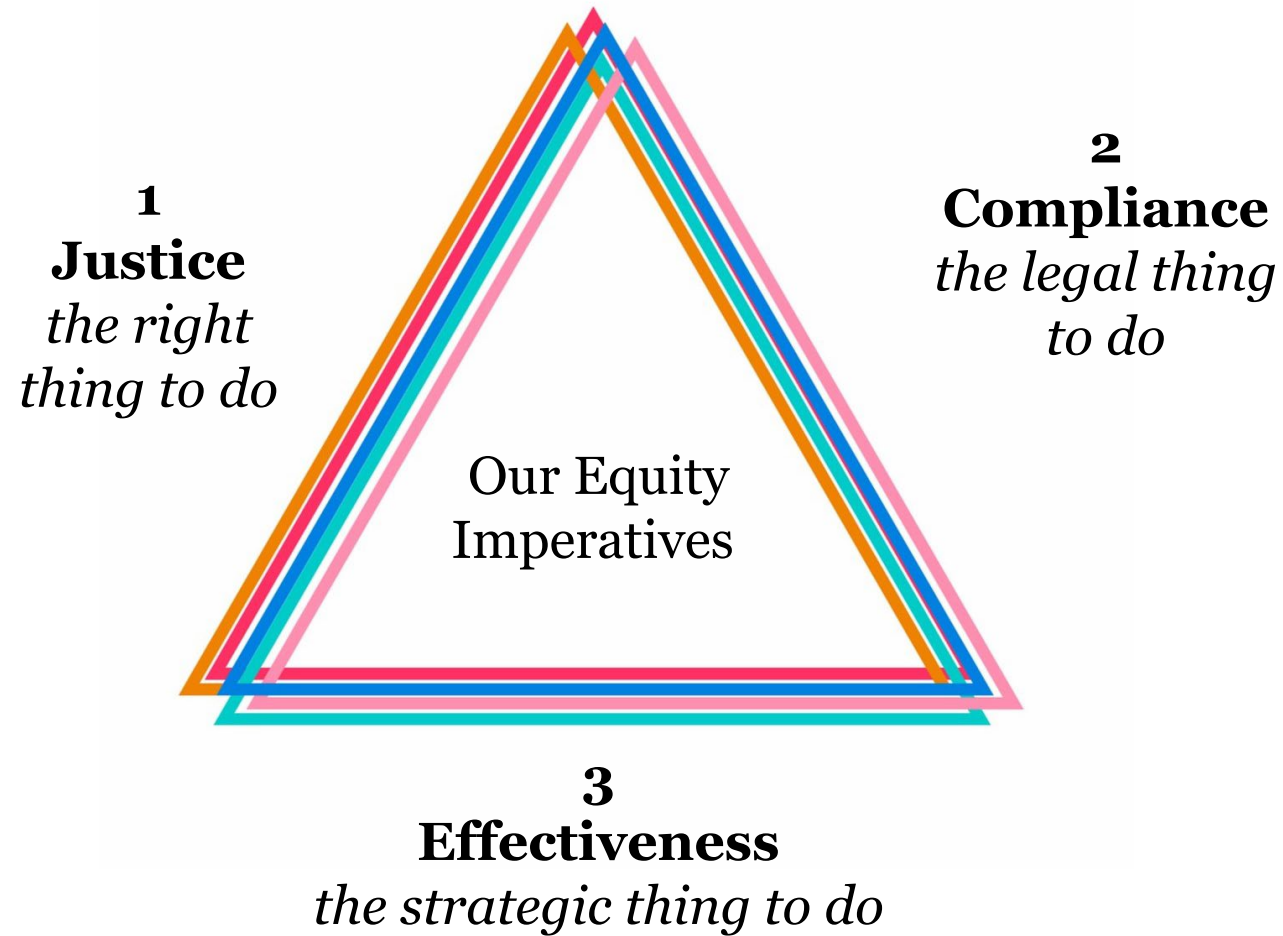
Departmental Equity Action Plans

Annual Departmental Work Plans

...



# Three Imperatives for Action towards Equity



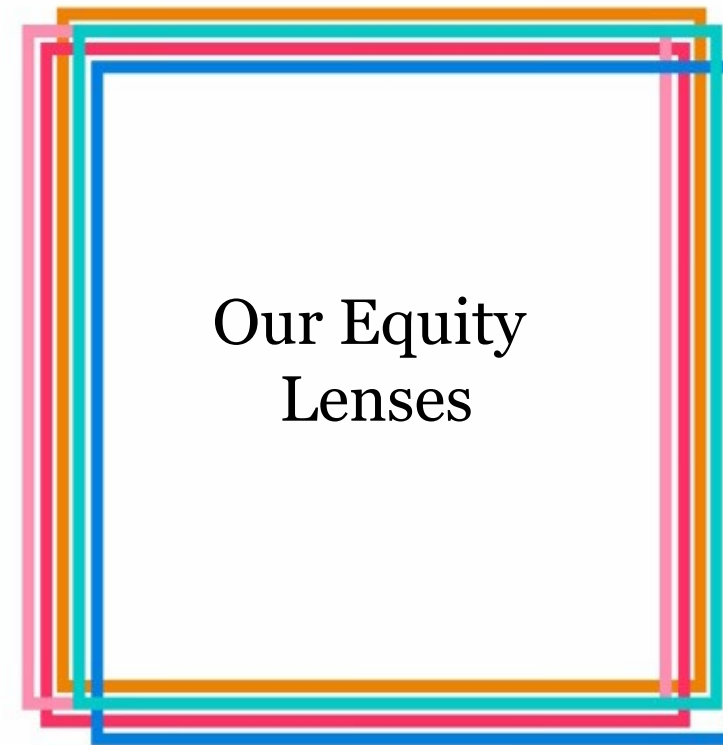
# Four Lenses that Define the City's Approach

We envision a city where those who are marginalized most are not excluded from care and opportunity for flourishing, rather, they are systemically prioritized for it.

**4. Systems Orientation**

**1. Indigenous Rights**

**2. Racial Justice**



**3. Intersectionality**

# Four lenses that define the City's approach



Photo by Rahul Pandit

## 1. Indigenous Rights

As a City of Reconciliation, the City has a responsibility to uphold and protect Indigenous rights. The process of decolonization is a key process through which the City can address past and current harms and as such, reconciliation and decolonization efforts are both central to advancing equity. While there are similarities and opportunities to build solidarity between Indigenous Peoples and equity denied groups, the distinctiveness of Indigenous sovereignty must be upheld.

# Four lenses that define the City's approach



## 2. Racial Justice

As a City where about 1 out of every 2 residents are racialized, the Framework commits to naming and dismantling systemic racism; addressing the impacts of racism on decision making and service provision is foundational to this work. A racial justice approach ensures that explicit discussions on dismantling racism and elevating racialized voices is central to our equity efforts.

# Four lenses that define the City's approach



## 3. Intersectionality

In addition to considering how systemic racism impacts racialized communities, equity work examines how multiple forms of discrimination intersect. An intersectional approach to equity focuses on how various aspects of social identity including: gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic class, race, religion and immigration status overlap to have compounding negative and/or positive impacts for people interacting with various systems.

# Four lenses that define the City's approach



Photo by Marco Tjokro

## 4. Systems Approach

Because our society is made up of different systems, equity work needs to move beyond individual actions to examine how these systems work to produce inequities. A systems approach to equity ensures that the lenses identified above are used to examine underlying assumptions, values and norms on which City operations are built.

# Our Equity Statements



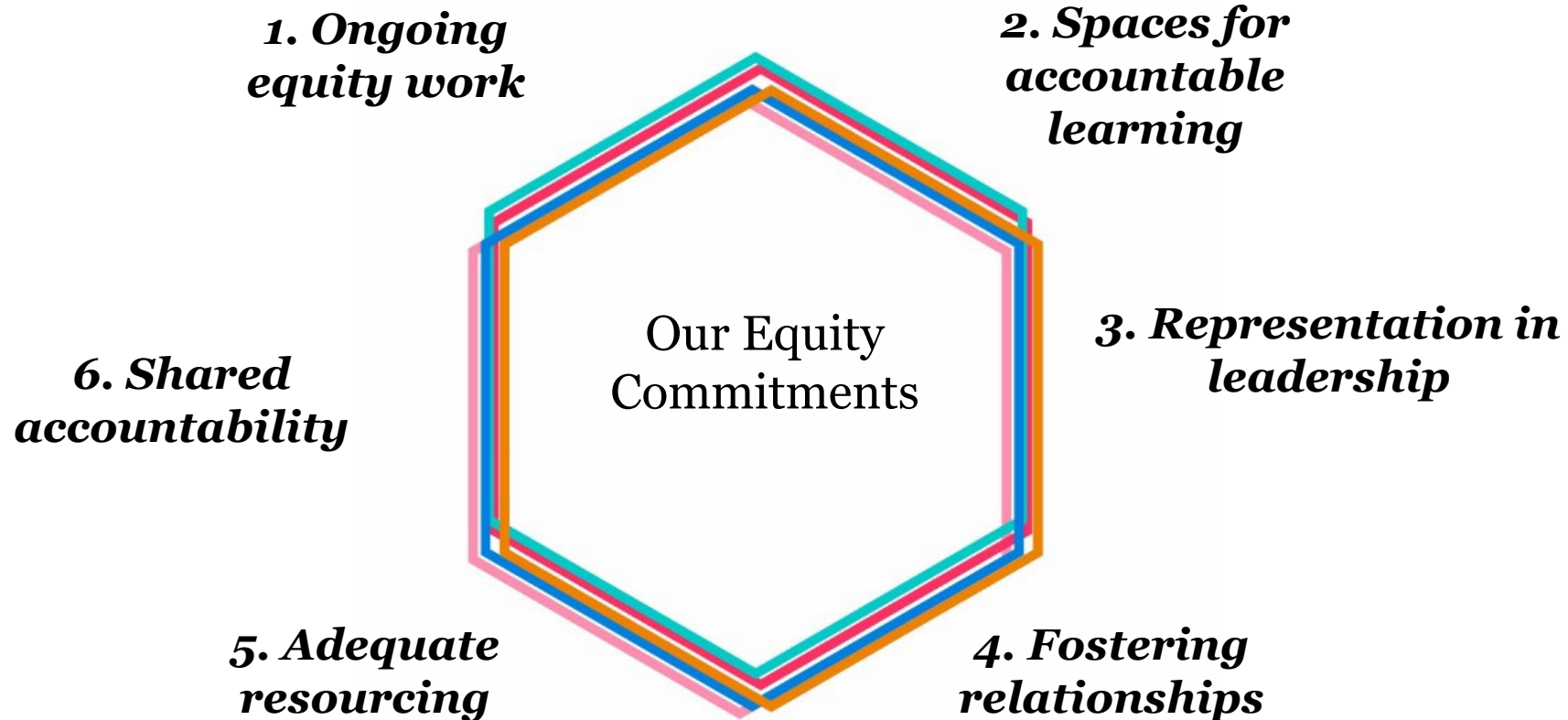
## **Equity is both an outcome and a process.**

Equity names and addresses systemic inequities that benefit and favour some groups and often disproportionately impact cultural communities, Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC).

Therefore, equity efforts seek ways to transform current structures, policies, and processes in order to balance power and influence, expand access and create new ways of walking together that nourish all people...

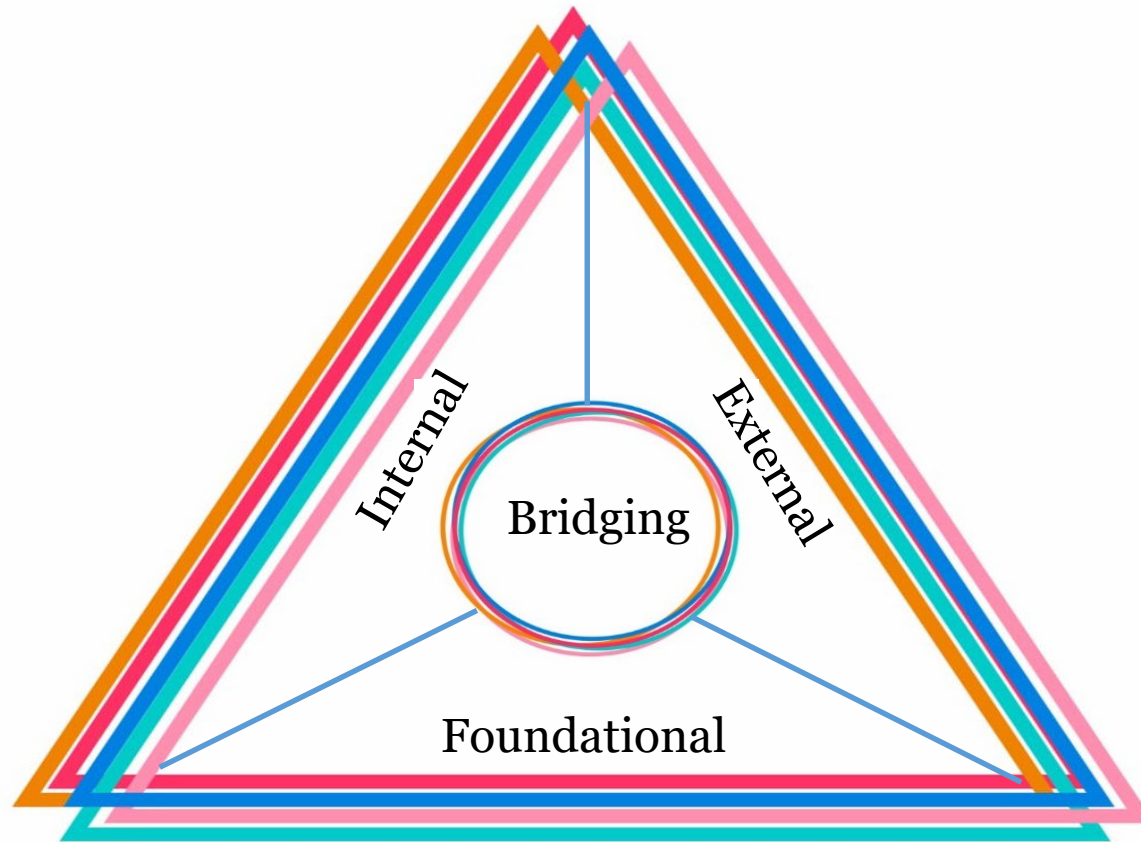
Equity amplifies and affirms the dignity and rights of all people by centering the diverse voices...in creative and resilient processes, informed by Indigenous knowledge and different world views across the ways we do our work.

# Six Commitments to Bring About Change in Culture





# Priority Areas for a Holistic Approach to Implementation



## Our Priority Areas

- **Foundational:** Vision, leadership, governance
- **Internal:** Human resources functions
- **Bridging:** Learning, communications, finance
- **External:** Community-facing functions

# PART 5: NEXT STEPS

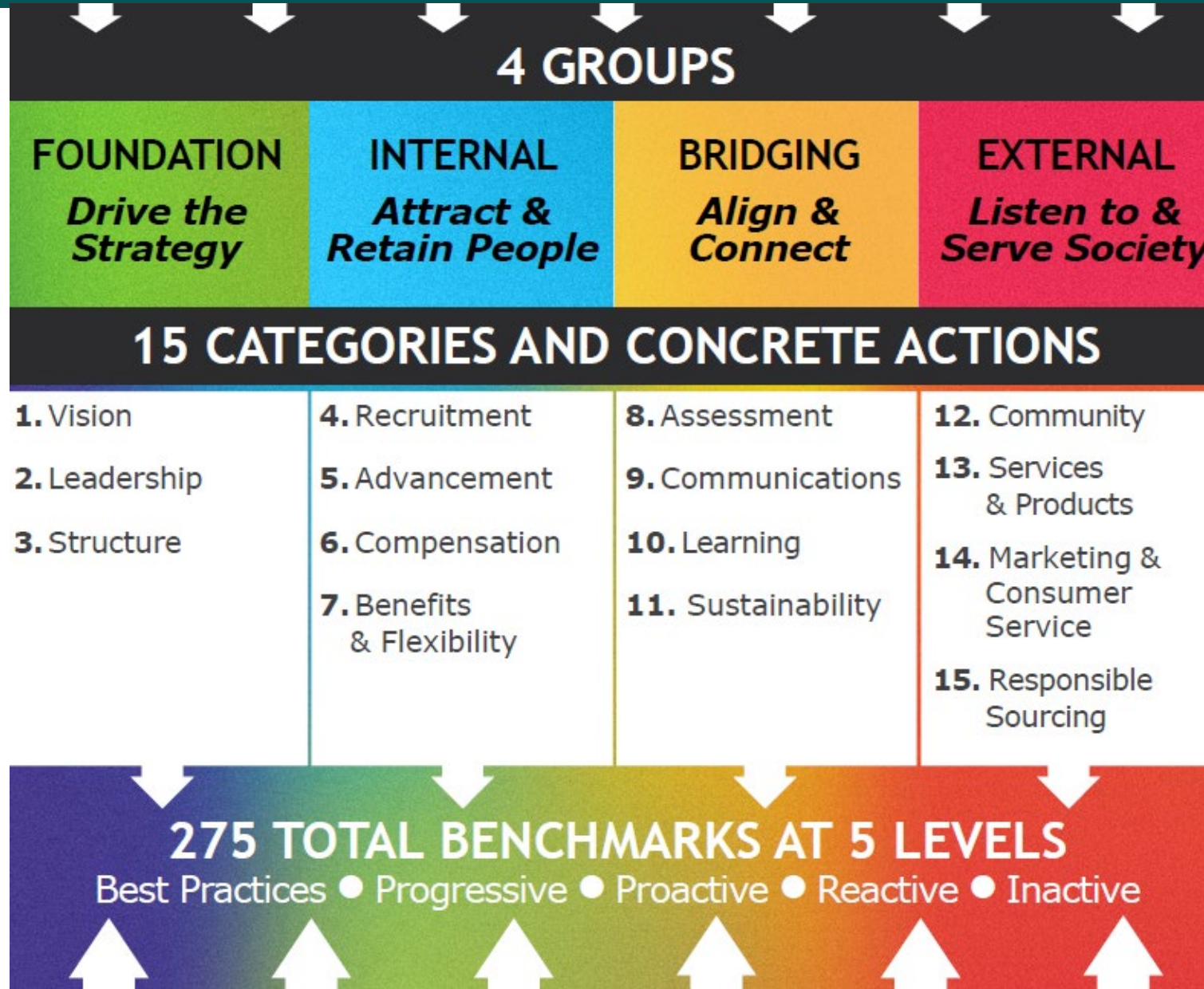
**Who  
Benefits ?**

**Why ?**



Photo by Mentatdgt

# Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks



## THE FIVE LEVELS

For each category, the benchmarks are divided into five levels that indicate progress toward the best practices in that category:

### LEVEL 5: BEST PRACTICE

Demonstrating current global best practices in DEI; exemplary.

### LEVEL 4: PROGRESSIVE

Implementing DEI systemically and showing improved results and outcomes beyond what is required or expected.

### LEVEL 3: PROACTIVE

A clear awareness of the value of DEI; starting to implement DEI systemically. This is what is required and expected of all organizations.

### LEVEL 2: REACTIVE

A compliance-only mindset; actions are taken primarily to comply with relevant laws and social pressures. Doing the bare minimum.

### LEVEL 1: INACTIVE

No DEI work has begun; diversity, equity, and inclusion are not part of organizational goals.

# How do we action this Framework?

- Communicate the Framework's key messages to all City employees (mid 2021).
- Benchmark the City's current practices in line with GDEIB, incorporating the City's Employee Benchmark Survey (late 2021).
- Drawing on identified benchmarks, set three-year organizational equity goals, associated metrics and success indicators (late 2021).
- Build a public equity dashboard to show departmental goals and actions and incorporate across work plans (early 2022).
- Update the Equity Framework, assessment and equity goals every three years (ongoing).



Photo by Dorien Monnens

# Financial Implications



Photo by Harman Sandhu

- For successful implementation of equity work, adequate resources and time are needed.
- Currently, staff are assessing internal resources and opportunities for prioritization to resource this work.
- The departmental and organizational needs will be incorporated in the City's 2022 annual budget process for Council's review.
- Given that equity cannot be achieved without justice for Indigenous Peoples, the City's Reconciliation work also needs to be prioritized to move these aligned frameworks forward.

# Q&A