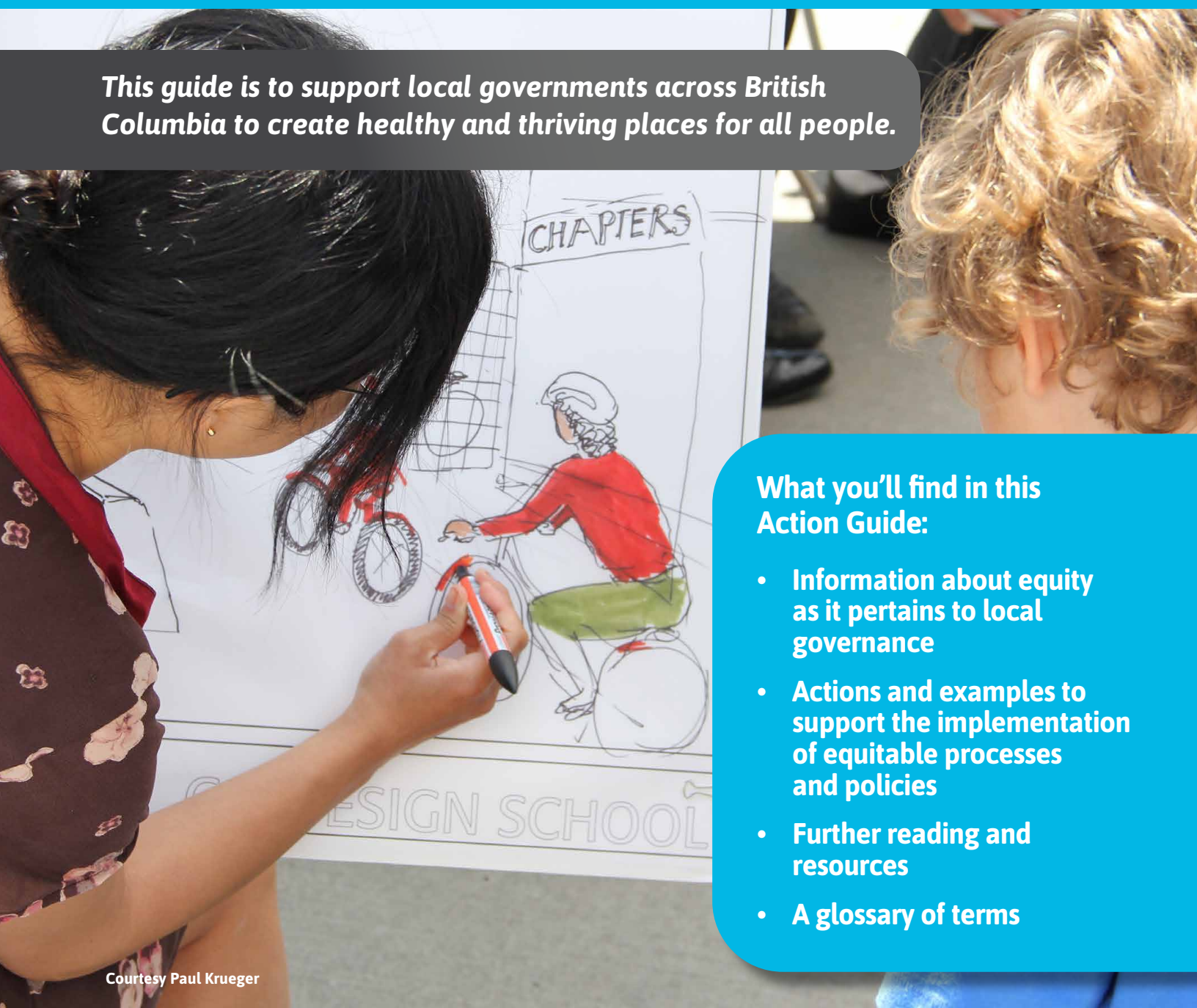


This guide is to support local governments across British Columbia to create healthy and thriving places for all people.



Courtesy Paul Krueger

What you'll find in this Action Guide:

- Information about equity as it pertains to local governance
- Actions and examples to support the implementation of equitable processes and policies
- Further reading and resources
- A glossary of terms



Healthy People



Healthy Society



Healthy Environments

Introduction

What is Equity?

Equity is the fair distribution of opportunities, power and resources to meet the needs to all people, regardless of age, ability, gender, income, education level, culture or background. This means providing support based on an individual's level of need, instead of providing everyone the same amount of support.

Governments traditionally focus on providing equal services to all residents. In contrast, an equity lens considers how services and resources can be distributed to those that need them the most.

About this guide

This resource combines best practices, language and ideas surrounding equity in planning and policy development, and aims to:

- Support planners and local government staff to communicate the importance and relevance of equity in land use and service provision to decision-makers;
- Outline considerations for planners and local government staff to apply an equity lens; and
- Share knowledge and ideas from a North American and British Columbian context on equity in public policy and planning specifically within the Official Community Plan.

If equity is a new concept, there are resources for further reading in the final section of this document.

Note: This document strives to use non-stigmatizing language. This is done in an effort to not only showcase the importance of equity, but also the importance of using equitable language.



Community members in Fort St. John provide feedback on the city's proposed Downtown Action Plan. Courtesy City of Fort St. John

Equity vs Equality

Equity considers the current, future and historical barriers that negatively impact an individual's opportunity to participate and prosper as a member of the community. Some find it easier to understand equity when we contrast it with equality: while **equality** suggests that we treat everyone the same, **equity** suggests that we identify populations most affected by social, economic, and political discrimination and provide them with a higher level of support so that they can participate in their community. In practice, this requires that civic engagement processes are designed and delivered in an equitable manner to ensure that resulting benefits are accessible to the widest range of community members for generations to come.

Visualizing Equity

As represented in the image at right, equality means giving everyone the same bike, regardless of their size, ability or age. The bike only fits one person and is difficult or impossible to ride for everyone else.

The bottom image considers each individual's current and future disadvantages that may impact their ability to ride a bike. Each bicycle is tailored to their size and ability, allowing all members to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by active transportation.

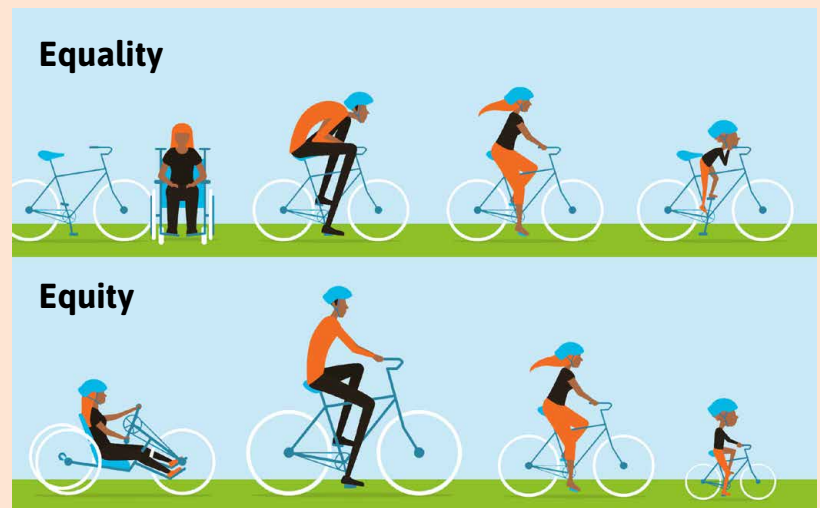


Image courtesy of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Equity in service provision

This pair of images (right) makes the link between equity and service delivery, which may help decision-makers understand how policy and infrastructure decisions can impact their community.

In the top image, one neighbourhood has many assets: a school, buildings, a hospital, solid housing. The other neighbourhood has no school, no hospital and buildings in disrepair. A pipeline delivers equal resources to both, representing equality.

The bottom image shows the two neighbourhoods receiving sufficient resources to meet their needs, meaning one area will receive more resources than the other. In this scenario both neighbourhoods are able to thrive.



Images courtesy of Matt Kinshella

Equity for Whom?

Equity-Seeking Groups face barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.

In the North American context, some communities that would be considered equity-seeking groups are:

- **Indigenous Communities**
- Communities of Colour and **Racialized Groups**
- Individuals experiencing poverty and low income
- Youth
- Women
- Seniors
- Newcomers
- Individuals whose first language is not English or who have low literacy
- People with disabilities and/or mobility needs
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Individuals with mental illness and/or addictions
- **Two Spirit** and **LGBTQIAP+**

It is important to note that these groupings are not necessarily exclusive, and that people may belong to more than one of these groups (intersectionality). Additionally, individual community context plays a significant role in determining who experiences inequity, in combination with broader historical and systemic inequities.

Stigmatizing language has impeded the advancement of equity by isolating the very populations that policy-makers need to prioritize. Terms such as ‘marginalized’ and ‘vulnerable’ are outdated and unhelpful to discussions about equity.⁷⁶ Recently, the term ‘**equity-seeking groups**’ has been used because it focuses on the unequal power relationships in economic, political, social and cultural settings that create inequity in the first place.^{77,78}

Local Governments & Equity

Historically, municipal policy has contributed to and perpetuated inequity. Zoning bylaws and land-use decisions have excluded specific groups from participating in economic, political and social systems, and segregated and displaced Indigenous communities, racialized groups, and individuals experiencing homeless and/or poverty.^{1,2,3}

However, the same laws and policies that have created these conditions can also be used to improve them for all community members.

Planning for equity contributes to the development of sustainable, resilient and healthy communities by more effectively and systematically addressing community well-being.⁴

Benefits of Equity

Equity is rooted in concepts of what is right, just and fair. There are also economic, social and environmental benefits to equity:

- Equity in economic development planning supports opportunities for all people to participate in the local economy at a higher level, adding strength and stability to the economy.^{5,6}
- Equitable access to local services like groceries, childcare and healthcare can lift low-income residents out of poverty, and contribute to more socially connected and resilient communities.⁷
- Civic engagement can encourage people to feel attached to their communities and create infrastructure that encourages people to invest, spend and hire in their community.^{8,9}
- Compact and connected communities reduce transportation costs for those who need it most, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by facilitating active transportation.¹⁰

Explicit and actionable statements of equity can support the planning and development of healthy and equitable communities.¹¹ These statements can be guided by the following questions:

- Who will benefit?
- Who will/may be excluded?
- What contributes to this exclusion?
- What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Actions to Support Implementation

Supporting the Implementation of Equity in All Policies

Improving equity requires a deep, nuanced understanding of how systemic inequities happen, and a long-term and holistic approach that includes centering community power, political commitment, strategic visioning and goal identification.

The practical application of equity is context-specific and policies will be different depending on the assets and inequities of each community. It is critical that policies and plans be developed in early and meaningful partnerships with communities most harmed by systemic inequities, to ensure the needs and goals of all communities members are valued and met. The overarching goals of these policies should be to eliminate inequities between different community groups through the redistribution of resources, power and community assets to equity-seeking groups.

Start by considering the following questions:

1. What would an **inclusive** and equitable city look like?
2. How would services and practices meet the needs of all residents?
3. What would a truly welcoming and inclusive workplace be like?
4. What would the composition and governance practices of city council look like?
5. How would residents from all backgrounds feel about their voice in the city?

(From the City for All Women Initiative. (2015). *Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A guide for municipalities.*)



Public Disco is a Vancouver-based initiative to create a space that celebrates queer identity, showcases a diverse array of artists and provides opportunities for the public to spend time together. The initiative was created with seed funding from the City of Vancouver's VIVA Refresh Program. Courtesy Paul Krueger.

Actions to Support Implementation

Actions to support the planning and implementation of equity in your community

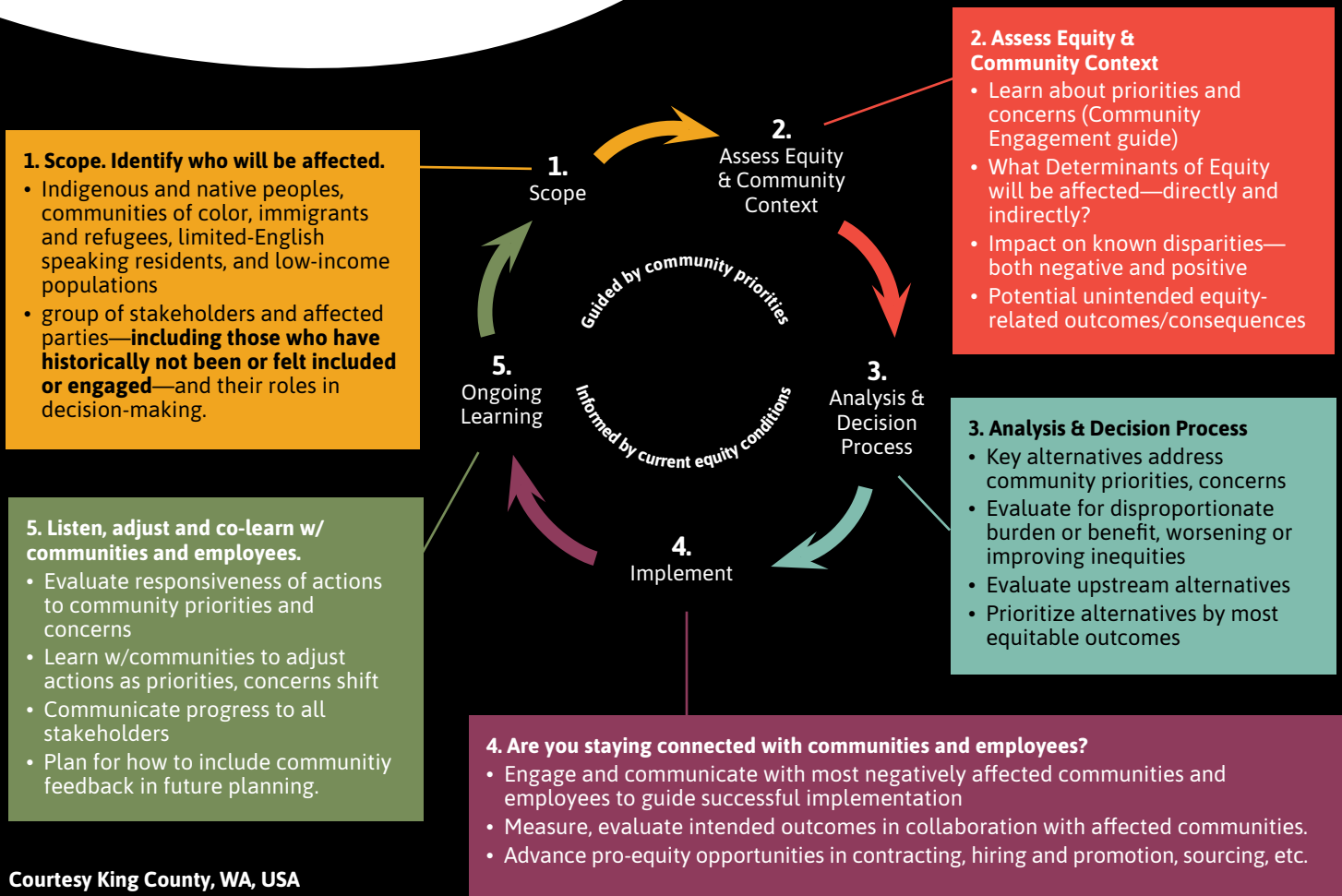
1: Develop measurable objectives and targets for equity.

Example: *Imagine Calgary*¹² is the collective vision that describes what city residents would like to see today, and the place they would like to live in the future. It outlines a 100-year vision and accompanying targets for the built environment, natural environment, economic system, governance system and social system. Within each system social justice and equity goals and targets are identified. These goals and targets were then incorporated into other long-range plans such as the city's sustainability strategy, social well-being policy and municipal development plans, highlighting how high-level, city-wide goals can help bring equity into municipal policy.

2: Incorporate equity into impact assessments to ensure rigorous and holistic decision-making, policymaking, evaluation and monitoring of outcomes.

Example: King County's Office of Social Equity and Justice developed an equity impact review process that can be adapted to local contexts and used to guide the identification, evaluation and communication of equity impacts.¹³ The process and accompanying resources guide decision-making and process design to ensure equity is incorporated throughout the planning and implementation of proposed actions (plan/policy/program development, operations modification, capital programs/projects, etc.).

Equity Impact Review Process



Courtesy King County, WA, USA

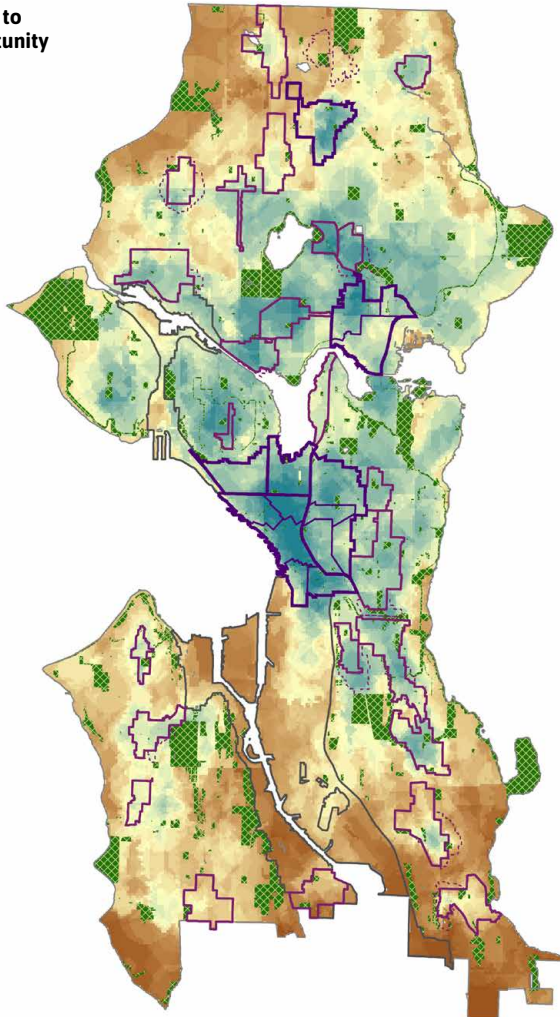
Actions to Support Implementation

Access to Opportunity

High



Low



The above heatmap from Seattle's Growth Strategy identifies access to opportunity across the city. The map highlights potential impacts of future growth, as well priority areas to reduce disparities. Credit: City of Seattle. BELOW RIGHT: The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability's Equitable Development Principles and Scorecard was specifically designed to be applicable to urban, suburban and rural communities. Credit: Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

3: Map your community to identify how growth might burden or benefit different populations.

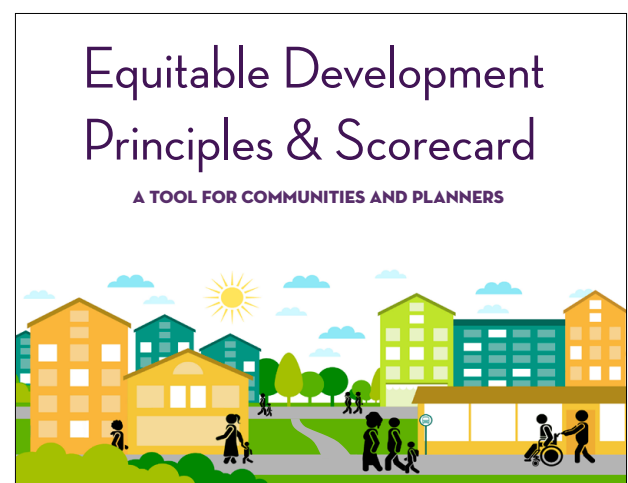
Example: The City of Seattle developed a framework and associated indicators related to their city's vision and goals for equitable communities. The *Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity Analysis*¹⁴ showcases how they mapped their community to identify neighbourhoods with limited access to services, and neighbourhoods facing higher risk of displacement.

4: Develop a specific equity initiative like an advisory group, planning department or guiding policy document to focus on moving equity initiatives forward.

Example: The Town of Stratford, P.E.I. established a Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee with an original mandate to develop, then subsequently review and oversee the implementation of, the Town's *Diversity and Inclusion Plan*.¹⁵ The sub-committee recommends strategies to increase diversity, promote civic participation and maintain the town's positive reputation within the diversity and inclusion context. The committee also devises and carries out programs and events in support of the recommended strategies. The original Diversity and Inclusion Plan was updated in 2018 to reflect the completed work from the first ten years of the plan as well as to include new ideas and reflect changes over the existence of the plan.

5: Create guiding principles and questions to aid city staff and working groups with day-to-day decision-making.

Example: The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, in partnership with local and regional leaders and organizations in the Twin Cities area, developed the *Equitable Development Principles and Scorecard*.¹⁶ This tool is intended to ensure principles and practices of equitable development, environmental justice and affordability are applied in projects across the region. The scorecard supports local governments, planners and community members with visioning, scoring proposed and ongoing development projects, and making policy change recommendations.



Equity in the Official Community Plan

Equity in the Official Community Plan*

Local governments play a foundational role in implementing and championing equity in communities. One of the documents that holds the most potential for effecting this change is the Official Community Plan, which guides the development of policy related to land use, transportation, food and agriculture, housing, social, economic and environmental sustainability policies, as well as neighbourhood design.¹⁷ To showcase approaches that worked for communities from a variety of contexts and starting points, the examples are featured from across B.C.

Think about how you might add to, enhance or build on the assets highlighted in these communities and apply them to your community.

The City of Surrey's Planning Context considers equity-seeking groups within the city, and the need for services and policy to support those groups. Courtesy City of Surrey.



Questions for Reflection

The following questions are intended to prompt reflection and discussion about how your community might benefit from incorporating an equity lens.

- What areas or projects underway in your community could benefit from incorporating an equity lens?
- Most of the guiding policy documents in British Columbia discuss equity as part of a sustainability framework. How might this way of communicating the importance of equity support or hinder efforts to directly link inequities to colonialism, racism and discrimination in planning and policy?
- Equity is not a one-size-fits-all template, and actions toward a healthier, more just, fair and inclusive community will look different depending on community values, priorities and capacity. What might you add to the focus area goals presented in the next section?

* We recognize that an OCP is based in colonial and western worldviews of private land ownership, and that the examples included in this resource may not accurately reflect the mechanisms of implementation in Indigenous community contexts, such as Comprehensive Community Plans (CCPs). However, equitable planning processes, whether in the Indigenous or non-Indigenous government context are community-driven and aim to represent the voices and perspectives of all community members. They also support the distribution of resources and benefits to those that need them most. Local governments have an opportunity to work collaboratively with and to learn from Indigenous communities and Indigenous governments to create more holistic, equitable and sustainable plans and policies.



Resource: [CCP Handbook](#)

Equity in the Official Community Plan

Consider Past and Present Inequities in the Community's Vision for an Equitable Future

Community context

Including your community's environmental, economic, historical and cultural contexts can help you to identify equity-seeking groups in your community. Community engagement and qualitative data collection can help illuminate lived experiences of inequity within your community, support understanding of local cultures, and identify solutions to issues that concern the community as a whole.^{18,19} Using **disaggregated data** when describing current conditions and emerging trends can allow you to create plans and policies that better respond to the unique needs of your community.²⁰

Goals

1. Outline the key social, economic and environmental challenges.
2. Identify equity-seeking groups in your community using racialized and disaggregated data so that they can be considered in all processes and decision-making.
3. Include spatialized analysis to identify communities and neighbourhoods of priority.
4. Include local community assets, aspirations, potential and preferences.

Example: The City of Surrey's 2013 OCP Planning Context highlights five key challenges the city will be facing in future years.²¹ Using resiliency in the face of rising energy costs and climate change—as well as a focus on compact urban form—as frameworks for equity, the community context outlines the need for initiatives to reduce economic and environmental impacts on community members. The *Planning Context* explicitly mentions prominent equity-seeking groups within Surrey, and the need for services and policy to support those groups. Demographic data is also disaggregated using 'mother tongue' as an indicator of cultural diversity.



Resource: [CIP Policy on Planning Practice and Reconciliation](#)



Performers drum and sing during a concert on Terrace's Multiculturalism Day. Courtesy City of Terrace

Community vision, guiding principles, and goals

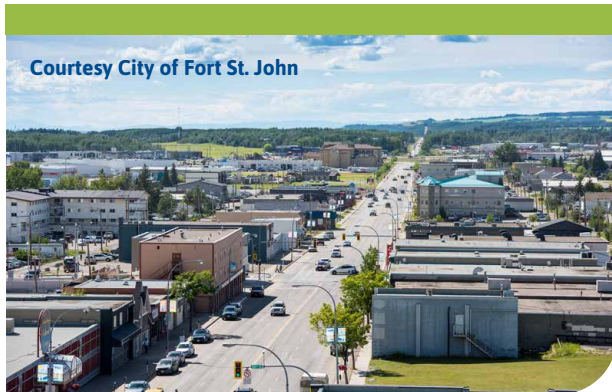
Equitable community engagement processes are essential for uncovering the shared community visions, principles and goals which guide the development of policy and implementation. Explicit statements of inclusion and equity within the overarching community vision will support the creation of equitable policies.

Goals

1. State equity as guiding principle for the development of all policy and land use decisions.
2. Make connections between equity, overall community well-being and sustainability.
3. Include goals for equitable access to environmental, economic and social amenities and resources within the community.

Example: The City of Terrace's community vision statement is people-focused, with a specific statement of celebrating and nurturing heritage, culture and social strength by fostering collaboration of all ages and walks of life.²² The vision and guiding principles focus on community vitality, a prosperous economy, efficient use of resources and clean energy, and community resiliency for current and future generations.

Equity in the Official Community Plan



Courtesy City of Fort St. John

Include Policy Goals Related to Social Need, Social Well-Being and Social Development

Economic and employment participation

Incorporating equity into economic and employment participation policies gives more people the opportunity to participate in the local economy at a higher level and adds strength to the economy as a whole.²³ There are racial, income and disability-related disparities in economic self-sufficiency and barriers to employment for youth, seniors, newcomers and residents whose first language is not English.

As part of an integrated land-use policy, mobility and accessibility to employment should be considered when developing zoning bylaws. In rural communities where resources and services are shared regionally, partnership and collaboration with neighbouring local governments, including Indigenous local governments, can help provide equitable opportunities for access to employment, service hubs and affordable housing.

Goals

1. Ensure a range and diverse economic opportunities are available for citizens with different skill sets, abilities and aspirations.
2. Prioritize access to economic opportunity and minimize involuntary displacement by supporting community-based wealth creation and on the job training opportunities.²⁴
3. Improve access to jobs through transportation and development of complete communities.

Example: The City of Fort St. John's economic development policy goals and objectives focus on partnerships across business sectors and governments, including Indigenous governments and communities to foster economic diversity and sustainability.²⁵ The policies focus on land use and planning of economic and business hubs to support and celebrate local businesses and enable retention and recruitment; avenues such as economic participation, affordability of housing, and transportation are used. Attracting and supporting Indigenous investment in businesses and land in Fort St. John is also prioritized. The policies included recognize that future commercial development will affect surrounding areas, and initiatives need to limit unwanted displacement.

Service provision

Community members rely on services including childcare, education, health services, and access to clean drinking water, infrastructure, and transportation.²⁶ Targeted, culturally safe and appropriate services ensure equitable access to these services, and can reduce disparities faced by equity-seeking groups in the community.²⁷

Goals

1. Ensure community and public safety including services such as fire, police, emergency medical services and code enforcement are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe to live, work and play in any neighbourhood.
2. Invest in high-quality affordable childcare and early learning opportunities, as well as high-quality education that is **culturally safe and appropriate** and allows each student to reach their full potential.
3. Support job training and skill-building initiatives to increase community capacity for the provision of essential services.
4. Encourage cultural sensitivity training and equitable hiring practices so that service delivery is safe and accessible regardless of background or ability.

Example: The City of Nelson includes library services, childcare, access to healthcare, and poverty reduction in the *Healthy Living & Social Wellbeing* section of its OCP.²⁸ This section

Equity in the Official Community Plan

highlights specific groups facing challenges in accessing social services, and identifies objectives to reduce barriers through municipal policy. These objectives and policies focus on responding effectively to community needs, developing programs and opportunities to enhance the physical, social, psychological and cultural well-being of residents, and fostering an inclusive and respectful community where all citizens have opportunities for meaningful participation.

Social, cultural and spiritual participation

Participation in social, cultural and spiritual aspects of community life can facilitate strong social networks, build trust among neighbours and support the community's ability to work together to achieve common goals that improve quality of life for everyone.²⁹ Cultural practices and values are an important piece of people-focused planning, policy and development.³⁰ The social and cultural life of a community flourishes when all community members are able to fully contribute their knowledge, experience, skills and talents as volunteers, artists, participants and customers.³¹

Goals

Design and deliver programming in collaboration with groups who may face higher levels of social isolation—including seniors, people with disabilities, Indigenous communities and newcomers.

1. Create communication tools that respond to the different needs within your community, with content that is clear, direct and easy-to-understand.
2. Ensure policy, land use and design elements support opportunities for social and cultural participation and highlight the potential impacts of development on individual health, well-being and independence.³²
3. Use zoning to prioritize connectivity to services, greenspaces, recreation opportunities, social services and amenities.

Example: The District of Clearwater identifies principles, objectives and policies in four arenas—economic, social, cultural and environmental—at

the outset of their OCP.³³ Cultural elements of the community are identified as anchors and focus points for policy and planning to ensure that cultural resources are integrated as a component of the community's long-term goals. These four sustainability principles are used as a guiding framework for the rest of the OCP content.

Food and agriculture

Food and agricultural resources in the B.C. context are essential for the health and vibrancy of communities. **Food security** and **food sovereignty** consider equitable access to healthy, affordable, safe and culturally-appropriate food. An equitable approach to food policy gives communities choices around how to source, harvest and process their food. Food sovereignty intersects with ecosystem health (pollution, water salinity etc.), infrastructure and service delivery (such as dams and water management), the economics of food affordability, as well as cultural and historical ways of knowing and being.

Goals

1. Ensure physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and cultural food preferences.
2. Partner regionally to support access, preservation and restoration of land and resources for local and regional food production, processing and distribution.³⁴
3. Support knowledge translation initiatives to encourage local and individual food production and processing, as well as cultural and spiritual connection to—and stewardship of—the land.
4. Collaborate with community members to create welcoming food retailer locations for all, including long-term residents.³⁵
5. Consider the location of full-service and small-scale food retailers in conjunction with residential and commercial neighbourhoods, as well as access to transportation where possible.

Example: The District of Mackenzie identified local food systems as a strategic policy area to support a new economic development sector in

Equity in the Official Community Plan



the community. The OCP identifies the assets of the existing local food system and ongoing projects, as well as challenges and opportunities for the local food system in the area.³⁶ The District defined a goal to “grow, raise and harvest more local food to provide a new source of fresh food, stimulate small enterprise, and develop a local food culture in Mackenzie.” This example highlights the intersections of health, food, culture, economic and environmental well-being.



Resource: [PlanH Healthy Eating and Food Security Action Guide](#)

Parks and recreation

Parks and public lands serve an essential role in preserving natural resources and wildlife habitats, protecting clean water and clean air, and providing open space for current and future generations. Racialized communities and low-income neighbourhoods often have less access to greenspaces and higher exposure to environmental contaminants.³⁷ **Gentrification** through increased

property values can occur with greening initiatives, and public open space is often used by people experiencing homelessness. Equitable parks and recreation policies consider the potential for exclusion, marginalization and displacement associated with **smart growth** and improvements to environmental amenities.³⁸

Partnership agreements and joint operating agreements of local and regional parks can facilitate knowledge transfer for the development of sustainable communities, now and in the future.

Goals

1. Support improved access to inclusive parks and recreation amenities. This includes the provision of resources for park acquisition and development in underserved neighbourhoods, with emphasis on social and environmental benefits for all.
2. Implement complementary and integrated land use and policy planning for affordable housing, affordable accessible and high-quality public transit, parks and recreation amenities.³⁹
3. Consider potential gentrification or displacement associated with ‘activation’ and greening of public space and prioritize safety, accessibility and inclusion for all.
4. Emphasize traditional ecological knowledge and community-based stewardship of greenspaces and environmental amenities through partnership and collaboration.

Example: The City of Coquitlam links the health of the natural environment to the health and well-being of the community in the *Healthy Environment* chapter of their 2010 OCP.⁴⁰ Policies within this chapter focus on compact and connected communities, integrated multi-modal transportation routes, development guidelines to support passive design and renewable energy, as well as the benefits of vegetation and green space for health and well-being and cultural relevance within parks and recreation uses. Watershed stewardship for resiliency and health is also highlighted, as well as the importance of fostering community understanding of relationships to—and responsibility for—the natural environment in which they live, work and play.

Equity in the Official Community Plan

Leverage Land Use Policies to Support Equitable Service Provision

Land use

Equitable land use practices require that the overall vision, plan and implementation include local communities' assets, aspirations, potential and preferences. They aim to keep current residents in the area and to develop projects that promote people's health, well-being and prosperity.⁴¹ In urban settings, complete, compact communities with a wide range of mobility options (e.g. transit, cycling, walking) are generally more accessible for everyone.⁴² In rural settings, small and medium population centres provide the services and amenities accessed by communities regionally. Working in partnership with neighbouring municipalities and Indigenous governments, these population centres should apply an equity lens to distribute resources and amenities to those communities, neighbourhoods and people across the region who need them most.

Goals

1. Support strong, vibrant community and neighbourhood centres through land use, community economic development, housing, infrastructure and technology investments.⁴³
2. Consider community health impacts, social impacts, and ecological and watershed health risks when making decisions about growth, implementing programs and designing capital improvements.
3. Consider and present potential equity impacts of land use decisions and developments so that the community is able to fully participate in making decisions about its future.
4. Minimize negative impacts from industrial, commercial and transportation uses including noise, light and air pollution for all neighbourhoods and community members.

Example: The Green Lake and Area OCP is based on the watershed boundaries of Green Lake.⁴⁴ The plan is a collaboration between the Cariboo Regional District, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, and Ministry of Community Development. The plan's goals and policies are intended to balance social development, economic development and environmental protection, and to focus on opportunities and resources for future generations. Some of the land-use concepts identified include regional partnerships, protection of areas with environmental and recreation values and areas of significance to First Nations, smart growth principles that focus on provision of a range of housing types, walkability and accessibility, integration of transit and opportunities for public engagement and participation, as well as management of new developments to limit negative environmental and social impacts. This example highlights opportunities for innovation in rural communities where partnerships and collaboration can support the application of an equity lens on a regional scale.

Urban design

The public spaces between built forms are where much of the day-to-day activities and social interactions occur in communities, and the design of these spaces plays a major role in how people experience their community.⁴⁵ Design guidelines typically address safety, accessibility, aesthetics, characteristic elements, social and cultural history, technical infrastructure, environmental sustainability, economics and mobility modes. Meaningful community engagement will aim to ensure that perceptions of safety, physical health and mental health are considered in infrastructure and design of public space.⁴⁶

Applying an equity lens to the design of public spaces can promote **social participation**, a sense of safety for all, and equitable access to community amenities. Design guidelines and development area plans can be used to provide access to goods and services, environmental amenities such as natural light and clean air, and healthy foods. Urban design can also be used to provide opportunities for physical activity and community gathering.

Equity in the Official Community Plan

Goals:

1. Balance safety and mobility needs of all community members.
2. Embrace local weather in design guidelines to promote **social inclusion** and public participation across seasons.
3. Support progressive design elements that provide welcoming and inclusive public spaces for all community members, specifically those who rely on these spaces for shelter and community gathering.
4. Focus on diverse cultures and history and representation in design and neighbourhood delineations to support a sense of community identity.
5. Include public art and collaborations with Indigenous communities to highlight the history and culture of neighbourhoods and diverse communities.⁴⁷

Example: The City of Prince George identifies universal design and winter city design in the urban form and structure section of their 2011 OCP, with specific policies relating to the design and use of streets, intersections and public spaces.⁴⁸ The urban form and structure section supports the City's objectives to: "(7.1.1) Encourage inclusive community participation in arts and culture that should ensure the social, environmental and economic sustainability of the community," and "(7.1.2) Support and facilitate the development of events, programs and spaces that celebrate culture, place and season."



Transportation

Mobility and access to opportunity are essential components of equity and have thoroughly examined benefits, including improved health outcomes, reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, economic benefits, and enhanced social inclusion.⁴⁹ Equitable access to transportation includes having choices between various transportation modes, ensuring that costs are affordable, and ensuring that travel times to destinations are reasonable for all people, abilities and ages. Active modes of transportation are often used by low- to moderate-income groups because of affordability.⁵⁰ Local governments should prioritize the improvement of infrastructure in areas of highest need, rather than areas where it is 'nice to have.'

In urban areas, the siting and distribution of transit facilities can address problems of mobility and access. A review of community assets that identifies neighbourhoods with limited access to services will help target resources to areas of highest need.

Parking & equity

Parking requirements are an example of transport planning decisions that have unintended and often overlooked equity impacts.⁷⁹ Prioritizing single-occupancy vehicles through excessive parking requirements can result in inefficient land use, reduced density and increased total cost of transportation for everyone, as well as increased cost of housing and commercial spaces.⁸⁰ These impacts burden low-income households and those who do not own a vehicle. Surface parking and hard or impervious surfaces can also increase runoff and high storm water volumes. Equitable parking policies take into consideration these factors and aim to ensure a tighter fit of parking supply to demand. Universal design guidelines and engagement of people with lived experience can help policy to prioritize accessibility for persons with assistance requirements (including mobility, visual and hearing).⁸¹

Equity in the Official Community Plan

In rural communities where public transit may not exist, this will likely require regional analysis and partnerships to promote regional mobility and social inclusion.

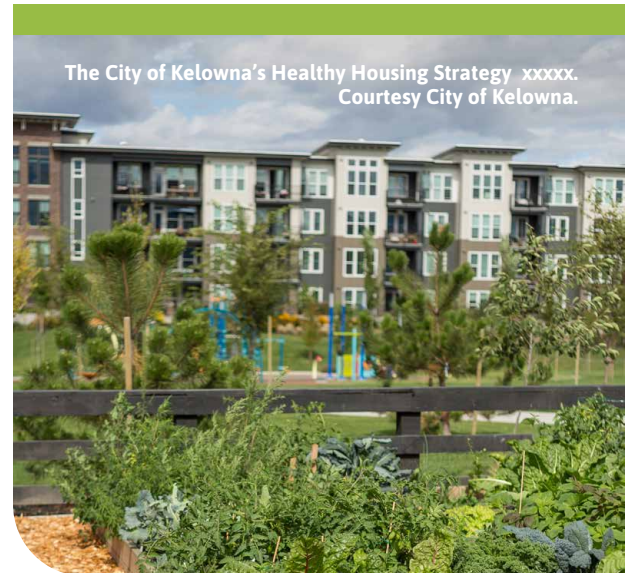
Goals

1. Create affordable, accessible and safe transportation options for all.
2. Ensure fair access to quality jobs, workforce development, contracting opportunities and affordable housing in areas of good connectivity.
3. Incorporate intuitive and accessible **way-finding**, as well as universal design principles,⁵¹ into infrastructure planning.
4. Reduce or limit negative impacts from light, noise and emissions, and site transportation facilities to avoid disproportionate impacts of these factors.

Example: The City of Kamloops Official Community Plan (KAMPLAN)⁵², identifies the importance of integrated land use planning. The objectives of the plan include improvements to provide safe, accessible, and convenient access to work, shopping, recreation, and other key destinations via sustainable modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling, and transit. The intent is to create an environmentally, socially, culturally, and economically sustainable transportation system supported by land use that reduces the impact on the environment, promotes public health, and increases social connections in the community. As such, the goals in the OCP identify a need to prioritize investment in active transportation infrastructure, including improvements to the transit, pedestrian, cycling and trail networks.

Housing

Equitable housing policy aims to provide culturally-appropriate and weather-appropriate housing forms, along with a variety of housing types. To support the overall health and well-being of the community, affordable housing plans should consider the mental, physical and cultural aspects of adequate housing. Coordination of housing and land use policy with other basic needs such as transportation, food and access to employment can help municipalities develop socially-inclusive housing that considers the diverse needs of its residents.⁵³



Goals

1. Strive for a housing system that includes a diversity of housing types and tenures that can fit changing needs of residents through ages, abilities, life stages and income levels.
2. Reduce barriers to housing system supports and develop inclusive and coordinated communication across service providers to prevent unwanted displacement and exclusion.
3. Encourage development of high-quality, well-designed housing in and around service centres and/or neighbourhood centres at a variety of sizes and cost ranges.
4. Include accessibility and quality in definitions of adequate housing.

Example: The City of Kelowna, in partnership with the Interior Health Authority, are collaborating to develop a long-term integrative Healthy City Strategy prioritizing healthy places and spaces, community health and quality of life for all. This plan aims to support integrated decision-making and will be a companion to the upcoming Official Community Plan. Two themes of the Healthy City Strategy have been completed to date: the Community for All Action Plan which focuses on seniors, children and people with diverse abilities, and the Healthy Housing Strategy, which prioritizes housing for all. In the Healthy Housing Strategy, a Housing Wheelhouse was developed to intentionally promote equity and inclusion within the housing continuum.⁵⁴

Resources & Further Reading

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Glossary

Community well-being: How well community members can access the social, economic, environmental and cultural assets they need to reach their goals, feel connected to the community and be healthy.

Colonialism: A practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Settler colonialism—such as in the case of Canada—is the unique process where the colonizing population does not leave the territory, asserts ongoing sovereignty to the land, and actively seeks to assimilate the Indigenous populations and extinguish their cultures, traditions and ties to the land.⁵⁵

Culturally appropriate: Culturally appropriate community interventions are based on the target group or communities' values. The strategies that make up the intervention reflect the attitudes, expectations and norms of the community, as well as the behavioural preferences and expectations of the group's members.⁵⁶

Cultural safety: An approach that considers how social and historical contexts, as well as structural and interpersonal power imbalances, shape service user experiences.⁵⁷

Disaggregated data: In the context of race-based data, this means breaking down composite (“aggregate”) categories such as “racialized communities” into component parts, such as Black, Chinese, Arab etc.⁵⁸

Discrimination: Treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics.⁵⁹

Equity: When people's race, gender, economic status or sexual orientation do not determine their economic, social or political opportunities. Equity means providing support and resources based on an individual's level of need, instead of providing everyone with the same level of support. Equity is a step towards social justice.

Equity-seeking groups: Equity-seeking groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.⁶⁰

Glossary

Food security: a condition in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.⁶¹

Food sovereignty: Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.⁶²

Gentrification: The combination of demographic and economic changes accompanying sustained reinvestment in inner urban and rural areas, contributing to changes in the social character of a neighbourhood or community. Often characterized by incoming higher-income groups and displacement of long-term residents and low-income groups.⁶³

Indigenous: The United Nations uses the term Indigenous to refer broadly to peoples of long settlement and connection to specific lands who have been adversely affected by incursions by industrial economies, displacement and settlement of their traditional territories by others.⁶⁴

Intersectionality: Acknowledges the ways in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which together can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group; for example, creating additional barriers or opportunities.⁶⁵

Inclusion: A state of belonging, when persons of different backgrounds and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers and collaborators. Inclusion involves people being given the opportunity to grow and feel/know they belong. Diversity efforts alone do not create inclusive environments. Inclusion involves a sense of coming as you are and being accepted, rather than feeling the need to assimilate.⁶⁶

LGBTQIA+: A common abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender, Genderqueer, Queer, Intersexed, Agender, Asexual, and Ally community.⁶⁷

Racialized communities: Encompasses all people that are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.⁶⁸

Racism: Any individual action, or institutional practice which treats people differently because of their colour or ethnicity. This distinction is often used to justify discrimination.⁶⁹



Smart growth: An approach to development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, development within existing neighbourhoods, and community engagement.⁷⁰

Social participation: Involvement in meaningful activities (social, cultural, physical, educational, recreational, etc.) that increase one's sense of belonging and well-being.⁷¹

Social inclusion: A socially inclusive society is one in which people feel valued, their differences and rights are respected, their basic needs are met so that they can live in dignity, and their voices are heard. An inclusive society is one in which people are able to meaningfully participate in social, economic, cultural and political systems.⁷²

Two-spirit: A term used within some Indigenous communities that encompasses cultural, spiritual, sexual and gender identity. "Two-Spirit" is to be used only by Indigenous people. However, not all Indigenous people who hold diverse sexual and gender identities consider themselves Two-Spirit; many identify as LGBTQ+⁷³

Universal design: Universal design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.⁷⁴

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Burnaby, B.C.
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More Information

Want support or to learn more about improving health and well-being in your community?

Health authorities can support local governments by providing advice and expertise, resources for local government staff and elected officials to develop healthy public policy, community health profiles, and opportunities to work together on joint healthy living actions. You may already have relationships with your health authority. If not, up-to-date contact information for your local health authority lead is available at www.planh.ca.

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