

ATTACHMENT B

Metro climate justice and resilience working definitions

Metro has adopted *climate justice* and *climate resilience* as integral principles to the agency’s work, most recently in the 2021 [Strategic Framework](#). Climate justice and resilience encompasses a transformational approach to climate change that addresses the root causes of climate change, centers the voices and priorities of those most impacted, and seeks solutions that amplify the transition to a just and equitable future and reduce vulnerabilities to the environmental, social, and economic impacts of climate change. The following working definitions have been developed with input from the Climate Justice and Resilience Task Force.

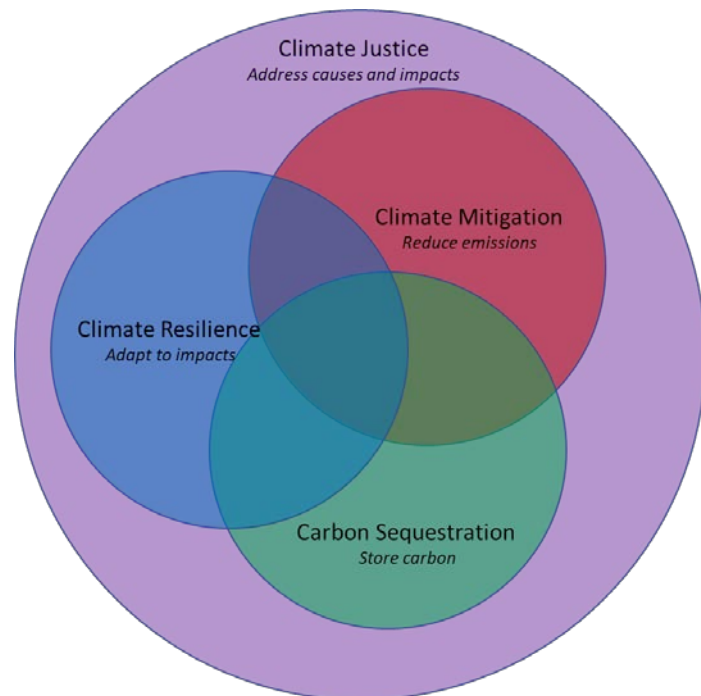
Introduction

Climate action is any action intended to reduce the occurrence or impacts of climate change. These actions take many different forms and have shifted focus over time. The most common type of climate action has historically been climate mitigation. While the term “mitigation” is used in many different contexts to talk about reducing risk, **climate mitigation** refers to reducing greenhouse gas emissions – the pollution that traps heat in the atmosphere.

A second type of climate action is **sequestration**, which removes carbon dioxide (a primary greenhouse gas) from the atmosphere and stores it. This is sometimes considered a part of climate mitigation, but it is helpful to think of them as distinct types of action, since the opportunities and impacts are different.

Climate resilience or adaptation actions focus on the impacts of climate change, rather than the causes. Because climate change affects all aspects of our lives, climate adaptation and resilience actions can focus on risks (most often) or new opportunities caused by climate change, including physical (e.g. wildfires), social (e.g. climate migration), economic (e.g. supply chain disruptions), or emotional (e.g. higher rates of depression among youth).

Climate justice is both a type of action and a way of approaching the other types of climate action that has gained more attention and focus in recent years, as the disproportionate impact of climate change has become even more evident. **Climate justice** looks at both causes and impacts of climate change. It acknowledges that climate change and systemic racism and inequity have the same root causes of an extractive



worldview, and it demands that climate actions have equitable costs and benefits, and that they center the voices of those most impacted.

Definitions

Climate justice

Definition – Climate justice seeks solutions that address the root causes of climate change and in doing so, simultaneously address a broad range of social, racial, and environmental injustices.¹

Additional context - A climate justice approach centers the voices and priorities of those most impacted by climate change to co-create strategies and implement solutions that build the capacity, well-being, and resilience of historically marginalized communities while reducing carbon emissions.² Climate justice recognizes the disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income communities and communities of color around the world, the people and places least responsible for the problem. Six pillars to climate justice include:

- a just transition from an extractive economic model to an equitable, regenerative, and renewable economy;
- advancing social, racial, and environmental justice;
- integrating Indigenous knowledge and science into climate action;
- fostering community resilience and adaptation;
- employing natural climate solutions such as forest restoration; and
- expanding climate education and engagement.³

Environmental Justice

Definition - Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.⁴

Additional context - Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington DC, drafted and adopted 17 principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, The Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.⁵

Green Jobs

Definition - Green jobs positively impact the environment and environmental justice, reduce environmental harm, and empower workers to play a role supporting a healthy and thriving environment.⁶

¹ [Center for Climate Justice, University of California](#)

² Modified from City of Portland Climate Emergency Declaration, <https://www.portland.gov/bps/climate-action/news/2020/7/1/city-council-adopts-climate-emergency-declaration>

³ [Center for Climate Justice, University of California](#)

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

⁵ <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>

⁶ Metro Green Jobs Workgroup

Additional context - Green jobs are an important part of closing the racial wealth gap and creating pathways to a regenerative economy.

Climate resilience

Definition - Climate resilience is a community's ability to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to and recover from trends and disturbances resulting from climate change impacts including intensified environmental hazards such as heat waves, storms, and wildfires, as well as economic and social impacts.

Additional context - While climate resilience relates to a community's ability to handle climate change, the degree of climate change is a major factor in that ability. Mitigation is essential to successful resilience, as it addresses the root cause of natural hazard risks and climate change, moderating the long-term effects on future generations and making current preparedness efforts more enduring and impactful.

Climate resilience strategies can reduce the vulnerability of natural systems like wetlands, economic systems like employment patterns, social systems like community networks, or built systems like electricity infrastructure.

Climate adaptation

Definition - Climate adaptation is the set of actions taken to increase climate resilience. It is the process of human and natural system adjustment to expected or actual climate change effects.

Additional context - Adaptation actions seek to moderate or avoid harm and harness beneficial opportunities such as protecting and restoring natural areas for habitat and species migration while providing community open space and recreation.⁷

Environmental hazard mitigation

Definition - Environmental hazard mitigation, (typically called natural hazard mitigation in emergency management) is any action taken to reduce or remove the long-term risk to life, human health, property, and the environment from environmental hazards.⁸ Environmental hazards include phenomena such as floods, hurricanes, heat waves, landslides, and wildfires with the potential to impact societies and the human environment.

Additional context - Climate change exacerbates and accelerates environmental hazard incidence and severity, for example through stronger winter storms that increase flooding. Actions to mitigate natural hazards can include habitat protection in floodplains and landslide hazard areas, ecological restoration, design, siting, building material choice, infrastructure investments, and green infrastructure to absorb, buffer, and filter threats to water quality and quantity.

Carbon Sequestration

⁷ Modified from the [International Panel on Climate Change definition](#), 2021

⁸ State of Oregon [Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), 2020

Definition - Carbon sequestration secures carbon dioxide to prevent it from entering the Earth's atmosphere. There are two main types of carbon sequestration: biological and geological.⁹

Additional context - Biological carbon sequestration is the storage of carbon dioxide in vegetation such as grasslands or forests, as well as in soils and oceans. Geological carbon sequestration is the process of storing carbon dioxide in underground geologic formations, or rocks. Scientists are exploring new ways to remove and store carbon from the atmosphere using innovative technologies.¹⁰

Climate mitigation

Definition - Climate mitigation refers to actions to reduce the amount and speed of future climate change and its related effects by reducing emissions of heat-trapping gases and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.¹¹

Additional context - Mitigation actions can include changing the fuel used for an activity to one that does not produce emissions (such as using renewable electricity), or reducing the need for an emission-causing activity (such as creating walkable neighborhoods to reduce the need for driving).

⁹ <https://www.ucdavis.edu/climate/definitions/carbon-sequestration>

¹⁰ <https://www.ucdavis.edu/climate/definitions/carbon-sequestration>

¹¹ Modified from [USGCRP definition](#), 2016