

# Equity Wrap-Up Report Outline

Department of Planning  
FY 2021 Equity Wrap-Up Report

## 1. Reflecting on Our Progress

Since 2015, the Department of Planning's Equity in Planning Committee (EIPC) has led efforts to analyze, discuss and address issues stemming from racial inequities perpetuated by planners in city government. From the beginning, the Equity in Planning Committee has been a staff-led and driven model.

Our FY20 assessment revealed both strengths and challenges. We believe that our strength lies in acting as a convener, facilitator, hub and resource for colleagues within city government and community members. Through our civic engagement programming, we are able to offer residents access to information about zoning and development, and support navigating city government around these topics. We bring residents together to learn from each other in peer groups, connecting people across different neighborhoods.

However, we still have work to do. While our Department has defined internally what the word "equity" means to us as an agency, we have not yet worked with residents to define what equity means when applied to our Agency's core work – for example, what does equity mean when applied to neighborhood plans? Or, what does an equitable land development review process look like? We hope to tackle these core questions in FY22 and FY23 as we work on the Comprehensive Plan for Baltimore.

## 2. Equity Highlights FY 2021

- a. July 2020: Equity Fellow, working with staff, facilitated small staff focus groups and one-on-one conversations on the topics of inclusivity and diversity within hiring and promotion issues within the department.
- b. August 2020: Equity Fellow presented findings from research on inclusivity and diversity to Director; and at full staff meeting.
- c. August 2020-December 2020: Small workgroup focused on developing recommendations for more equitable hiring of interns; recommendations shared with executive staff and new internship webpage developed.
- d. August 2020-December 2020: Small workgroup consisting of staff from land use, CHAP, community planning and other teams worked to develop an equity analysis framework for use in staff reports to Planning Commission. This framework was presented and discussed with Planning Commission during December 2020. It is currently being piloted, with broader implementation beginning October 2021.
- e. Nov 2020-Feb 2021: CP&R Equity Group was convened to develop recommendations to apply an equity lens to Community Planning and related neighborhood plans. This work was presented to Equity

Committee in June 2021. Currently, working to develop and pilot an engagement template to support INSPIRE plans.

- f. July 2020: DOP established an inter-agency CIP Oversight Committee to explore opportunities for alignment across agencies and develop new evaluation criteria that can be used to score projects. Equity is one of the key criteria identified and will allow us to consider additional factors besides the geographic location of the project.
- g. June 2021: DOP hosted focus groups with Planning Academy alum and other Baltimore City residents to get additional feedback on the evaluation criteria and other factors that are important in scoping capital projects.
- h. June 2021, we published the FY22 Annual Update to the CIP Equity Report using the methodology established in the earlier reports.
- i. The Community Resiliency Hub program increased from 8 to 12 locations. The Office has raised an additional \$367,000, while the Community Resiliency Hub partner organizations have individually raised over \$250,000 for Hub-related functions.
- j. The Baltimore Outdoor Learning Program engaged 11 schools during its pilot year to design or create new high-quality, actively used outdoor learning spaces at City Schools.
- k. March 2020 (thru present day): Food Policy team developed an equitable response to COVID-19 Emergency Feeding operations by distributing produce to geographically targeted areas most negatively impacted by COVID-19.
- l. Worked with Resident Food Equity Advisors to develop community-driven food, public housing, and policy recommendations. Recommendations were released in May of 2021.
- m. Ongoing: Distribution of Healthy Food Priority Area funds to support BIPOC-led organizations in Baltimore City.

### **3. A Strategy for Meaningful Change**

In FY20 and FY21, the Department of Planning has generated a large number of ideas to push the needle around equity. Now is the time to begin to prioritize and implement more of these ideas:

**Diversity and Equity-** We will continue to work towards building a more diverse and inclusive workforce, through greater outreach and publicity of available positions and through new partnerships with local and/or HBCU institutions. We will also take care to focus on youth engagement and programming, to build new channels of access into our profession and other related “built environment” fields.

**Inclusion and Belonging-** We will continue to cultivate a culture of learning within our agency, by supporting staff to self-organize staff meeting speakers and topics relevant to the topics of racial equity. We

will invite more diverse speakers and more Black speakers to address our agency on topics of importance to the urban planning field.

**External Impact-** We will continue to work to further our goals around transparency, accountability and accessibility to the public. As we design the engagement process for the Comprehensive Plan, we will take care to ensure that it is relevant and authentic to Baltimore's history and culture. We will also ensure that we take measures to acknowledge urban planning's past and current harms in terms of policy and practice. Finally, we will more clearly define equitable development – what it looks like and means – as well as strategies to achieve this. This effort will be done collaboratively with community.

### **FY22 Goals and objectives**

- Seek funds for a Planning Academy fund to seed alum projects with criteria and selection process designed by alums.
- Develop Community Design Fellowship program for youth 18-30 in conjunction to outreach for Comprehensive Plan; include youth on Advisory Council and recruit for Planning Academy in FY22.
- Develop a framework for Comprehensive Plan that centers and defines equitable development.
- Develop an equity framework for neighborhood planning/plans.