

A Visual Quickstart for Local Governments



Equity is the fair distribution of opportunities, power and resources to meet the needs of all people, regardless of age, ability, gender, income, education level, culture or background. It considers who is involved in decision-making and recognizes that those with lived experience are the experts on their needs. It also considers the past injustices and potential impacts on future generations. An equity lens considers how services and resources can be distributed to those that need them the most.

Equity is foundational to the development of healthy communities and that local governments have an important role in implementing and championing equity across social, economic, environmental and cultural domains. Applying an equity lens to community planning is not as simple as 'ticking a box,' but this guide is a set of prompts to get you started.

Consider past & 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 sustainable solutions to issues that concern the community as a whole.

COMMUNITY VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES & 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.

Include policy goals related to social need, well-being & development



ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION

As part of an integrated land-use policy, mobility and accessibility to employment should be considered when developing zoning bylaws, location of services, employment hubs and housing. In rural communities where resources and services are shared regionally, partnership and collaboration can help provide equitable opportunities for employment participation.



SERVICE PROVISION

On a daily basis, community members rely on services including childcare, education, transportation, health services, and access to clean drinking water. Equitable service provision policies strive to reduce disparities faced by equity-seeking groups in the community, and to ensure all individuals and neighbourhoods have access to the necessary services to thrive.



SOCIAL, CULTURAL & SPIRITUAL PARTICIPATION

Cultural practices and values are an important piece of people-focused planning, policy and development. 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 and improve quality of life for everyone.



FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Food and agricultural resources in the B.C. context are essential for the health and vibrancy of communities. Food sovereignty intersects with ecosystem health, infrastructure and service delivery, the economics of food affordability, as well as cultural and historical ways of knowing and being. An equitable approach to food policy gives communities choices around how to source, harvest and process their food.



PARKS & RECREATION

Parks and public lands serve an essential role in preserving natural resources and wildlife habitats, protecting clean water and air, and providing open space for current and future generations. Equitable parks and recreation policies consider the potential for exclusion, marginalization and displacement associated with improvements to public spaces.

Leverage land use policies to support equitable service provision



LAND USE

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 sustainable solutions to issues that concern the community as a whole.



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. 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.



HOUSING

To support the overall health and well-being of the community, housing plans and policies 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.



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. Equitable access to transportation includes choices between various transportation modes, affordability, and reasonable travel times are reasonable for all people, abilities and ages.