

# **Twin Cities Region Equitable Development Principles & Scorecard**

**a tool for communities and planners**

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**Created by Community Engagement Steering Committee Equitable Development working group:**

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# Principles and Practices for Equitable Development, Environmental Justice and Affordability with Transit Oriented Development

## Introduction

The principles and practices of equitable development, environmental justice, and affordability are guides for all communities: suburban cities, rural communities and urban neighborhoods as they plan and implement economic development that benefits everyone.

This equitable development tool will help guide development projects to 1) become economically vibrant with creative new affordable housing options that complement transit development 2) embrace the important concepts of local placemaking, livability, accessibility, walkability 3) increase the number of local stakeholders planning development projects. Working in partnership; government and low income, communities of color, people living with disabilities and seniors can ensure equitable development in our region.

The principles of equitable development, environmental justice and affordability guiding development projects are not new. Here are the principles that have been adopted by the federal government and by the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council:

**Equitable Development:** Corridors of Opportunity Equitable Development definition and principles 11/30/11 Metropolitan Council, Twin Cities MN

### Definition of Equitable Development:

Equitable development creates healthy vibrant communities of opportunity where low income people, people of color, new immigrants and people with disabilities participate in and benefit from systems decisions, and activities that shape their neighborhoods.

### Principle of Equitable Development:

The principle is to ensure that everyone regardless of race, economic status, ability or the neighborhood in which they live as a access to essential ingredients for environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being including: living wage jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, viable housing choices, public transportation, good schools, strong social networks, safe and walkable streets services parks and access to healthy food.

## **Environmental Justice:**

Environmental Justice Definition, US Environmental Protection Agency: 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.

### Environmental Justice Principles – US Department of Transportation:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations

**Affordability Definition:** Affordability is as much about urban design as it is about brick and mortar costs. Housing affordability is not simply the cost of the home itself. An affordable home must be a home with access to jobs, goods and services, educational, medical and governmental institutions and entertainment and recreational venues. To the extent that these necessities are located nearby and/or become accessible by less expensive and/or multiple modes of transportation, affordability increases for the housing.

**Partnership for Sustainable Communities – HUD/DOT/EPA:** Transportation costs are the second biggest budget item for most American households. The combined cost of housing and transportation claims about half of the average household's budget, and transportation costs actually exceed housing costs for many rural and working-class households.

## **Sustainable Communities Livability Principles HUD-DOT-EPA**

<http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/aboutUs.html#2>

- **Provide more transportation choices.**  
Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.**  
Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- **Enhance economic competitiveness.**  
Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- **Support existing communities.**  
Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
- **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.**  
Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
- **Value communities and neighborhoods.**  
Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

**EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT SCORECARD**  
**Project Evaluation cover page**

**Project Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Public Investment:**

**Funding amount and source:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tax abatement amount and source:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Public land sale and amount:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zoning changes/variances:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Infrastructure (sewer/water, street, sidewalk, ect)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Developer contact info:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Developer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Public Agency contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Public Agency Governing body:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Stakeholders** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project description:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Community Engagement process:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Equitable Development Overall Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equitable Community Engagement Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equitable Land Use Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equitable Economic Development Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equitable Housing practices Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equitable Transportation Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Equitable Development Scorecard

The purpose of this scorecard is to rate a specific development project to ensure that everyone is benefiting from our government's investments into our community. These practices advance the principles of equitable development, environmental justice and accessibility.

**Rank each bullet point from 1 – 5 with 1 being low and 5 being high**

### 1. Equitable Community engagement practices require evidence that:

- Planning requires participatory community engagement which establishes priorities and criteria for economic development to guide future development and growth.
- Community engagement involves the local community members most affected by the development project such as: low income people, people of color, neighborhood groups, and community agencies people living with disabilities and new immigrants.
- Community engagement involves local community members early in the planning process.
- Community is involved in the decision making process.
- Development project reflects the community goals and objectives.

**TOTAL SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Equitable Land Use practices require evidence that:

- Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.
- Creates a healthy and pleasant local environment with clean soil, air, and available water.
- Measurable increases in living wage jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities on current and future industrial and commercial land.
- Land use is promoted and created to increase community ownership of land through a land trust or local community-based organizations.
- Infrastructure investments improve the livability of local neighborhoods through streetscaping and green space.
- There is infill development promoting higher density in developed areas.
- Zoning supports economic opportunity of the community by including affordable housing, small businesses, and jobs in mixed-use development projects within transit station areas.
- The development increases walkable and accessible communities.

**TOTAL SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Equitable Economic Development practices require evidence that:**

- Strategies address alleviating poverty by developing job and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- New capital and investment opportunities for existing low-income residents are created to overcome economic and employment challenges.
- Public funding criteria that requires prioritizing high quality job standards such as: job training, sustainable wages, childcare and other employment support.
- Public funding criteria that requires promoting and nurturing local community entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Clustered development increases access to transit, housing, jobs, education, and amenities.
- Local hiring is a preference for consultants, contracting, developers and workers.
- Public funding criteria is prioritized to reward applicants who ensure that their workers have living wages jobs with benefits and the right to organize without fear of retaliation through labor peace agreements.
- Policies and programs work to prevent unwanted displacement of residents and small businesses from low income communities and communities of color.

**TOTAL SCORE**\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Equitable Housing practices require evidence that:**

- Policies and programs ensure that extremely low (30% average median income), very low (50% average median income), low (60% average median income), and medium (80% average median income) income families have access to decent, affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods.
- An energy efficient, safe and healthy housing stock, free from environmental hazards that reduces utility bills for the residents.
- Affordable housing is developed near amenities (health and social services, transportation, and quality job opportunities) that provide walkability, livability and community.
- Public subsidies provided to developers and corporations, such as density bonuses, redevelopment funds, or tax abatements result in concrete and definable community benefits for local residents.
- An affordability formula that includes “housing + transportation” costs as outlined in the affordability principle evidences access to jobs, education, cultural resources, goods and services is used in all housing and transportation projects
- Zoning codes promote the integration of affordable housing throughout the transit corridor.
- Replacement of the loss of any naturally occurring affordable housing.
- Intentional policies that serve special needs groups, including large families, single-parent households, persons with disabilities and homeless individuals and families.

**TOTAL SCORE**\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Equitable Transportation practices require evidence that:**

- Transit is integrated into walkable, livable, and affordable land use practices to enhance healthy living within low income communities and communities of color.
- Commitment to maintaining and improving public transit services throughout the region.
- The transit system demonstrates increases in access to all transportation options for low-income communities, communities of color, seniors, and persons with disabilities.
- Commitment to bicyclists and pedestrians by providing safe, attractive, and convenient routes of travel.
- Alternative transportation modes are connected to local and regional system of bike trails and walkways.
- Residential streets are improved, are calmed and traffic is slowed
- Transit remains affordable to everybody in our region.
- Measurable reduction of noise pollution and vehicle emissions pollution.

**TOTAL SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

## GLOSSARY

**Affordable Housing:** In general, housing for which the occupant(s) is/are paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities.

**AMI – average median income:** Median income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount. Income categories include: Extremely low = 30% average median income; Very low = 50% average median income; Low = 60% average median income); and Medium = 80% average median income.

**Complete Streets:** Complete Streets is a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation.

**Community Benefits Agreement:** A Community Benefits Agreement is a contract signed by community groups and a real estate developer that requires the developer to provide specific amenities and/or mitigations to the local community or neighborhood.

**Environmental Justice:** 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.

**Equity:** Just and fair inclusion where all can participate and prosper.

**Equitable development:** Equitable development is an approach to creating healthy, vibrant, communities of opportunity. Equitable outcomes come about when smart, intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that low-income communities and communities of color participate in and benefit from decisions that shape their neighborhoods and regions.

**Infill development:** In the urban planning and development industries, infill has been defined as the use of land within a built-up area for further construction, especially as part of a community redevelopment or growth management program or as part of smart growth.

**Livability:** A measure of integration of the housing, transportation, environmental, and employment amenities accessible to residents. A livable community is one with multiple modes of transportation, different types of housing, and destinations located within an easy distance (20 minutes by transit, 15 minutes by bike or foot, 10 minutes by car) of homes.

**Mixed use development:** In general, mixed use development is a development that combines two or more different types of land uses, such as residential, commercial, employment, and entertainment uses, in close proximity. In some communities, mixed use may be defined as different uses contained within the same physical structure.

**Placemaking** is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being.

**Smart Growth:** Planned economic and community development that attempts to curb urban sprawl and worsening environmental conditions.



**Streetscaping:** Streetscaping are programs to improve streetscape conditions than can include changes to the road cross section, traffic management, pedestrian conditions, landscaping, street furniture (utility poles, benches, garbage cans, etc.), building fronts, and materials specifications.

**Sustainable Communities:** Urban, suburban, and rural places that successfully integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of: 1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; 2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; 3) energy use and climate change; and 4) public health and environmental impact.

**Tax abatement:** Reduction of or exemption from taxes granted by a government for a specified period, usually to encourage certain activities such as investment in capital improvements and development projects. A tax incentive is a form of tax abatement.

**Transit Oriented Development (TOD):** Development of commercial space, housing services, and job opportunities close to public transportation, thereby reducing dependence on automobiles. TODs are typically designed to include a mix of land uses within a quarter-mile walking distance of transit stops or core commercial areas.

**Transit:** Public transportation in the form of buses, bus rapid transit, light rail trains, and streetcars.

**Walkability:** A walkable community is one where it is easy and safe to walk to goods and services (i.e., grocery stores, post offices, health clinics, etc.). Walkable communities encourage pedestrian activity, expand transportation options, and have safe and inviting streets that serve people with different ranges of mobility.

**Zoning:** The classification of land by types of uses permitted and prohibited in a given district, and by densities and intensities permitted and prohibited, including regulations regarding building location on lots.

#### **Resource links:**

##### **A Resident's Guide for Creating Safe and Walkable Communities**

[http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/ped\\_cmunity/ped\\_walkguide/about.cfm](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_cmunity/ped_walkguide/about.cfm)

##### **Environmental Justice Overview – Department of Transportation**

[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental\\_justice/overview/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/overview/)

##### **eTOD Score: A Rating System for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development**

<http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/transportation/etodscore/>

##### **Great Communities Toolkit**

<http://www.greatcommunities.org/resources/tool-kits/>

##### **PolicyLink Equitable Development Toolkit**

<http://www.policylink.org/equity-tools/equitable-development-toolkit/about-toolkit>

##### **Sustainable Communities: an interagency partnership HUD-DOT-EPA**

<http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/>