

# **The Social Equity Factor**

## **Community Attitudes, Expectations, and Priorities for Eugene's Sustainable Business Development**

by

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# **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Although there is extensive information available on strategies to incorporate economic and environmental concerns into sustainable business development efforts, few models or examples exist on how to integrate social equity principles into community sustainability initiatives. In order to address this knowledge gap, the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network/Jobs with Justice (ESSN/JWJ) and the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) received a grant from the Sociological Initiatives Foundation to conduct a series of focus groups that would explore community sentiment on sustainable business development and determine the kinds of practices community members believe are most essential to the promotion of social equity.

This study dovetails with an initiative by the city of Eugene, Oregon to develop a sustainable business strategy. In the spring of 2005, the City established a task force with an ambitious charge: to help fashion a community consensus that would make sustainable development an integral part of Eugene's overall approach to economic development. The purpose of this strategy is to promote the "Triple Bottom Line" which is the simultaneously pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity. This report summarizes the authors' findings concerning the social equity component of sustainable business development.

In order to explore the social equity component, LERC and ESSN engaged forty-six community members to participate in focus groups. Participants were targeted to ensure that a variety of demographics were represented, including union members, non-union workers, managers of local businesses and nonprofit organizations, and members of the Latino community.

A principal goal of this study and report is to encourage more extensive citizen participation in Eugene’s economic development decision-making process and ensure that community concerns and interests receive full consideration. We also intend to make our findings available to other communities and constituencies that are pursuing sustainable development strategies and grappling with concerns similar to those that have motivated this project.

### **Principal Findings from Analysis of the Focus Groups**

- **Considerable Support Exists for the Concept of Sustainable Business Development in Eugene**

We found considerable awareness of, and support for, the concept of sustainable business development, along with a deep sense of pride that Eugene is a community with many businesses already committed to sustainable practices. Sustainable business development’s Triple Bottom Line of economic efficiency, environmental protection, and social equity appealed to members of all focus groups as a major community benefit that the city of Eugene should encourage and support. The long-term perspective associated with sustainable business development was also praised by participants as necessary to promoting social stability and ultimately social survival.

- **Health Benefits, Flexible Work Schedules, Living Wage, and Opportunities for Career Advancement Seen as Most Important Social Equity Indicators in the Workplace**

There was strong agreement that in order for social equity to be achieved in the workplace, the following elements are most critical: provision of affordable, comprehensive health insurance, flexible work scheduling and allowance for time

off the job, payment of a living wage, and opportunities for career development and advancement. Additional workplace social equity indicators that were cited as important included work that was satisfying and socially valued, a preference for full-time over part-time employment, adequate retirement benefits, and the assurance of non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and respect for diversity.

- **Strong Belief That Sustainable Businesses Should Explicitly Benefit the Local Community and the Local Economy**

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the focus group discussions was that that sustainable businesses should explicitly benefit the local community and the local economy. Participants in virtually all groups expressed their clear preference for local hiring, the use of local suppliers, and keeping money in the local economy. There was also a belief that sustainable businesses should cultivate working partnerships with local organizations and encourage their employees to engage in community service, especially by providing them with sufficient time to do so.

- **Concerns Expressed About Business Commitment to Sustainability and the Achievement of Social Equity**

A majority of the focus groups raised questions about the city's ability to implement sustainable business practices, fearing that social equity concerns might not receive the attention and priority granted to economic and environmental considerations. Others wondered if businesses were prepared to make a long-term commitment to implementing sustainable practices, and observed that a short-term, bottom-line approach remained prevalent in most corporate circles. Business focus groups affirmed their commitment to social

equity principles but underscored the obstacles they face in attempting to provide the levels of wages and benefits associated with advancing social equity.

Our findings suggest that there is strong support for the concept of sustainable business development and a consensus that policy makers in Eugene should encourage sustainable practices and policies. However, this support is accompanied by notable reservations: skepticism that social equity considerations will be granted co-equal status with economic and environmental priorities, and uncertainty that businesses will be sufficiently committed to the long-term pursuit of sustainability. If Eugene's Sustainable Business Initiative is to attract broad-based community support, especially among workers, it will need to address these reservations in formulating its final recommendations and devising an implementation process.

## II. INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2005, Kitty Piercy, the mayor of Eugene, Oregon, appointed a task force to help create a sustainable business development strategy for the community. As the task force defines it, sustainable business development is “the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity. Sustainable businesses are not wasteful, use resources efficiently, and are respectful of the surrounding environment.” The goal of this initiative is to make Eugene a model city that not only promotes environmentally sensitive and economically efficient development policies but also supports fair and equitable treatment for workers and promotes a higher quality of life in the community.

These policies have often been referred to as sustainable development’s “Triple Bottom Line”: the benefits to be derived from the simultaneous pursuit of economic efficiency, environmental sensitivity, and social equity. According to the mayor’s task force, “social equity means that as a matter of fairness, sustainable businesses consciously take into account the well-being of the people and the communities in which they operate.”

Yet as sustainable business development has unfolded across the country and around the world, economic and environmental considerations have often been granted priority over social equity concerns. If the Triple Bottom Line benefits of sustainable development are to be fully realized and broad public support for sustainable business initiatives is to be obtained, social equity concerns need to receive far greater attention and consideration from key stakeholders and policy makers than has been the case previously.

As news about Mayor Piercy's intentions became public, the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network/Jobs with Justice (ESSN/JwJ) and the Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) at the University of Oregon both became interested in the implications and possibilities contained in Eugene's Sustainable Business Initiative. ESSN/JwJ and LERC have close ties to unions, community organizations, and policy makers and share a long history of research and activism around economic development and social equity issues. ESSN/JwJ coordinator Claire Syrett and LERC senior instructor Lynn Feekin were appointed to serve as members of the Mayor's Sustainable Business Initiatives task force. In this capacity they worked on a subcommittee charged with developing social equity principles that would incorporate worker and community concerns into the city of Eugene's overall approach to sustainable business development.

To assist them in this task, LERC and ESSN/JwJ applied for and received a grant from the Sociological Initiatives Foundation to conduct a series of focus groups that would explore community sentiment on sustainable business development and determine the kinds of practices community members believe are most essential to the achievement of social equity. LERC Director and Associate Professor Robert Bussel was the project's principal investigator, with Claire Syrett of ESSN/JwJ and Lynn Feekin of LERC serving as co-directors. They were assisted by a five-member community-based research team: John Evans, a shop steward with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union; Miriam Jordan, chairperson of the board for Centro Latino-Americano; a non-profit agency that serves Eugene's rapidly growing Latino community; Lucy Lahr, a member of Service Employees International Union Local 503 and who also serves on a county workforce development board; Charles Spencer, a local human resources manager with

an extensive background in workforce development and sustainable forestry; and Ellen Teninty, an educator and activist who has worked with unions and local governments on economic development issues.

The focus group method was chosen in order to tap the rich experience of community members, encourage a wide-ranging discussion of the social equity principles and policies that different occupational and business groups perceive as most important, and gain insight into how these perceptions should be reflected in the task force's final recommendations. What follows is a report that describes and interprets the views and perspectives that emerged during these focus group sessions.

### **Scope and Methodology**

During March and April of 2006, LERC and ESSN/JwJ conducted seven focus groups in which 46 community members participated. Members of the community-based research team collaborated with the project co-leaders in helping to formulate focus group questions, recruit focus group participants, conduct data analysis of the focus group interviews, and shape the recommendations contained in the final report.

In order to obtain a diverse range of community opinion on sustainable business development and social equity issues, the focus groups targeted several constituencies. Three groups were comprised of union members, two included managers from local businesses and non-profit organizations, one consisted of workers with no union affiliation, and another non-union group involved members of the Latino community. Participants were recruited by LERC and ESSN/JwJ, with assistance from the community-based research team and the two task force co-chairs representing the business community. Participants were chosen on the basis of their union or business

affiliations or in the case of the non-union and Latino focus groups, their interest in civic affairs and social issues. Seventeen of the union focus group participants were employed in the public sector, five by private businesses, and one was a student who had previously been a private sector union member. All eight of the participants in the focus group without union affiliation worked for private employers. In the Latino focus group, three of the participants worked in the public sector and one for a non-profit organization. In the two business focus groups, eight participants worked for private companies, two for non-profits, and one for a public entity. Twenty-two participants were male, twenty-four were female, and most had at least two decades of experience as members of the labor force.

Members of the community-based research team and the co-chairs of the Sustainable Business Initiatives Task Force assisted the moderators from LERC and ESSN/JwJ in conducting the focus groups. Each focus group lasted approximately two hours, with participants being asked to respond to the same set of questions regarding sustainable business development and social equity concerns (see appendix for transcript of questions). The questions were slightly modified for the business focus groups, but the basic thrust of the questions remained the same. Each session was audio-taped and subsequently transcribed in order to allow for extended analysis.

Questions focused on three major areas. Participants were asked about their attitudes towards the concept of sustainable business development and their impressions of how sustainable businesses might demonstrate their commitment to social equity. Subsequent questions asked participants to describe how social equity should be reflected in both workplace and community settings and to identify which specific elements of social

equity deserved the greatest attention and priority. What ensued was a lively series of exchanges in which participants shared their perceptions of social equity and reflected on how social equity concerns could be made an integral part of sustainable business development's Triple Bottom Line.

### **Analysis of the Focus Group Sessions**

Along with ESSN and LERC, members of the community-based research team read and analyzed the transcripts of each session. In analyzing the focus group discussions, we attempted to identify the words, images, and perspectives that were expressed most frequently across all of the groups and with the most passion and intensity. We also noted opinions that while heard less often nonetheless reflected sentiments voiced with some regularity in a majority of the groups. Representative quotations are cited below to portray more vividly why participants held certain attitudes and attached importance to particular concerns. These quotations are accompanied by interpretive comments that analyze and assess the implications of participants' observations.

### **III. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS**

#### **A. Support for the Concept of Sustainable Business Development in Eugene**

Participants in almost all of the groups were familiar with the concept of sustainable development, were able to cite examples of sustainable businesses they had encountered, and voiced strong support for the principles and values embodied in the notion of sustainability:

##### **1. Community Pride and Connection**

A sense of community pride and connection fostered by sustainability was frequently expressed:

*“Sustainability helps people feel connected to their community, feel good about what they’re doing in their community, [that] their community’s doing the right thing.”*

*“There’s a business between Oak and Willamette... and there’s a sign that says their building was you know, green, it was built green, with green materials. And I go by there and I...feel, even though I have nothing to do with it, I feel proud that they’re there.”*

##### **2. Importance of a Long-Term Approach**

The word “long-term” was repeatedly used in many groups in justifying support for sustainability, as was the sense that certain natural resources are scarce and finite:

*“It’s also survival in the long term, it’s thinking ahead, and I think that’s one thing that might be missing from there, a long-term view.”*

*“Of course [I support sustainable business development]...We are seeing all the fatal consequences that this is bringing, so we need to reverse completely our [course]...or we are going to fail completely as a planet.”*

The concept of sustainable business development was viewed favorably by all of the focus groups. Union, non-union, business, and Latino focus group participants uniformly praised Eugene’s efforts to encourage sustainable business development, citing the critical importance of conserving scarce resources, the need for a long-term vision to guide corporate decision-making, and the community benefits to be gained from a strong business commitment to social equity. Many spoke knowledgeably about specific businesses and their commitment to sustainability, most notably cooperative businesses that attempted to involve workers in decision-making, avoid top-down, hierarchical styles of management and administration, and use recyclable and renewable resources. Although some business focus group participants observed that they might incur higher short-term costs from pursuing sustainable practices, they agreed with other participants that customers would ultimately reward businesses for demonstrating their commitment to sustainability.

## **B. Social Equity Indicators in the Workplace**

The workplace is one major arena in which sustainable businesses deal with social equity issues. Participants were asked to describe what they thought were the most important elements in determining the quality of a job and ensuring the presence of

social equity in the workplace. The following characteristics were most frequently cited:

**1. Quality health care that is affordable and comprehensive in its coverage**

Providing comprehensive health care benefits was universally cited as a critical element of a good job and an indication of social equity:

*“[Health benefits] should be mandatory... for any type of job. Everybody should have some insurance. Everyone. It should be a mandatory benefit.”*

*“...When we are talking about employers providing health care, we need to talk about them paying the premium cost [and] having the design be something realistic for people to be able to afford.”*

All groups cited affordable, accessible health care and the need to pay good wages as the most vital components of a good job and indispensable to providing workers with a sense of personal security. Business group participants underscored the challenges faced in providing health care while affirming their belief in its importance.

**2. Flexible scheduling and paid time off that enables workers to balance the demands of work and family life**

All of the focus groups spoke about the importance of allowing workers time off to tend to family matters and to participate in community affairs. Flexible scheduling and the opportunity to have time off from work, either as sick leave or personal leave to care for family members, were mentioned by almost all of the focus groups as a significant indicator of a good job and an important measure of social equity in the work setting.

As one member of a worker focus group asserted:

*“...Some of the things that would be nice to do is allow some of the people to work with the community and do things for the community, either with some time off, either without pay or with pay... It makes you feel good that your work allows that.”*

A business owner echoed this view:

*“If we can help [employees] to have access to their community or provide it, that multiplies what our community can do, more than just [writing] our check to the non-profit. That’s one of the reasons that we try to do that.”*

### **3. Payment of living wage**

Five of the seven focus groups attached considerable importance to businesses paying what participants repeatedly described as a “living” or “family” wage.

*“[A living wage means that people] should be able to pay their rent and their utilities, buy groceries, and have some sort of health care accessible to them. To me, those are just basic, bottom line things that everybody across the board should be able to have without wringing their hands every month about whether they’re going to be able to make their rent or their utilities. Nobody’s lights or water should ever get turned off for lack of income.”*

*“If companies don’t pay a living wage, then we end up paying—for social services that people will need because they don’t earn a living wage.”*

### **4. Opportunities for career development and advancement**

Providing opportunities for career development and advancement was universally cited as important. As reflected in the observation of a union focus group member, most participants agreed that having the opportunity to upgrade one’s skills and advance in a job was vital to the achievement of job satisfaction:

*“I understand the way society is going, that people have three, four, five jobs throughout their career now. [Therefore], it’s very important that you’re learning something throughout your career, that you’re developing new job skills and you’re able to keep up with the changing economy and the new technology...”*

## **5. Respect for the worker, work that is valued, job satisfaction**

Although virtually all groups cited the need to do work that was “valued” as central to a good job, business focus groups gave special priority to work that was personally satisfying or fulfilling. As one business owner commented:

*“I think a large part of workplace satisfaction, whether it’s monetary or personal, would be feeling that your contribution is valued. Whether that’s demonstrated through benefits, or through pay, or through praise...”*

## **6. Job security and preference for full-time over part-time work**

All of the union focus groups, the non-union focus group, and the Latino focus group expressed a strong preference for the availability of full-time jobs:

*“[We need] full-time jobs. A lot of it is just part-time jobs [so] that people need a second job in order to live.”*

## **7. Retirement benefits**

Retirement benefits were cited as an important social equity indicator but with less frequency than other items:

*“I think it would be important to have a retirement plan that had a defined benefit attached to it so that you have assurances of something.”*

## **8. Equitable treatment, including non-discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity or gender, and equal opportunity and fairness on the job**

Several groups underscored the importance of exhibiting respect for and openness to cultural diversity, with the Latino focus group giving this point special emphasis. A member of this group summarized the commitment to diversity and non-discrimination that was shared by others, especially in the union focus groups:

*“A good job would be working for an organization that has management that is responsive to the views of a diverse workforce. That would be the ultimate for me.”*

The following characteristics of a good job were also cited but less frequently:

- The right to organize a union
- Having a union contract
- Respect for seniority
- Grievance procedures
- Two-way communication and assurances that worker input would be taken seriously
- Opportunity to work as a team with co-workers

Each union focus group identified a union contract as the best means of ensuring that workers receive fair treatment on the job. All groups, however, concurred that ensuring that workers had input into decision-making processes is a key non-monetary measure of social equity in the workplace setting.

## **C. Sustainable Businesses Should Benefit the Local Community Economy**

All groups agreed on the need for business to “give back” to the community. Indeed, this expression was used in almost every focus group, underscoring a strongly held

belief that businesses have an obligation to be attuned to community needs. The specific ways in which sustainable business could “give back” and improve the quality of life in the community that were cited most frequently include:

**1. A commitment to local hiring, local ownership, and use of local suppliers and contractors**

One of the strongest themes to emerge from this discussion was that sustainable businesses should explicitly benefit the local community and the local economy. The word “local” was repeatedly used by participants in describing the kind of commitment they wanted from sustainable businesses. A member of a union focus group reflected:

*“I think also to support local- the [local] economy- and trying to get supplies and use products needed that on the local market would be a...contribution to the community. In the sense that, so that, it’s actually- that a company feels also kind of a part of this local economy...”*

A manager from a business focus group offered the following affirmation of commitment to the local community:

*“We pride ourselves on buying locally, whenever possible. We really research all the local suppliers we invite bids from and try to keep the money in the community.”*

Most groups also favored the presence of local ownership and management, although members of one focus group noted that some of the best pay and benefits for area workers were provided by non-local firms. Overall, however, the prevailing view was that locally based firms and national firms with a strong local presence would be more inclined to invest in the community, show sensitivity to

its needs, and make a long-term commitment to enhancing the community's well-being.

## **2. Promoting volunteerism in the community and establishing partnerships with schools and community organizations**

Encouraging employee volunteerism was another theme that reflected the importance of flexible scheduling and local giving. Almost all groups believed that sustainable businesses could enhance the quality of life in the community by making it easier for workers to volunteer their time and by developing closer relationships with community partners. Business focus groups were somewhat more inclined to cite financial contributions as an example of their community involvement but in most instances approved the donation of time as well as money as an appropriate expression of their contribution to community betterment. Although most groups welcomed businesses making donations to community organizations and programs, they attached even greater importance to employers allowing workers more time to become involved in community affairs. As a business manager explained:

*“The more we can allow people their personal lives, the more we have fifty employees, which is fifty potential soccer coaches, that’s fifty potential volunteers at their day care center. If we can help them have access to their community or provide it, that multiplies what our company can do, more than just our check to the non-profit.”*

Schools received the most attention as a focal point for business contributions to community well-being, with many participants urging employers to expand on the commitments they have already made.

*“Business should partner more with school systems, they can support apprenticeship programs, [and] sponsor work-study. LCC and UO could team up with them to create training programs.”*

### **3. Providing training and career development opportunities**

Just as opportunities for career development and advancement were seen as integral to a good job, most participants believed that it was the responsibility of business to make these opportunities more widely available. Support for businesses offering more opportunities for training and career development was nearly universal. Participants observed that the community would benefit from having more job-based training available to help workers develop their skills and increase their ability to advance in their occupations or careers.

*“Whether you have an internship, or you have a mentorship where you have people come in and work in your business, that maybe opens up an opportunity for them to be hired into that business, not just use them and say, ‘oh well, we’re hiring someone else,’ But maybe lead it into an actual job.”*

In their thinking about business’s role in improving the community’s quality of life, many of the focus groups used the word “investment” to describe what they thought sustainable businesses should do. Reflecting the views of many, one participant explained the benefits of business investment in the community in this way: *“You get a lot more loyalty from people who know that you’re investing in their future, not just your own.”*

#### **4. Additional Local Benefits**

The following practices were not universally cited but were expressed with considerable conviction in many of the focus groups, especially the ones comprised of union members:

- Paying a fair share of taxes
- Demonstrating sensitivity to the environment and exercising care in the use of natural resources

Among the union focus groups, the issue of business contributions to community well-being was approached from another angle: the importance of offering living wages and paying a fair share of taxes. Those expressing this view asserted that payment of a living wage (one that allows workers to meet basic expenses and have some additional discretionary income) promotes self-sufficiency, requires less use of social services, and helps local businesses by increasing the purchasing power of workers. There was also a widespread belief in the union focus groups that the business share of taxes has steadily declined, and boosting the revenue base through additional corporate taxation would permit communities to improve both educational and social services.

#### **D. Concerns About Business Commitment to Sustainability**

Although the concept of sustainable business development was warmly supported by most participants, many had reservations about the prospects for advancing social equity and the extent to which area businesses would be committed to the implementation of sustainable policies and practices.

## **1. Concern That Social Equity Considerations Will Not Receive Equal Status**

Especially in the worker-oriented focus groups, participants were fearful that environmental and economic efficiency would trump social equity considerations.

*“When I think of sustainable business, I get a feeling that it’s more on the environmental – if that would be listed number one for sustainable business advocates -- it’s the environmental. And I think that the social equity piece is tacked on nicely at the end in the minds of some people.”*

## **2. Questions About the Business Commitment to Sustainability**

Others questioned the business community’s commitment to sustainability and wondered what kinds of incentives would be needed to ensure that any plan adopted by the mayor’s task force would in fact be implemented.

*“I’m pretty pessimistic about all of these things happening, unless we set it up so that it affects big business’ wallet. Otherwise, I don’t see them being motivated.”*

*“I really think we’ve had an illusion of social equity for a long time, and I don’t think it’s really been real, I think it’s become more and more obvious to people that it’s not real... The issue with health care, for example, is a glaring one. The people, the working poor, who really are working, still can’t afford health care for themselves or their children.”*

## **3. Businesses Face Special Challenges in Implementing Social Equity Provisions**

Participants in the business focus groups frequently described the challenges they faced in providing the kinds of wages and benefits seen as necessary for the advancement of social equity:

*“The point being that to have a good, healthy workplace, that you have to – it has to be, that is,*

*financially viable as a starting point, or there's not much point. So that's a critical piece that has caught up, I think, with those of us knee-jerk liberals that got the social equity and environmental quality aspects of it."*

Several members in the union focus groups questioned the employment practices of sustainable businesses, contending that the wages and benefits they paid workers did not reflect social equity. And in a few other groups, participants noted that sustainable businesses tended to charge more for their products, thereby making it difficult for people of modest economic means to shop at these firms. Still, the overall mood was more skeptical than cynical, and most participants remained open to the possibility that sustainable business development could take hold in Eugene.

The business focus groups expressed a similar commitment to sustainable development but noted the difficulties they faced in attempting to implement sustainable practices. As one participant observed, if a business is not financially viable, its ability to establish social equity or sustain each element of the triple bottom line will be constrained. *"We must do well in order to do good,"* said one business owner – a sentiment shared by other managers in the business focus groups. Several business group participants also mentioned higher initial costs incurred by adopting sustainable practices and worried about the short-term prospect of being placed at a competitive disadvantage. Most business owners and managers seemed prepared to accept these challenges, expressing confidence that their commitments to sustainability would ultimately be rewarded by consumers and the community.

## IV. Conclusion

Several dominant themes emerged from the fourteen hours of discussion and the nearly 150 pages of transcripts generated by our seven focus group discussions. Although we have solicited opinions from a relatively small group, the people we have interviewed are all active in public and community affairs and represent diverse constituencies. Moreover, the thoughtful, lively exchanges that occurred during the focus groups suggest that the participants represent an important segment of public opinion whose perspectives on sustainable business development may be shared more widely in the community.

There is considerable awareness of and enthusiasm for the concept of sustainable business development in Eugene. This support is accompanied by a deep sense of civic pride in existing sustainable businesses and the hope that these initiatives can be strengthened and expanded. At the same time, many participants in the focus groups were uncertain about the prospects for further extension of sustainable business development in Eugene. They are concerned that the commitment to advance social equity, especially when it comes to paying living wages and providing adequate health care benefits, will not be granted the same priority as the pursuit of economic efficiency or environmental protection. This perception holds major implications for how the recommendations of the mayor's Sustainable Business Initiatives Task Force will be received when they are submitted for public consideration. As one business owner observed in discussing the Triple Bottom Line of sustainable development: *"I just see it as a three-legged stool, you know. You miss one of those legs, the whole thing goes down."*

Focus group participants had several ideas for addressing these kinds of concerns. One suggestion was the possibility of establishing goals or standards that sustainable businesses might strive to attain. As several focus group participants suggested, the city might find ways to formally recognize businesses that meet certain standards or goals for sustainable practices. Another recommendation was to create a matrix of sustainability measures or benchmarks, and award businesses points for reaching them, with the proviso that businesses would neither be expected nor required to meet the benchmark in every instance. Given the high hopes that the focus groups had for sustainable business expansion and the accompanying concerns they expressed regarding implementation, some attempt to set goals, establish a matrix, or formally recognize progress toward implementing the Triple Bottom Line merits careful consideration by the Task Force as it enters the recommendation and implementation phase of its deliberations.

# Appendix

## Focus Group Questions

### 1. Introduction:

- A. What is your name?
- B. Where do you work?
- C. How long have you been in the work force in general?
- D. How long have you been employed in your current job?
- E. Are you represented by a union where you work (for union groups only)?

### 2. Questions about Work and Community

- A. If you were to describe a “good job,” what would be some of most important characteristics of it?
- B. Now let’s think about your life outside of work. When you think of the quality of life in the community, what are some of the things businesses could do to enhance the community’s well-being?

### 3. Questions on Sustainable Business Development

#### Post brief definitions of “sustainable business development” and “social equity”

- “Sustainable business development is the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity. Sustainable businesses are not wasteful, use resources efficiently, and are respectful of the surrounding environment.”
  - “Social equity means that as a matter of fairness, sustainable businesses consciously take into account the well-being of the people and the communities in which they operate.”
- A. Are these concepts that you are familiar with?
  - B. What do you think about these concepts?
  - C. Have you seen examples of sustainable business development being practiced?

#### **4. Comparison of Their Lists with Task Force List of Social Equity Indicators**

##### **Workplace Questions:**

- A. Within these categories, are there specific policies or practices that you would include as desirable?
- B. What is the relative importance of these policies or practices? At minimum, what would be most important to you?

##### **Community Issues Questions:**

- C. Within these categories, are there specific policies or practices that you would include as desirable?
- D. What is the relative importance of these policies or practices? At minimum, what would be most important to you?

#### **5. Conclusion**

##### **Questions:**

- A. Do you have any particular advice that you would offer the Mayor's Task Force in considering what workplace and community indicators it will ask sustainable businesses to follow?
- B. Is there anything we have missed or any additional comments you would like to add?

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