EQUITY AND BUILDINGS:

A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKERS

USDN | urban sustainability directors network

American Cities Climate Challenge

Emerald Cities COLLABORATIVE *America empowered.*

UPRIGHT Consulting Services

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

We are also grateful to our interview participants from their insights. Excerpts from this collection of interviews are quoted and layered into the document's content.

BlocPower

Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy (CEED)

Enterprise Community Partners

Equitable Building Decarbonization Cohort – This is a group of local community organizations supporting the 25 cities in the American Cities Climate Challenge, which provided responses in a focus group. The group was created and facilitated by the Energy Foundation.

Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

Greenlink Analytics

Home Energy Efficiency Team (HEET)

City of Portland

City of San Jose

City of Seattle

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THE GOLDEN GRIOT SOLUTIONS
"Let's tell your story."

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1. INTRODUCTION

This framework document is advised by and evolved from the longstanding efforts of BIPOC-led organizations and leaders. This document highlights existing work by BIPOC-led organizations and provides guidance for local government staff who are shaping building policies and programs.[1]

By pulling together guidance and resources into the first buildings and equity framework, this document is intended to provide practical guidance that will help local governments center equity within their policies and planning for the built environment. The purpose of this framework is to foster stronger relationships between and provide some shared language for local government staff, community-based organizations (CBOs), and national nonprofits to address equity.

The intended audience for this framework is all local government staff whose work engages with building policies. In this document, building policies and programs refer to both existing and future buildings. Building policies do not apply simply to the materials and energy consumed, but also, more importantly, to the occupants within buildings and their wellbeing, health, and safety. **Buildings are places where people live, work, play, connect, worship, and more.**

Policies and programs require a holistic and integrated approach that match community needs. **There is a critical need for local governments to integrate the work and priorities of housing, public health, sustainability, resiliency, and economic development departments.** With strong interdepartmental networks, sustainable building policymakers can help meet the pressing needs of communities that suffer disproportionately negative health, housing, economic, and quality-of-life outcomes, all of which is particularly important as we manage the COVID crisis.

We invite readers to explore with us the emerging practice of centering equity in sustainable building policies and programs. Examining considerations of equity in buildings is an emerging practice and one that calls for a continuous commitment to learning and evolving as a community of practitioners. This document is not meant to be prescriptive. To meaningfully do this work, a community has to commit to practice, iterate, and build ongoing capacity for integrating buildings and equity rather than prescriptive formulas for policymaking. To this end, we have developed twelve guiding principles to support staff in their work. These principles serve as the foundation for this document.

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[1] BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The BIPOC Project uses "the term BIPOC to highlight the unique relationship to whiteness that Indigenous and Black (African Americans) people have, which shapes the experiences of and relationship to white supremacy for all people of color within a U.S. context."

The remainder of this document is divided into three sections and includes case studies and resources meant to help further explore the concepts in the framework and principles in Parts I and II. Additional resources for learning about and implementing these principles are presented in the final section.

> **PART I - EQUITY FUNDAMENTALS**

> **PART II - CRITICAL ISSUES AT THE INTERSECTION OF EQUITY AND SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS**

> **PART III - NEXT STEPS**

Throughout the document, guiding questions prompt readers to apply the content to their particular circumstances. Inquiry is at the heart of equity practice. Successfully centering equity in policy and programs is much more about identifying and working through good questions than about applying formulas or copying what has worked elsewhere. The guiding questions in this document provide a starting point. The best results will come from practitioners taking the time to develop and answer their own equity questions.

A NOTE ON TERMS

In this document, we use the term "equity" and "racial equity" interchangeably, as race is the leading indicator of disparities. As articulated in Race Forward's Zero Cities Racial Equity Assessment Tool:

> **"Racial disparities are not natural, or random. From the inception of our country, government at the local, regional, state, and federal level has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequity. A wide range of laws and policies were passed, including everything from who could vote, who could be a citizen, who could own property, who was property, and where one could live. With the Civil Rights movement, laws and policies were passed that helped to create positive changes, including making acts of discrimination illegal. However, despite progress in addressing explicit discrimination, racial inequities continue to be deep, pervasive, and persistent across all indicators of success – including in education, criminal justice, jobs, housing, public infrastructure, environment, and health – regardless of region. Many current inequities are sustained by historical legacies and systems that repeat patterns of exclusion. Institutions and structures have continued to create and perpetuate these inequities, despite the lack of explicit intention."**

Throughout this document, several terms are used interchangeably: "historically marginalized," "negatively impacted," "impacted," "disproportionately impacted," "frontline," BIPOC, and "vulnerable." These terms are meant to describe communities of people who have been routinely and intentionally excluded from important decision making and forced to bear the burdens of harmful policies and systems for generations, and to whom government in particular has not been accountable. This includes people and communities of color, Black people, Indigenous people, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, those experiencing poverty, people experiencing homelessness or insufficient housing, English language learners, people with disabilities, and other communities that are systematically denied full access to rights, opportunities, resources, and power.

PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

Equity is a practice more than a prescription — a practice that requires continuous commitment, learning, iteration, and improvement. Contributors to the Buildings and Equity Framework identified these twelve Principles of Practice to help cities center equity in their buildings policies and programs. These principles underpin the framework and wider building and equity practice. See the additional resources by leading organizations highlighted through the Equity and Buildings Framework and in the Appendix on Page 54 for more information.

1. **Make impacted communities, which are continuing to lead equity and building work nationwide, central to planning and projects.** Communities have lived experience, knowledge, and expertise that is critical to designing equitable building outcomes. Deep collaboration with community groups and members ensures that more equitable policies and outcomes are truly accountable to those who are most impacted.

2. **Build stronger policies by actively centering equity.** Making community priorities central builds broader support for bolder policies. Focusing on equity does not undermine climate urgency but rather enables policy development that produces stronger outcomes.

3. **Understand the people ('the who') of buildings.** Look at buildings as places where families live, learn, play, socialize, work, and rest. This perspective reveals opportunities to improve peoples' lives by creating understanding of how communities interact with the built environment, and what their priorities are.

4. **Collaborate across departments and disciplines to produce policies and programs that better address equity issues.** Working across silos allows policies to move beyond solely focusing on buildings' greenhouse gas emissions to also providing critical health, resilience, environmental, and economic benefits for communities.

5. **Address root causes.** Conduct analyses to understand existing or past policies that hinder progress on equity in the built environment, such as redlining, zoning, infrastructure investments, and procurement practices. These structures may be under the jurisdiction of different city departments, but their impacts may need to be addressed in building work.

6. **Prioritize reparations over reducing additional harm for deeper healing and better outcomes.** Equity work acknowledges the systems that have created current inequities and suffering. Effective policies specifically address the persistent harm of such systems and improve the lives of those most affected by large-scale, long-term investments.

7. **Shift funding and financing structures to directly support increased capacity in impacted communities.** Sustainable resourcing prioritizes community capacity and decision-making power. Direct investments in disenfranchised communities allow for deeper collaboration in the design of bold climate and building policies. Sustained investments are required to build relationships and achieve equitable outcomes.

8. **Share data and information transparently.** Open and transparent resource sharing is a powerful avenue for creating equitable policies. A lack of access to data can cause roadblocks and deepen inequities in accessing power and self-determination. Data should be made available between city departments, community partners, and the public so it can be leveraged to support existing community leadership.

9. **Orient work and goals around shifting power and self-determination.** Advancing equity requires shifting power and correcting power imbalances. Shifting decision-making power and control to communities requires existing power holders – individuals and institutions in local government – to understand the power they possess.

10. **Prioritize making economic opportunities work for marginalized communities.** All climate policies have economic implications. It is important to ensure that people who have historically been left behind benefit from these policies' positive economic impacts. Policies or programs should set high-road job creation, community ownership, and wealth building as explicit goals.[2]

11. **Lay a foundation of equitable decision-making processes and transparent accountability measures.** The purpose of engaging impacted communities is to make informed decisions that best address urgent issues. Community engagement should be designed on a scale suited to each point in the policy process while ensuring that government is accountable to impacted communities.

12. **Tie success directly to equity.** A successful building policy or program should improve both sustainability and equity. Local governments must work with the community to develop and track meaningful equity metrics to be used alongside traditional environmental indicators.

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[2] High road refers to social and environmental responsibilities. Supporting policies focus on over labor quality and not just cost.

PART I

EQUITY
FUNDAMENTALS
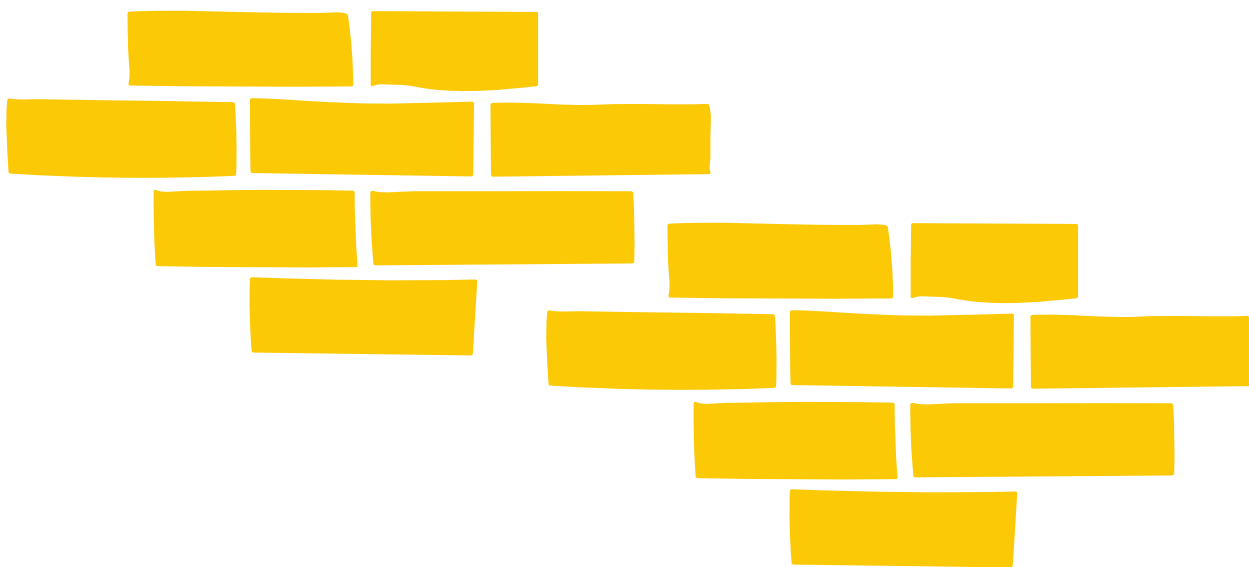
HOW TO USE PART I:

Part I provides a foundational understanding of equity, community engagement, and setting policy goals. Each subsection is accompanied by guiding questions to help readers begin to apply the lessons from this framework to their work. These subsections should be read sequentially.

2. WHY EQUITY IN BUILDINGS POLICY?

EXAMPLE OF A "WHY STATEMENT" FROM THE <u>NAACP'S CENTERING EQUITY IN THE SUSTAINABLE BUILDING SECTOR INITIATIVE</u>

Why Now? Why This? Why Us?

Communities of color and low-income communities bear the brunt of the impacts of unhealthy, energy-inefficient, and disaster-vulnerable buildings.

Yet, as one looks around the tables or worksites of the sustainable and regenerative building sector, there is little representation of the populations most impacted by our current proliferation of unsustainable, inefficient, sometimes unsafe, and often unhealthy building stock.

Whether it's as policymakers, advocates, architects, project managers, contractors, or the construction workforce, the most impacted communities are underrepresented in the design, construction, and occupancy of sustainable, regenerative, healthy buildings.

Given the huge import of buildings in reducing the demand on energy production, plus the co-benefits that regenerative design has for building occupants and the community, not to mention the environment, all of this points to the fact that this gap in access/uptake must drastically change and quickly to build a big tent and universalize sustainable, regenerative buildings.

Our aim as the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization is to be a beacon of inspiration and transformation in centering equity in the sustainable building sector. In doing so, we can catalyze the building of a bigger, broader tent for the sustainable building movement, towards the betterment of the building users, the communities, the economy, and the planet.

-Jacqui Patterson, Senior Director for Environmental and Climate Justice, NAACP

Efforts to redress racial disparities in the distribution of benefits, burdens, resources, and influence are much more effective when they begin with a clear sense of purpose.

Establishing a shared understanding of purpose is a critical first step to advancing equity in buildings work. A clearly articulated purpose statement serves as a compass for navigating the decisions and tradeoffs inherent in addressing the complexities of inequity while advancing sustainability. Creating a "why statement" together with stakeholders and partners is an important first step toward mutual understanding and shared power.

A why statement should be specific to local contexts and actors. Here are some common reasons that local governments have identified for centering equity in their buildings work:

> **Local Government Has a Duty to Be Inclusive.** A strong democracy requires that people have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. Attention and resources should be dedicated to ensuring that people who have been historically marginalized in the policymaking process have influence from now on.

In April 2021, the Equity and Buildings framework authors and Advisory Committee held a workshop with a group of North American cities and counties. The workshop participants found the following recommendations on how to construct Why Statements helpful:

Lead with vision and values. This could include city policies and personal stories from residents.

Describe the structural drivers of inequity. This can include historic and current policies and should be race explicit (see Section 3. What We Mean When We Say Equity).

Describe the solution and collective benefit your work would generate. Name and be specific about the social, environmental and economic benefits of your work.

Invite your audience to take specific action. Create calls to action for the city, community partners and others who you will need to move the work forward.

These recommendations were adapted from a presentation by Dennis C. Chin of Race Forward.

Local Government Has a Duty to Repair Harm. Public policies have played a key role in creating inequities and exacerbating harm in BIPOC communities. Land-use planning, redevelopment, redlining (see the Housing Affordability Section on page 32), freeway construction, infrastructure investment, housing policy, public procurement, and code enforcement are some examples of such policies. Government has a duty to eradicate disparities, address harm, and transform the systems that created them.

People and Communities Must Be Centered in Buildings Policy. Shifting the focus of discussions about buildings and sustainability to their implications for people leads to better results. Successfully incorporating equity into buildings policy requires a holistic, people-centered approach.

It Is Important to Honor and Reconnect to Cultural Practices. Drawing on anthropological, earth systems, and Afroindigenous principles and practices can alter harmful and inequitable policymaking approaches. Honoring the rich planning and design practices that are part of BIPOC ancestry can begin to shift power and open up possibilities for progress.

Identify a Bold Vision and Build Broad Constituencies of Support. There has been an awakening in local governments about the harms of inequality, the imperative for racial justice, and the urgency of addressing climate change. Many jurisdictions have elected mayors, city council members, and other local leaders on boldly progressive platforms. Policies that align with equitable and progressive values have the potential to resonate with a wide range of people, garner their support, inspire big, necessary changes, and be given priority by these elected officials.

Local Government Has a Duty to Be Intentional About Impacts. As Tamara Toles O'Laughlin pointed out at the [NAACP Centering Equity in the Sustainable Building Sector](#) launch summit, "Sustainability without equity is sustaining inequities." All climate policies have impacts on communities – on income inequality, economic opportunities, housing affordability, health, and resilience. Policymakers must intentionally prioritize equity and understand the direct and indirect impacts of their decisions in order to avoid exacerbating harm through unintended consequences. Diligence and intention are key to creating the equitable future that local governments and communities say they want.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

◈ Why integrate equity into buildings policies?

◈ Who will be involved in creating a why statement for the work?

◈ Where has the local government or a department already made statements about the purpose of equity work and policy?

Sustainability without equity is *sustaining* inequities.

3. WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY EQUITY

What do we mean when we say equity? This is a question that is best addressed in local contexts and in partnership with communities that have borne the brunt of disparities in resources, opportunities, and power. Investing some time in exploring the issues and creating a definition is an important part of doing equity work.

Common themes and important elements for local governments and departments to consider when defining equity with respect to their local work include:

Lead With Race. Racial disparities are consistent and prevalent, and racial inequities have been perpetuated by both government systems and cultural bias. Addressing racial equity improves outcomes for other marginalized groups and builds capacity to address other forms of inequality. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity discusses this further in their document Why Lead With Race? For buildings specifically, leading with race is critical to address the impact that a long history of redlining and other racist real estate development and housing practices has had on building stocks. While it is important to lead with race, this does not mean race should be discussed exclusively. Other factors such as socioeconomic status and gender are important to consider and often intersect with race.

Be Clear About Different Types of Equity. USDN's definition distinguishes between procedural, distributional, structural and intergenerational forms of equity. Equity definitions from other leading organizations are clear about the differences between individual, cultural, and institutional contributors to inequity. It is helpful to distinguish between equitable process and equitable outcomes.

Reconcile Harms and Prioritize Reparations for Restorative Justice. It is not enough to just avoid doing harm to BIPOC communities. Avoiding harm is critical and requires taking a broad view of potential impacts and unintended consequences. However, that too is not sufficient. Advancing equity requires creating benefits to correct disparities, starting with those that impacted communities have identified as the ones they most urgently want ameliorated. These benefits and positive outcomes should pave the way for the creation of new systems and structures in which all communities can thrive.

Understand and Shift Power. Understanding power structures is key to advancing equity. Understanding who has power, how power is exercised (including how power is exercised invisibly), and shifting power by making historically marginalized voices and values central in decision making should be at the core of efforts to achieve equity. Empowering communities can make possible stronger coalitions for implementation and policy passage because priorities will be aligned with their needs.

Promote Interdepartmental Collaboration and Crosscutting Approaches. Multiple policy areas affect the built environment and overlap with building policies, including housing, public health, and economic development. Since the problems in these areas are connected, the solutions cannot be siloed: addressing equity will require working across departments to identify issues and strategies. Achieving positive outcomes for one policy may conflict with another policy or department's approach to solving the same or interconnected issues. Policies can sustain inequities through a complex web of rules or actions, or they can present opportunities to advance equitable outcomes. In order to advance equity, local governments may have to stop some existing practices in addition to advancing new approaches.

Understand That Equity Is a Practice. There is no simple formula for shifting power, correcting inequitable systems, eradicating disparities, and repairing harm. Advancing equity requires ongoing learning and practice to ask different questions to help see the world differently. Equity requires new professional competencies and new interventions as well as different outcomes. Learning new competencies and policy areas takes time and patience, but it can pay off by providing opportunities for advancing building energy policy that would not have been available otherwise.

Acknowledge That Equity Is Contextual. Equity is not a cut and paste concept. The causes and effects of inequity must be sorted out locally. Local governments can learn from one another, but there is no substitute for working out solutions in collaboration with each, distinct impacted community.

DENVER'S CLIMATE ACTION TASK FORCE EQUITY DEFINITION

Denver's Climate Action Task Force defines equity in part as, "addressing broken systems connected to racial injustice and historical inequity." In 2020, the task force fleshed out the equity definition and used it to ensure that equity was the central consideration in any proposed climate actions and win support from voters for a new tax to fund climate work. Page 4 of the task force's recommendations report includes this equity definition:

"The pursuit of equity happens in several ways. Government has historically excluded people of color, Native Americans, and under-resourced communities from decision-making processes, so it is critical that processes to make decisions about policies and programs are inclusive and fair. In addition, the benefits or burdens of policies, programs or investments have not always been fair or shared equitably across our City. Looking closely at those impacts and making future corrections is critical. Finally, equity is also about understanding historical patterns of discriminatory action and correcting for those injustices today."

USDN EQUITY DEFINITION

Equity in sustainability incorporates procedures, the distribution of benefits and burdens, structural accountability, and generational impact

This includes:

Procedural Equity -- inclusive, accessible engagement and representation in processes to develop or implement sustainability programs and policies

Distributional Equity -- sustainability programs and policies result in fair distributions of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community, prioritizing those with highest need

Structural Equity -- sustainability decision-makers institutionalize accountability; decisions are made with a recognition of the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that have routinely advantaged privileged groups in society and resulted in chronic, cumulative disadvantage for subordinated groups

Transgenerational Equity -- sustainability decisions consider impacts and don't result in unfair burdens on future generations

GUIDING QUESTIONS

◇ What do you mean when you say equity? What are the critical elements of your equity definition?

◇ What has the local government, or local government departments, said about equity? Are there existing definitions to work with?

◇ Who will be involved in creating an equity definition that guides your work?

◇ What sources will you draw on?

   ◇ Sources could include statements based on lived experience or reports from local community groups. Additional resources are cited throughout this framework and compiled in the Appendix (page 54).

◇ How will other people use and begin to understand your equity definition?

4. PREPARING TO DO EQUITY WORK

In addition to creating a why statement and a definition for equity, a sustainability department or team can prepare to do good equity work in other ways, including the following:

Assess Readiness. Taking stock of current practices and capacities within the department or team can help identify strengths and weaknesses to address as the equity work moves forward. Create a readiness assessment tailored to a specific why statement and equity definition. (See examples of readiness assessments in the reference section of this document.)

> During the Equity and Buildings workshop participants completed a brief readiness assessment exercise to contextualize their local government's existing work on equity and buildings. Readiness assessments require time, effort and introspection from many staff members within a local government. While the workshop exercise may be a helpful way to begin exploring this topic, it is highly recommended to customize and complete a deeper readiness exercise using the documents in the Appendix (page 54) as a starting place.

Build Capacity. Undertake foundational training to create a shared understanding of the concepts and practices that will be integral to the department's equity work. Identify ways to support ongoing learning and the development of new professional competencies necessary to advance equity. Invest in internal capacity and leadership development for BIPOC staff at all levels to support buildings and equity work. (See USDN's Equity Foundations training.)

Center Marginalized Voices. Research and explore the perspectives of BIPOC communities and other historically marginalized voices. Take time to seek out and discuss what has already been said or written by impacted communities, locally and more broadly. Develop an understanding of the history of systemic racism and inequity in your communities through the perspectives of impacted communities. (See Section 6 of Part I for more on understanding community vision and priorities.)

Articulate Power, Permission, and Authority. Understanding and shifting power is at the heart of equity work. Take time to map out the specific power the department or specific leaders have to make decisions on equity. Key questions include: What can you do? What do you have to do? What do you have authority to do? What do you have permission to do? What do you have the power or influence to shift or affect? How would other departments answer these questions? Being able to articulate how decisions get made and who has power will help local government staff and community partners design workable equity strategies.

Identify Funding and Resources to Support Equity Work. Equity is not free. Local governments in North America have spent hundreds of years and billions of dollars contributing to current inequities. Undoing that will require resources. Prepare to do good equity work by identifying funding or staffing resources that can be dedicated to the work. (See Part III on page 49 of this document for more information.)

Plan for Interdepartmental Coordination. Integrating equity into buildings work will require coordinating across departments. Communities may feel confused and experience engagement fatigue when interacting with many different departments with different definitions of and approaches to the built environment. In many cases, sustainability departments may not have authority to implement policies affecting the built environment and so collaboration can be crucial.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

The following compilation of other agencies that sustainability departments may want to work with is based on the research team's discussions with communities that have recently collaborated to develop building decarbonization plans, adaptation strategies for buildings, and standards for rental housing.

Department	Authority	Intersection With Critical Issues (See Part II)
Housing	• Works with and may directly manage affordable housing in the jurisdiction • Supports housing planning across the community and collects and holds relevant data on demographics • May have strong connections to landlords and tenants	• Housing affordability • Gentrification and displacement • Funding
Economic Development	• Supports workforce development efforts in the jurisdiction • May have strong connections to unions and other labor organizations • Identifies and supports small businesses • Could have data on or help strategize about contractor and workforce needs to support retrofits	• Economic inclusion • Funding
Buildings Department	• Issues permits for existing buildings and major rehabilitation projects • Inspects existing buildings and rental units • Has responsibility for code enforcement	• Health • Energy burden • Resilience to disaster and disruption
Planning and Zoning	• Conducts development reviews for new construction • Oversees long-term planning for land use, development, and zoning • Can negotiate development bonuses related to priority issues	• Housing affordability • Energy burden • Gentrification and displacement • Resilience to disaster and disruption

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

Emergency Management	• Oversees hazard mitigation planning and funding • May work with Community Emergency Response Teams that respond to extreme events • May have data on completed retrofits for hazards (e.g., flooding) and prevalence of insurance (e.g., renters' and hazard)	• Health • Resilience to disaster and disruption • Funding
Health and Human Services	• Collects data on community health indicators • May oversee existing healthy buildings programming or relevant communications (e.g., lead removal and asthma prevention)	• Health • Resilience to disaster and disruption • Funding
Communications	• May already regularly communicate with community leaders or have community-based ambassadors • May have experience with translation and culturally-competent communications	• Cultural recognition, identity, and tradition
Race and Equity, Human Rights, Diversity and Inclusion, Community Benefits (various names)	• Promotes prioritizing racial and social justice practices internally and in outreach and civic engagement • May manage community equity funds • Develops guidance or action plans for addressing systemic racism and injustices within the jurisdiction	• All issues

In many local governments across the country, departments are beginning to collaborate on crosscutting issues. For example, in Portland, Oregon, staff from local sustainability and housing departments coordinate monthly to discuss actions they are taking related to anti-displacement. There is also an effort underway to coordinate these discussions with more departments and with collaborators at the county level.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Inequity is an extraordinarily complex phenomenon. Deeply layered, interconnected systems work over time to produce disparities in health, income, influence, housing affordability, living conditions, mobility, cultural recognition, power, and access to opportunities. Advancing equity usually requires prioritizing issues and managing tradeoffs. For example, it may require deciding whether to prioritize jobs, building infrastructure to support future electric vehicle parking, or providing access to energy efficiency incentives. Or, it may require deciding how to balance improved living conditions, better health outcomes, energy efficiency, and utility bill savings.

People who bear the burdens of inequity should guide the decisions about what specific equity outcomes are given priority in any particular building policy or program. The needs and concerns of impacted communities should shape equity goals and strategies. Policies and strategies should be specifically accountable to these communities.

While the following guidance is focused on local governments' engagement with community members around policy or programs, local governments should build relationships and be in conversation with residents about equity goals and their priorities even before policy design or development begins. (See Sections 2, 3, and 6 of Part I.) Building trust and relationships takes dedicated time and maintenance outside of planning processes. The USDN Nexus project, which focuses on helping local governments shift power to impacted communities and act to advance the nexus of equity, climate mitigation, and resilience, emphasizes this point by outlining a cyclical process which should be central to all relationship-building and planning.

This framework document provides only a high-level outline of some critical elements of community engagement. The Appendix on page 54 lists additional sources of guidance and support.

WHY – Sometimes local governments initiate community engagement activities without first clarifying the purpose of the engagements. There should be no question about whether or not to engage about equity: it is an imperative. But if the only purpose of engagement is to get it done, then the measures of success will be only whether or not something happened and will be insufficient.

In general, the underlying purpose of community engagement is to meaningfully shape policy decisions so they better address equity, while also shifting power so that future decisions are made in the same way.

Having a clear purpose for engagement determines who is to be given priority and how the process is to be conducted. Having a clear purpose informs decisions about timing and resource allocation and, most importantly, establishes the basis for measuring success.
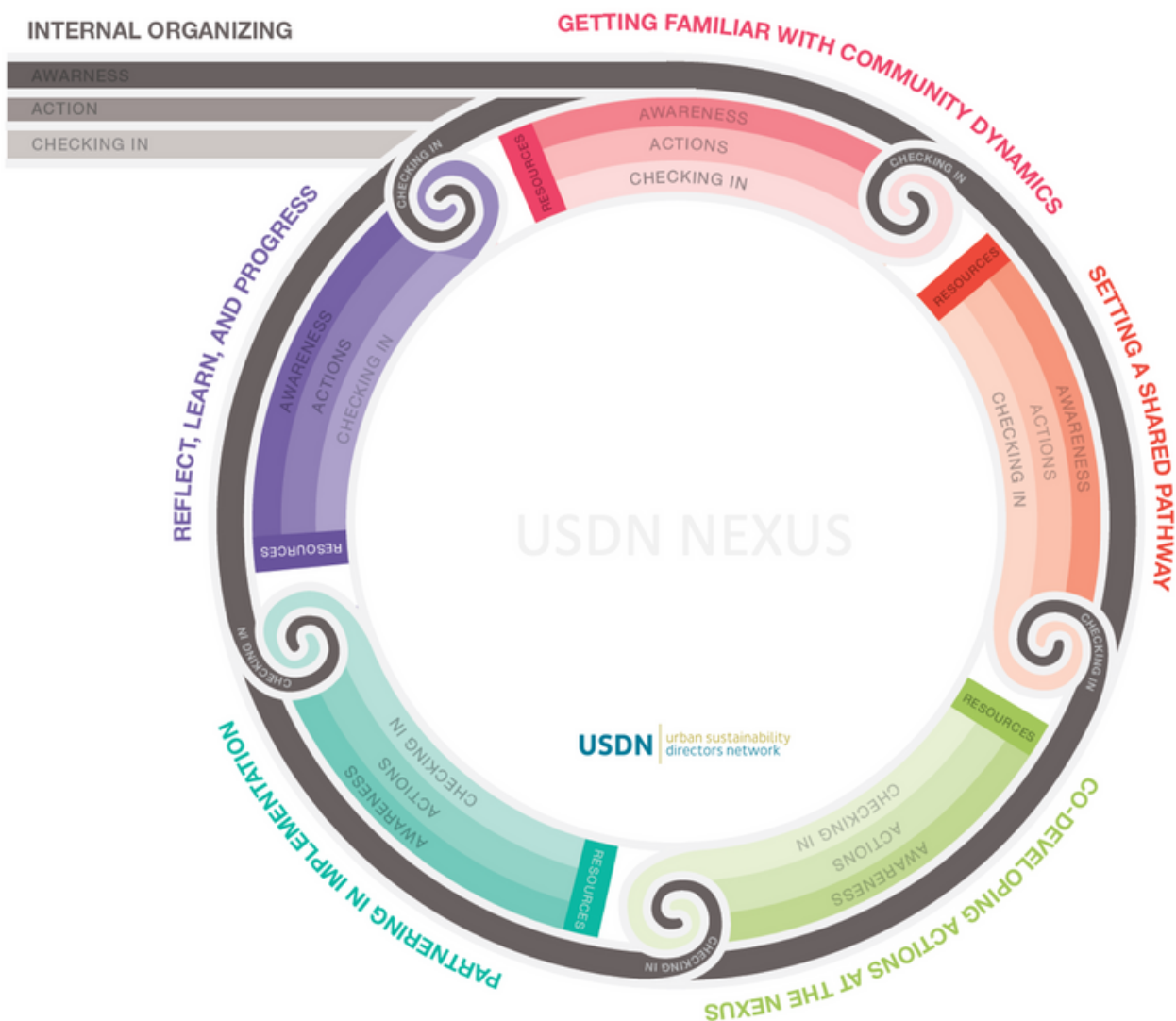
Here are some of the reasons that local governments engage communities in the process of designing and implementing equitable building policies or programs:

- To elevate and learn from the unique expertise, perspectives, and strategies of communities that have lived with inequity. These communities have perspectives and experience that are often not found in abundance among local government staff.
- To better understand how proposed policy might create unintended consequences in the lives of people who already bear the burden of disparities in health, wealth, opportunity, safety, or stability
- To shift power to historically marginalized voices to correct disparities in influence and outcomes that perpetuate inequities
- To build relationships and increased capacity for collaboration on more complex policy decisions in the future
- To substantively address a community's concerns and needs in order to garner support for bold policies
- To achieve just transition objectives, such as collaborative solidarity, racial equity, climate and environmental justice, energy democracy, an equitable economy, community

WHO – Decide who to engage and how to prioritize certain communities, groups, or leaders for engagement.

- In general, people in communities that have been disproportionately negatively affected by and historically marginalized in decision making should be the highest priority for engagement.
- Some local governments and states have created data-driven definitions of these communities. See, for example, the California Public Utilities Commission's definition of ESJ Communities or San Diego's communities of concern. Seattle and other local governments have created a social vulnerability index and maps.
- Established CBOs and community leaders usually know specific people and organizations better than local government staff. Early conversations or collaboration with key leaders can help identify other critical community members to engage.
- Stakeholder mapping or power-mapping exercises (see page 20 of the linked document) can help identify groups and further understanding of how they are affected, how much influence they have historically had, and how they relate to issues and to each other.
- For equitable buildings work, consider not only tenants, housing rights, and affordable housing groups but also people who work on health, economic inclusion, racial justice, and community organizing.

> **"Don't let perfect be the enemy of not doing engagement and relationship building at all. Acknowledge where you are and the power you have. "**
>
> - City Sustainability Professional

HOW – Engagement strategies and processes should be designed based on the overall purpose and the specific needs of the people or groups involved. The Spectrum of Engagement to Ownership is a particularly useful tool for understanding how some approaches shift power and build capacity for collaboration and community leadership while others reinforce disparities in influence and outcomes. Here are some high-level takeaways about how engagement activities can advance equity. They should:

- distinguish between traditional community engagement practices and community-driven planning and authentic community partnerships or collaboration. Traditional community engagement practices are insufficient for the level of authentic community leadership and partnership needed to support equitable buildings work.

- think creatively about traditional engagement. What are the best ways to build relationships, learn, and meaningfully integrate community priorities into the policy under consideration?
- partner with CBOs to design and implement new engagement processes.
- hire facilitators that are trusted by the community and have experience with local government-community collaborations.
- compensate people for their time and expertise. Community members can be much more valuable than outside consultants in designing effective engagement and providing advice on policy. They should be paid accordingly.

WHEN – Start planning for community engagement as early as possible. Sustain engagement from the beginning to the end of policy or program design.

- The earlier community engagement begins, the better. The community itself should be involved in planning for community engagement. Identify key partners or contract with community leaders to create an engagement plan.
- Engage throughout, including in goal setting, policy or program design, implementation, evaluation, and revising, adapting, and updating policies.
- Follow through on ideas that have emerged from engagement. Be transparent about how engagement influenced the policymaking process and where decisions were shaped or improved by the community. People's energy and capacity for engagement dissipates when they do not see their input shaping decisions or their recommendations being implemented.

WHAT – Here are some critical components of a [community engagement strategy](#):

- An engagement plan. This is a written strategy that lays out the why, who, how, and when of engagement. The plan should include success metrics related to the purpose that will show how engagement resulted in different decisions, outcomes, relationships, and power dynamics.
- A budget for community engagement that aligns with the purpose and the scale of the policy.
- A clear and transparent decision-making process that indicates who has the authority to make final decisions about policy and how other members of local government, members of the community, and other stakeholders have the ability to shape decisions.
- An accountability process that tracks engagement activities, gathering information about how plans are being implemented, whether goals are being met, and how the community's investment of time and expertise has shaped outcomes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How will engagement change decisions and outcomes?

- Which people, organizations, and neighborhoods are priorities for engagement? Who is closest to the problem? Who is experiencing the worst outcomes because of inequitable systems, both past and present?

- Why would community leaders want to engage with the local government on this issue? What might they want to get out of it? Who can help answer these questions?

- How will engagement shift power to correct disparities in influence and voice?

- What information will help determine who might be affected by a policy, negatively or positively?

- What power and authority does your organization have in the city's policy process for buildings? Has that information been disclosed and shared with community partners?

- Are there key organizations or leaders who can help shape an engagement plan?

- What is the earliest opportunity to begin discussing with people from impacted communities the policy or plans for engagement?

- What is the budget for community engagement? Is it sufficient? What additional resources can be secured?

- Who are the community engagement experts in the local government? How can they be brought into forming and executing an engagement plan? Who are the community engagement experts in the community? How can they be brought into forming and executing an engagement plan?

- Are other city departments already engaging community members and CBOs? How can local governments coordinate the engagement of these groups or otherwise ensure that these groups are not overextended or in an extractive relationship with the city?

> **"Enthusiasm for engagement dissipates when people don't see their recommendations being implemented or implemented how they would like."**
>
> - Ansha Zaman, Policy Coordinator Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy (CEED)

6. UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY EQUITY PRIORITIES, NEEDS, DEFINITIONS, AND VISION

Meaningful community engagement is essential to fully understanding community priorities and to designing and implementing building policies or programs that advance equity in accordance with those priorities. However, local government staff should not start at zero and expect members of impacted communities to bear the full responsibility of educating staff. Local government staff can work to better understand community needs and equity priorities on their own in preparation for doing so, eventually, in partnership with communities.

Explore issues in data and maps. Local government staff should have a baseline understanding of racial and social disparities among people affected by their policy decisions. Most staff will have access to census data, academic studies, community-led research, and other information that begin to sketch out the issues facing BIPOC communities or other communities of concern. Greenlink Equity Map (GEM) and other third-party platforms provide maps that illustrate the geographic distribution of disparities within individual jurisdictions.

Conduct root cause analysis and examine the history of inequity. Move from a simple view of current conditions to a more sophisticated understanding of how current inequities were created over time. Identify systemic issues and key factors – especially government policy or decisions – that have led to current conditions and reinforce negative outcomes and power imbalances. Many local governments are exploring historical practices such as redlining, land-use decisions, and policy incentives for things such as solar energy to better understand how policies, even well-intentioned climate policies, contribute to injustice. Read through existing reports, research, and statements from local community groups and refer to their work in the community engagement process to show a commitment to understanding the community's priorities and root causes of inequities.

Begin engagement from an informed place. Collaborate with the community. Respect community expertise. Local government staff and communities can work together to develop a shared understanding of equity issues and priorities. A facilitated process that brings together the local government and communities to look at data and maps, while also sharing narratives about lived experience and history, can lay a foundation of mutual understanding for collective action on building and equity policy. (See for example, the _GEM Process Guide for City-Community Partnerships_ and the _Community-Driven Climate Resilience Planning_ framework of the National Association of Climate Resilience Planners.) This shared understanding will inform community engagement throughout the program and policy development process.

CASE EXAMPLE

The Canadian Urban Sustainability Practitioners is a coalition of 17 Canadian jurisdictions that developed an analytical mapping tool to unpack the complexities of energy poverty in Canada. CUSP's stated goal is to use this data to inform climate action plans and energy programs and leave "no one behind in the low carbon transition." Work is proceeding through a series of local coalitions, which include governments and other local organizations. The free tool is available along with a webinar to guide the application of the data in local contexts. The group has used the data from the tool to develop a research report that illustrated that Canadian immigrants, Indigenous communities, and households of color disproportionately experience energy poverty, controlling for income and other factors.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the priorities of people and communities that bear disproportionate burdens of negative impacts?

- What problem is the policy or program under consideration intended to address? Has The 5 Whys Exercise or another root cause analysis been used to explore the issue?

- What data sources, reports, or mapping resources can help illuminate equity issues in your local context? What data, information, or maps have been produced or used by BIPOC communities to describe issues and priorities in the built environment?

- How can local government staff gain a better understanding of the history of inequity in the jurisdiction? What materials would help? What kinds of discussions or learning opportunities can be organized?

- How can local government staff and people from impacted communities look at data together? In what ways does the data align with and reflect the experience of community members? In what ways do the data and people's own narratives about equity conflict?

- How can an understanding of equity issues and priorities in BIPOC communities help shape equity goals and strategies in sustainable buildings policy?

7. SETTING POLICY GOALS AND SUCCESS METRICS

Perhaps the most important and frequently overlooked step in integrating equity into building policy and programs is including it as a coequal goal in written policy. Too often, equity is only considered after policy is formulated and approved, relegating it to an implementation concern where it competes with other priorities for attention and resources. If equity commitments are included in policy statements, sometimes they are vague and immeasurable, resulting in a lack of clear outcomes. Often equity is treated as an add-on or side dish to the emissions and climate policy entrée.

Equity goals should be:

EXPLICIT	Equity goals should be explicitly stated throughout the text of building policy. Background reports on and prior local government commitments to equity can inform and equity priorities should be woven throughout goals statements and policy provisions.
SPECIFIC	Equity goals must be specific, define terms, reference data, and be clear about how success will be measured. A commitment to tangible equity outcomes should be reflected in the strategies, resource allocation, and measurement approaches throughout the policy.
COEQUAL	Equity goals need to have, at least, the same importance as other policy goals, such as emissions reductions. Establishing equity goals as coequal will help direct implementation and resources and ensure that outcomes are achieved. History has demonstrated that when equity is not a top priority, attention wanes, resources are diverted, and outcomes fail to materialize.

A critical part of the process of establishing equity goals is determining how success will be measured. Staff, elected officials, and others are more easily held accountable to explicit goals. Specific goals may lend themselves to specific key performance indicators with underlying metrics. Coequal goals receive coequal resources for data collection and evaluation as well as prominent attention in progress reports.

Equity policy goals are ideally co-created with the communities that are most affected and flow from community engagement and an understanding of community equity needs and priorities. Community members should be a part of measuring success. Local government staff and community partners can identify the most relevant metrics, that is, those that are about effectiveness rather than just quantity (e.g., how many information sessions were conducted). Further, they can design a plan for analyzing data together to determine how a policy is performing against its goals. In Seattle, a group of community members reviewed and provided detailed recommendations for revisions to the city's Equity & Environment Agenda. The city continues to work collaboratively with its Environmental Justice Committee to review progress and align the agenda with emerging community priorities.

Adjusting and adapting policy and programs is an integral part of the implementation and evaluation process. There is often not sufficient transparency around this process. This is a phase in which the power to shape outcomes operates invisibly, sometimes unnoticed by the very staff making adjustments.

Establishing a collaborative process for evaluating policy for equity outcomes and being transparent about the adjustments required to improve outcomes will help achieve equity by shifting power, refining approaches, and producing better equity outcomes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

⟡ What are the equity goals of your local government and how can these inform equity goals for a particular building policy? How are these shaped by engagement with the community and a shared understanding of community needs and priorities?

⟡ Are equity goals being written into policy so that they are explicit, specific, and coequal to other policy goals?

⟡ How will progress on the equity goals be measured? What metrics will be used? What is the plan for data collection? How and when will the local government, staff, and community leaders come together to look at the data and evaluate progress?

⟡ How will your local government show the community that its feedback was received, heard, and incorporated?

⟡ How will progress on equity be reported?

⟡ How will the measurement of success shape the way policies are revised or implemented? How will the community participate in those decisions?

CRITICAL ISSUES AT THE INTERSECTION OF EQUITY AND SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

HOW TO USE PART II:

Unlike Parts I and III of this document, the subsections in Part II can be used independently of each other. We encourage readers to examine the key questions in each subsection and to delve more deeply into the content of their primary areas of focus by using the hyperlinks in the Appendix on page 54 of this document.
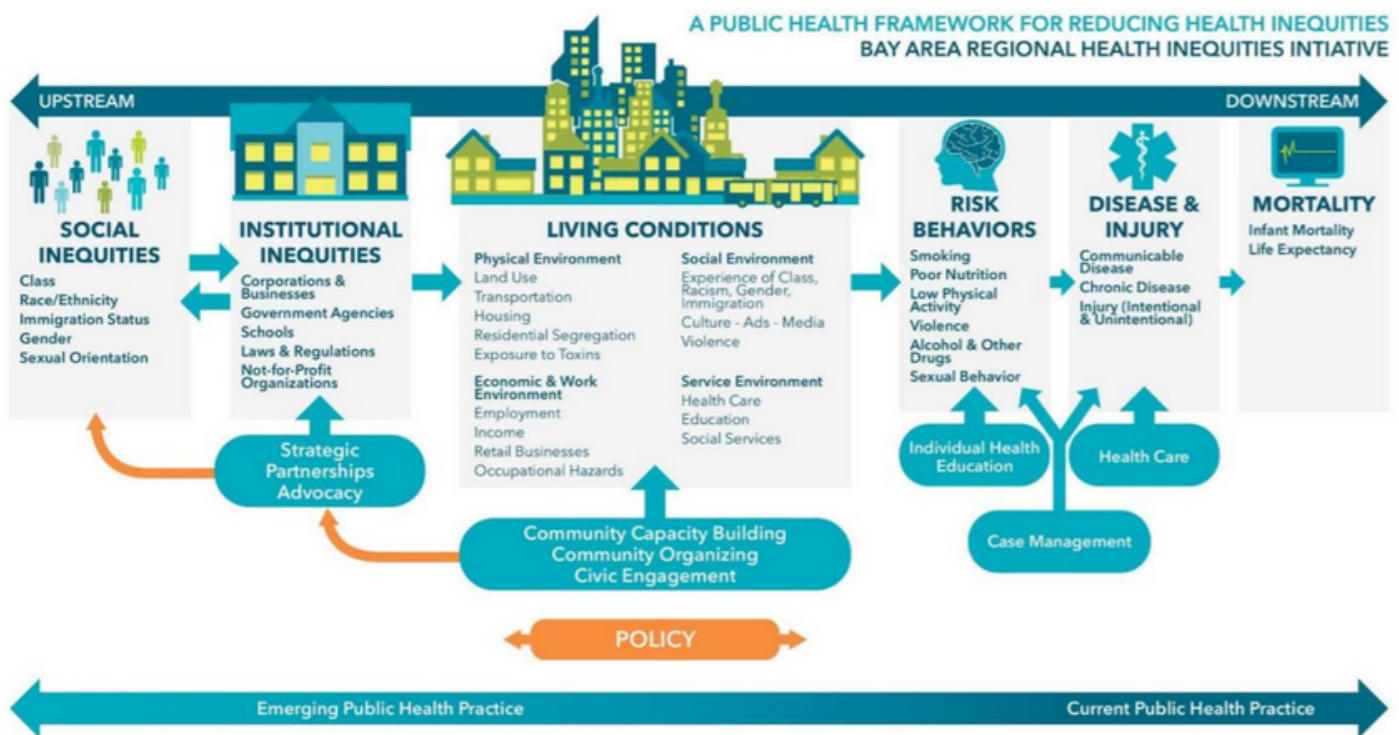
Figure 1: The Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative, the BARHII Framework.
Graphic by the California Department of Health Equity.

Buildings touch many aspects of our daily lives – we work, go to school, and rest within the built environment. Using a people-centered approach in thinking about the future of the built environment will uncover crosscutting issues because buildings are deeply interconnected with our modern lives. These systems-level realities mean that related challenges require interdisciplinary approaches and collaborations, which cross fields, institutions, and sectors. For example, displacement is related to economic forces, social cohesion, and cultural respect. Understanding these dynamics in partnership with the community can help shape future policies and define solutions that are equitable.

Advancing progress in the built environment goes beyond sustainability departments and provides an opportunity to explore how other departments, such as housing, mobility, and workforce development, frame issues and how they might work together. In the same way that there are opportunities to incorporate equity goals and outcomes into policies designed for sustainability, there may also be opportunities to incorporate climate goals and outcomes into housing, economic development, and other policies designed to provide benefits to impacted communities. The following sections discuss issue areas in the built environment in which it is crucial to make equity the central focus, program and policy design questions to consider for practitioners, and examples of local leadership throughout the U.S. and Canada.

8. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Local governments and states across the country are experiencing housing and energy crises as a result of high housing prices, limited affordable supply, and stagnant low wages. Stable housing and energy justice are high-stakes priorities for many jurisdictions, both small and large, and within and outside of booming real estate markets.

In 2017, almost half of all renters and a quarter of homeowners in the U.S. were housing cost burdened or severely housing cost burdened. That meant that they spent more than 30 percent (burdened) or 50 percent (severely burdened), of their incomes on rent or mortgage payments. In addition, more than one-third of the entire country – 38 percent of all households in the U.S. – are energy burdened or severely energy burdened, meaning they pay more than 6 percent of their income, and sometimes double or triple that, for energy costs such as electricity and gas service.

Renters are particularly vulnerable to the housing and energy affordability crisis, and are severely harmed by policies regulating the built environment even though they often have little influence or voice in setting those policies. A third of all U.S. households are renters, and the majority of people of color are renters, compared with about 25 percent of white people. Low-income households, which are more likely to be families of color, spend more than three times the portion of their income on energy costs than middle- and high-income households. Bearing high energy cost burdens mean households are forced to

make difficult tradeoffs and critical needs, such as food, medicine, and transportation go unmet so that utility bills are paid. The constant stress caused by these cost burdens negatively affects physical and mental health over time. The households experiencing these extreme cost burdens are disproportionately Black, Latinx, and Native American.

For 20 years, the rising cost of renting has outpaced renters' incomes and now not a single state has adequate housing for low-income households. Many large metropolitan areas also lack adequate middle-income housing. (See box below for more details on categories of housing.) Without rent control, just-cause eviction policies, and other key tenant protections (which are outlawed in many jurisdictions and states), building and sustainability policies can make affordability issues worse, and may not benefit the existing residents for whom they were designed.

It is critical to address housing affordability for BIPOC communities because of the continuing impacts of systemic racist policies, such as redlining and federal divestment from affordable housing. As described in the Zero Cities Racial Equity Assessment Tool, redlining denied "key services (such as home loans and insurance) or increased their costs for residents in a defined geographical area... [and were] used to keep communities of color locked into particular areas. FHA manuals often encouraged homeowners and brokers to avoid letting People of Color into neighborhoods, warning that it would bring down the value of surrounding

homes." The economic impact of these policies which "systematically shut [particularly Black people] out of wealth-generating momentum of the heavily-subsidized housing [ownership] market" means families of color, particularly Black, Indigenous, and Latinx households, are disproportionately struggling to afford housing. This has direct repercussions, reducing access to quality education and services, and increasing exposure to environmental hazards. Further exacerbating the injustices, the supply of affordable housing has been declining over the last several decades, due to the simultaneous reduction of federal investments and market pressures.

There is a need for adequate funding and accessible financing for sustainability and building improvements that do not require burdened households to contribute upfront funds. To put this issue in context, almost half of Americans surveyed in 2013 noted they would not be able to meet an unanticipated $400 expense, even to cover an emergency. Solutions for financing should include options that work for small-scale building owners and tenants who cannot put money down. There are also critical differences between mom and pop owners of rental properties and corporate owners. Owners of one or a few properties, or owners who live on site, have very different access to income than corporate owners. This difference is particularly key for households in units that are affordable but unregulated. (See box below.) It is also key where large areas of single family homes were bought up for rent by corporate landlords after the 2008 economic crash.

Well-designed financing is also critical for addressing energy burden. Utilities and local governments have created many energy-efficiency assistance programs in recent years. However, many well-intentioned programs were not designed to meet the needs of the lowest income residents who would benefit most. Instead, programs ended up benefiting wealthier households. The most impactful, equitable programs reduce energy burden by getting assistance to those who need it most, using equity indicators to understand the needs and geographies of communities. This data can be obtained from resources such as Greenlink Analytics' Equity Map, the U.S. Department of Energy's Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool, and the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. These resources help practitioners understand who is energy burdened and should inform how resources are distributed so that policies provide relief that can directly improve many peoples' lives and do not increase costs for low-income customers.

Different types of housing units, whether they are rented or owned and whether they are managed by the government, private companies, or nonprofits, can be considered affordable, or unaffordable. Policies affect each type of housing differently, depending on how the housing is operated.

Regulated affordable housing, also called "deed-restricted" or just "affordable housing"

- ❥ Housing that is operated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or a local government and are financed with state or federal housing subsidies that have affordability restrictions is considered deed-restricted. Public housing is directly funded by the state and federal government. These properties are managed by local housing authorities.

- ❥ Private affordable housing can be developed by either nonprofit or for-profit developers using state and federal funding in the form of grants, bonds, and tax credits. These properties have affordability restrictions and tenants pay a subsidized rent that is either a percentage of their income or a set rate, usually based on area median income, which is sometimes problematic.

- ❥ Rent-controlled housing are units that are subject to local laws that limit rent increases, usually to between 2 and 3 percent per year, for ongoing tenants. Most jurisdictions do not have laws that prevent rent increases for a unit when it changes hands.

Unregulated affordable housing, also called "naturally-occurring" affordable housing

- ❥ These units make up most of the affordable housing units across the country. They are not regulated by the government, either through rent control or provision of subsidies, and are most at risk of being sold quickly for profit by owners who, taking advantage of rising housing prices, increase rents, and evict tenants.

- ❥ There are no affordability restrictions for these units. However, they are considered affordable usually because they are of low quality, lack amenities, or are neglected. Renters in these units include those with government housing choice (Section 8) vouchers.

- ❥ During housing crises or real estate market booms, these affordable units are the ones that most rapidly turn unaffordable as developers and owners seek to increase profits by taking advantage of new policies in a jurisdiction, amenities, or other strategies.

Extensive work examining and mapping energy burden by the local government and community partners in Atlanta has shaped approaches to energy and buildings policy by the city and utilities. Metro Atlanta has the fourth highest energy burden in the U.S. The Partnership for Southern Equity has used energy burden maps to focus policy engagement and energy education work in high-burden neighborhoods. A coalition pressed for Georgia Power to use the city's energy burden maps to inform two low-income efficiency pilot projects. The data is expected to support targeted outreach and assistance to property owners in need. Future iterations of the program are expected to target rental properties. The City of Atlanta has made addressing energy burden a focus of its 100% clean energy plan. Cincinnati, Ohio has also applied energy burden mapping to stand up new energy efficiency programs for residential landlords and tenants in partnership with their local utility.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is the relationship between building improvements, such as sustainability or safety upgrades, and affordability? What are the impacts on different types of buildings and the communities that use them?

- How do potential changes to property values affect low- and middle-income renters and businesses?

- How do current and potential policies benefit, support, or otherwise affect the creation or preservation of affordable housing stock?

- How are disparities resulting from past policies, such as redlining, still affecting communities?

- How are improvements, incentives, financing, and other solutions made accessible to those who need them most?

- What affordable housing policies or funds are available in your jurisdiction that could be combined with or leveraged for building decarbonization policies or other sustainability improvements?

- How can we avoid increasing costs on low-income customers as we make the shift from gas to electricity that is necessary for the climate, health, and safety?

- How can energy programs help relieve the critical issue of energy cost burden?

- Who in your jurisdiction is energy burdened and what programs and policies are in place to assist them? What assistance is in place for extreme heat and cold weather? Are these programs reaching and effectively serving vulnerable residents?

- How can energy programs work alongside housing programs to prevent displacement and increasing the housing crisis?

9. GENTRIFICATION & DISPLACEMENT

Policies regulating the built environment directly influence the gentrification of neighborhoods and displacement of residents. Cycles of government investment and disinvestment in cities have helped create the housing and economic crises we see today. Local government has to play a leading role in efforts to solve the problems, for example by ensuring that subsidies are not designed to benefit market-rate developers and that policies do not incentivize building owners to increase rents or initiate evictions.

Increased focus on climate resiliency and sustainability has created new avenues for the development of negative consequences from well- intentioned policies. These negative impacts are sometimes called "green" or "environmental" gentrification. Investments in efforts such as electrification, green spaces, or bike lanes made by local governments may increase the desirability and property values of buildings. These increased property values can attract higher-income residents who seek, and can pay for, the green amenities, and can make the area unaffordable for long-term residents.

Costs might also be raised because of building upgrades, changes in amenities, or increases in market value in surrounding areas. Building requirements, or simply incentives, for building owners can be particularly dangerous for residents, especially renters. For example, building owners who are required to make renovations due to local government policies, e.g., building tune-up ordinances, may use the requirement to make improvements as a reason to evict tenants. This is sometimes called "no-fault" evictions or "renovictions." Then owners increase the rent for new tenants once the project is completed. Another potential danger is that building owners pass the costs of these renovations on to tenants, or they change leases so that utilities are no longer included in rent. Absentee landlords who have neglected their properties may also reappear, take part in building improvements, and take advantage of the opportunity to evict long-term or rent-controlled tenants. Even if tenants are not formally evicted, increases in costs could cause them to be displaced, or informally evicted.

DISPLACEMENT is the involuntary relocation of current residents or businesses from their current locations, because of housing or neighborhood conditions. Displacement can be caused by physical conditions, such as deteriorating building conditions; economic factors, such as rising costs; or cultural factors, such as people choosing to move because their neighbors and culturally related businesses have left the area. Displacement can also be driven by changing climatic conditions. These forces might push households out, or prevent them from moving in, a phenomenon known as "exclusionary displacement."

GENTRIFICATION is the profit-driven influx of capital and higher-income, higher-educated residents into working-class neighborhoods. This reconfigures urban, working-class, and BIPOC communities that have suffered from a history of disinvestment and marginalization.

People and communities that experience displacement and gentrification face [direct detrimental impacts](). In many areas, families are forced to leave the region entirely because of limited affordable housing units. Any move can mean that people are far from necessary services, such as health care, food, social services, schools, faith communities, community centers, and schools. Displaced residents also face health hazards, such as overcrowding, substandard housing, extreme stress and anxiety, and homelessness. When households are displaced, communities lose cohesive political influence as well as the social connections that provide mutual support and build resilience to emergencies and disruptions. Jurisdictions may lose the culture that drew many newcomers to these areas. These impacts have been shown to have long-term negative effects, especially in BIPOC communities, including on mental and physical health, and educational, job, and economic outcomes.

Ultimately, as buildings and neighborhoods change, [protections for current residents are needed that limit cost increases]() and prevent widespread displacement caused by well-intentioned sustainability measures on the part of local government. [Protecting particularly low-income tenants from displacement]() is [key to achieving the climate goals]() of sustainability measures. In addition, protections are critical to ensuring that current residents benefit from public investment in improvements, such as electrification, lower energy bills, better parks, and other amenities.

Critical protections for current residents, especially renters, can be organized into three categories, often referred to as "the Three P's." They are ordered sequentially and build on each other:

- **Protection.** First, policies should ensure that tenants and residents can stay in their homes, even with changes in buildings policy or neighborhood market values. Once households are displaced, it is much more difficult to bring them back and for them to benefit from the upgrades or changes. These protections often take the form of strong rent control, just-cause eviction laws, and ample relocation funds, along with strong local government enforcement.

- **Preservation.** Policies, implemented through regulations, should be put in place to retain housing units as affordable, especially when they are vacated. This increases the supply and stability of affordable units, since units that are vacated are not returned to market value when there is tenant turnover. This can involve the acquisition of properties by land trusts or local government or expanding rent control to newer buildings.

- **Production.** Affordable housing units need to be built alongside those that are acquired by local governments, affordable housing nonprofits, or land trusts. Increased production can also come from local government investments and subsidies directed to increasing the number of affordable units available for extremely low- to middle-income local households.

CASE STUDY

Massachusetts' LEAN Multifamily Program serves housing with five or more units in which a majority of the residents are of low to moderate income. The program is run in coordination with utility incentive programs and provides comprehensive energy-efficiency and renewable upgrades for regulated, for-profit and unregulated affordable housing. To participate in the program, building owners must sign an affordability agreement. This agreement documents deed-restrictions and other affordability provision for the property. For-profit owners must sign an additional 5- or 10-year agreement which commits them to preserve affordable rents as a condition of receiving the incentives.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How can sustainable buildings policies potentially increase the risk of displacement and gentrification?

- How do sustainability improvements increase property values, and what impact does that have on surrounding housing and businesses?

- What protections for current residents can be put in place and how can existing ones be strengthened?

- How are local governments' public investments used to prioritize and serve marginalized communities?

- How can policies that address energy efficiency and housing stability also address habitability and safety issues that tenants may be afraid to report?

- How might your sustainable buildings efforts support and include the Three Ps (above) of Protection, Preservation, and Production?

10. HEALTH

Within the built environment, issues of energy and health are closely interconnected. Substandard housing has been repeatedly linked in research studies to energy insecurity, energy burden, and health hazards. These buildings are concentrated in low-income communities and BIPOC communities. The 2005 American Housing Survey indicated that Black and Latinx communities were two to three times more likely to live in moderately substandard housing, increasing their exposure to mold, asbestos, pest infestations, and other dangers. Research by the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative indicates that substandard housing drives poor health outcomes, which in turn put demands on city resources. Data for African American homes specifically indicates connections between substandard housing and higher levels of stress, mental health problems, asthma, lead poisoning, and other diseases. Investing in healthy building upgrades also reduce the abandonment of large tracts of housing, preserving city tax income.

The built environment can affect people's health at work as well as in their homes.

The WELL Certification, which emerged and gained popularity after the new initial wave of green building certifications, illustrates the link between well-designed, intentional spaces and the mental health and safety of employees. Energy-efficient strategies have been proven to contribute to many non-energy benefits, including health and occupant comfort.

In spite of these connections and even though many buildings are in need of reinvestment for energy, health, and safety measures, energy-efficiency and health funding and programs have remained relatively siloed. Local governments have an opportunity to link energy and health metrics in existing processes, such as inspections. Furthermore, they can adopt policies to formally link these co-benefits to support marginalized communities. For example in Seattle, the local government passed an ordinance to proactively conduct inspections of rental units, incorporating health and safety concerns. Instead of inspections being completed by request, all units in the jurisdiction are inspected every 5 to 10 years. Other communities, such as Los Angeles, are attempting to integrate energy-efficiency assessments into health inspections.

"
"If you invest in healthy housing and healthy building standards, you can lower lead poisoning, improve school performance and lower crime, reducing government spending on these issues over time."

– Ruth Ann Norton, President and CEO, Green and Healthy Homes Initiative

"

CASE STUDY

There have been several pilots and programs across the U.S. designed to connect healthy homes and energy assessments. The environmental consultant VEIC has documented the benefits of these programs and described some of the programs in its [Energy-Plus-Health Playbook](). One such program, Fort Collins, Colorado's healthy homes program, was initiated by the city's sustainability staff, which adapted training by the American Lung Association for use with community volunteers offering cost-free healthy homes assessments. The home assessors identified health and safety hazards and issues connected to occupant comfort, such as adequacy of insulation and air sealing. Residents whose homes were assessed received comprehensive recommendations, no-regrets, low or not cost interventions (e.g., fire alarms and radon test kits), referrals to utility incentive programs, and discounts on future energy audits.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do retrofits and other actions focused on climate mitigation also benefit health (e.g., energy efficiency and improved occupant comfort)?

- How can people who have borne disproportionate burdens of unhealthy buildings and poor health outcomes be given priority in the development of health benefits in green buildings?

- How can local governments deliver these benefits without increasing the housing or energy cost burdens on low- or moderate-income families?

11. ECONOMIC INCLUSION

All climate policies and actions have economic impacts that result in winners and losers. Audit and benchmarking policies as well as building electrification and solar readiness requirements, for example, will create new jobs, while displacing others. Staff should assess the details of a building program or policy for its economic impact on jobs and business opportunities in communities. The impacts on the quantity and quality of jobs and businesses, and most importantly, on equity in the local economy must be considered. Local governments should evaluate whether policy outcomes are equitable or if they maintain or exacerbate a legacy of inequities. Climate investments create enormous economic opportunities. Without being designed intentionally to correct for past and potential future inequities, climate policies will inadvertently perpetuate inequities by reinforcing exclusionary hiring and procurement practices, low-wage jobs, and environmental racism. Nonetheless, the opportunities to support equitable economic outcomes through climate policies are enormous.

Since economic inclusion strategies are not normally within the purview of sustainability offices, interagency collaboration and community engagement will be required to align and leverage a full suite of resources to implement an effective strategy. This collaboration and engagement will entail:

◆ Determining how many jobs and business opportunities are embedded within climate policies and programs and giving priority to those that maximize the co-benefits (i.e., environmental, labor, and community) for local residents

◆ Adopting and implementing high-road labor and community standards for climate initiatives. High-road policies are those that reflect a high level of environmental, labor, and social responsibility. They value quality over cost (i.e., they do not necessarily make minimizing cost the highest priority), and they account for the true cost of providing livable wages, benefits, growth opportunities, quality working conditions, worker and supplier diversity, safety laws and regulations, community engagement, and reparation and investments within low-income, BIPOC communities. For guidance on developing high-road job strategies for building policies, please see the High Road Workforce Guide for City Climate Action developed by the American Cities Climate Challenge and Inclusive Economics.

◆ Formalizing city hiring and procurement policies, protocols, and tools, such as solicitation and bid documents, contracts, and compliance rules within climate projects that reflect the localities' regulatory environment related to union labor and racial inclusion

◆ Enlisting the small business ecosystem within the jurisdiction to train and support workers and contractors for the projected demand and to build clear pathways to high-road career and business opportunities. These pathways should be created particularly for communities underrepresented in the environmental, energy, construction, and other climate-related sectors.

Policies and programs can generate a need for a skilled workforce in a new sector or area of work. For example, policies which require buildings to be audited regularly to support energy efficiency may necessitate a strong contractor base of certified energy auditors. In order to ensure that there is a workforce ready and capable of meeting this demand, it is important to invest in training and pre-apprenticeship programs. After the City of Buffalo received settlement funds from New York State to support weatherization upgrades for homes, the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative partnered with the Center for Employment Opportunities to provide contractor training for both energy-efficiency and health upgrades for buildings. The partnership worked closely with local employers to support job placement and graduates of the program reported increased wages.

In order to support disadvantaged workers and small and minority business owners within the building sector, local governments must embed requirements for diversity, training, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship into building decarbonization strategies and they must ensure follow-through. Furthermore, local governments should give priority to small and minority-owned businesses in requests for proposals and bidding to mitigate the power of big business monopolies. Each local government must understand whether it is in a race-conscious or race-neutral environment when designing these economic inclusion components and addressing the numerous other structural barriers small, disadvantaged businesses face. (In race-neutral state policy environments government agencies are compelled to dismantle race and gender conscious affirmative action programs and policies not required by federal law or federal funding requirements. Race-conscious states allow for the use of some form of racial preferential consideration in contracting, hiring, and college admissions. See Inclusive Procurement and Contracting: Building a Field of Policy and Practice.)

CASE STUDY

California's Building Decarbonization Workforce Needs and Recommendations study found that California building electrification policies will result in more than 100,000 new construction jobs and 4,900 manufacturing jobs annually for 25 years. While these policies will result in many gas extraction and utility jobs being phased out, there is an enormous opportunity to transition both existing and new workers into the decarbonization sector. With adequate policy development, these can be high-road jobs and can benefit BIPOC and low-income communities.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

◆ Will the program or policy maintain the status quo or will it provide a just transition for displaced workers, while also enlisting historically excluded segments of the population in the new economy?

◆ What new demand for workers and contractors will proposed climate policies or actions create? How many jobs? What number, types, and sizes of contracts for goods and services will policies produce?

◆ What skills and qualifications are necessary for the projected jobs, contracting, and business opportunities?

◆ How does the current workforce – in terms of size and demographics – compare with the anticipated demand? What is the gap?

◆ Has the city conducted a disparity study to justify the use of local procurement requirements for minority and women contractors?

◆ What are the barriers faced by under-represented and especially low-income and BIPOC communities to qualifying for opportunities in key sectors of the climate economy? What do they need to qualify?

◆ What, if any, city economic inclusion policies and programs exist that support high-road workforce and procurement standards? Do local programs (e.g., incentives and rebates) require the skills and qualifications necessary to guarantee high-quality retrofits and other energy-related jobs?

◆ What is the capacity of the local workforce and small business ecosystem (e.g., training and technical assistance organizations) to meet labor and business demand?

12. CULTURAL RECOGNITION, IDENTITY, AND TRADITION

As local governments push forward with building decarbonization, it is important to acknowledge that many communities have cultural relationships to land, energy, and shelter that may not fit seamlessly into policy requirements. It is important for leaders and policy developers to ask how they can recognize, acknowledge, and be responsive to these communities' needs and emerging tensions.

Different cultures and communities interact with and use buildings, including technologies and energy, in different ways. Policies and programs should acknowledge and not inadvertently penalize communities for their cultural practices or economic limitations. For example, there have been ongoing debates about the impact of time-of-use rates, which charge customers more for energy use during peak hours to reduce utilities' capacity requirements. In order to get the best pricing, customers are often required to have smart infrastructure, such as advanced meters, smart thermostats, and other technologies that are less likely to be present in BIPOC or low- to moderate-income households. These households may

also have less of an ability to shift load if many people are sharing space within a multigenerational household or working night shifts and spending time at home during the day. The average low-income and BIPOC household consumes less energy than wealthier households, yet they are more likely to live in inefficient housing and experience high energy burdens.

Many local governments are launching building decarbonization policies that prioritize wide-scale building electrification. This includes replacing gas stoves with electric or induction cooktops. While electric and induction stoves are proven to reduce indoor air pollution and other health hazards, many communities are hesitant to get rid of their gas stoves. This is because some traditional dishes simply cannot be cooked the same on induction or electric stoves. In San Francisco, Asian American restaurant owners expressed concerns about the city's gas ban and short compliance period amid the pandemic and said that gas is integral to their culture, food, and business.

> **Simply changing our fuel source and technologies while maintaining our consumption patterns; or harvesting the sun to accumulate wealth for a privileged few are simply new forms of extraction.**
>
> - Emerald Cities Collaborative

As local governments develop policies to encourage electrification and efficiency, they must work with their communities to understand what support their residents need and be culturally competent and inclusive of all socio-cultural traditions that communities practice. In addition to providing information in the preferred language and style of community members and through trusted messengers, local governments may need to address higher priorities families and communities may have, such as leaking roofs and broken furnaces, or legacy issues, such as toxic exposures and housing insecurity. These may have to be addressed before or alongside electrification or efficiency improvements. Other important considerations in transitioning to 100 percent electrified buildings are that some communities (e.g., Indigenous communities) choose to live off the grid. Others have valid concerns about the resilience of their communities when the grid is down. These choices and perspectives have an impact on how people respond to building and energy policies, which is why it is essential to equitably engage community members in the policy process.

More broadly, the Emerald Cities Collaborative's Building Electrification Equity (BEE) Project reminds us of "the opportunity to make a cultural transition, along with a transition to renewable energy sources and smart building technologies." According to BEE, It is not possible to maintain current cultural lifestyles rooted in technological solutions and the commodification and extraction of natural resources and also achieve decarbonization goals by 2050. "Simply changing our fuel source and technologies while maintaining our consumption patterns; or harvesting the sun to accumulate wealth for a privileged few are simply new forms of extraction," the BEE Project report states. It is important to understand and integrate regenerative traditional and cultural values and practices that ensure the longevity of the planet and its resources while making the health and wellbeing of impacted communities central in the development of climate policies.

CASE STUDY

The Empower Me program began in 2012 in British Columbia with a focus on reaching Chinese and South Asian homeowners. The program relied on community mentors who had the language skills and cultural competence to foster connections. Many of the homeowners were not familiar with some of the appliances used in Canada and no one had ever explained to them, in their preferred language, how to improve the health, safety, and efficiency of their home. Since 2012, the program has expanded to support New Canadians, Indigenous communities, and renters in other parts of Canada. According to Statistics Canada, it is expected that immigrants will account for 31 percent of Canada's population in the next 18 years, increasing the importance of programs such as Empower Me.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

◆ How can policies encourage less extractive consumption patterns and make regenerative practices from BIPOC communities central?

◆ Are there alternative compliance pathways, timelines, or subsidies for those who may have conflicting cultural practices?

◆ Has there been consideration of how to maintain traditional cooking (e.g., providing flat-bottom woks for use on induction stoves for Asian cuisines)?

◆ Do program materials and messaging include images of people from different cultural backgrounds, and are they available in multiple languages?

13. RESILIENCE TO DISASTER AND DISRUPTION

Climate change is creating a new set of stressors and challenges for the built environment. Recent events such as COVID-19 and the humanitarian crisis resulting from the 2021 winter storm in Texas have amplified the importance of having comfortable and safe environments to work and live in that are resilient to cascading threats.

Since many were forced to shelter in place in the summer of 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, many people could not get access to traditional emergency services for cooling and were home without air conditioning during heat waves. While many localities responded with actions such as purchasing box fans and window HVAC units on an emergency basis, more holistic approaches to integrate resilience into new and existing buildings will be necessary for transformative change across the built environment. As in the highlighted example above, if utility programs were designed to incorporate resilience into cost-benefit analyses, supplying cooling technologies and interventions would have been prioritized and funded. There could have been year-round support for cooling instead of just when there was an emergency. Incorporating resiliency into cost-benefit analyses should result in efficiency and insulation improvements being viewed as assets to preserving the habitability of buildings during extreme heat and cold and reducing the demands on energy transmission and distribution infrastructure during these critical periods. We encourage local governments to think holistically about the built environment,

seeking opportunities to foster long-term change and protections against climate disruptions. The RetroFIT program in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina provides an example of this style of leadership. It is, as of this writing, the only program in the U.S. to be funded prior to a disaster in order to provide grants for flooding retrofits for small commercial and residential buildings damaged in a disaster. The county uses stormwater fees to support the program.

Innovative projects have successfully incorporated improving resilience and energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewable energy, which benefit landlords, tenants, and the wider community. For example, the Marcus Garvey complex, an affordable housing complex in New York City, did a large retrofit that included adding back-up power for a community center because the community had been vulnerable to brownouts in the summer months. The back-up power provides resiliency in the face of current threats and improves the ability of the building's renewable energy installations to serve residents. The apartment complex also participates in demand-response programs to help provide grid reliability as grid demands are expected to increase with the changing climate. Consideration of current and future climate risks in energy planning is essential to producing climate-adapted, high-performance buildings that will serve communities well for their full lifespans and for projects such as Marcus Garvey to become the norm and not the exception.

CASE STUDY

Washington D.C., in partnership with Enterprise Green Communities and New Ecology, modified the energy audit, a familiar tool for buildings management. They integrated key components for evaluating a building's vulnerability to climate impacts, which include extreme heat and flooding for D.C. The group created an audit protocol for looking at energy-efficiency, renewable energy, and resilience retrofit opportunities simultaneously. The protocol was used in pilots in multifamily housing across the jurisdiction. The audits identified strategies for improving energy and resilience in these buildings. For more information, please see their documentation and case studies.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

➡ How can crisis interventions lay the foundation for positive transformational change?

➡ Where are there opportunities to integrate strengthening resiliency into existing policies for the built environment? Possibilities include audits and facility condition assessments.

➡ What spaces are available in the community if people lose their homes or are temporarily displaced during disasters, and do these spaces provide healthy and safe (both physically and emotionally) environments? How are these emergency shelter resources currently distributed and how else could they be?

➡ What types of support is available for both homeowners and renters to increase resiliency before a disaster occurs? For example, what percentage of renters are covered by insurance and what support exists for resilience retrofits before disasters occur?

PART III

NEXT STEPS

HOW TO USE PART III:

Part III provides resources to support policy and program implementation and to further explore the topics introduced in the framework.

14. FUNDING

Creating and maintaining equity in the decarbonization of the built environment will require a significant level of investment. Local government staff, CBOs, and a variety of other local partners will all require adequate and sustained resources to lead and implement future work. CBOs and other local partners will require sustained investment for capacity-building exercises as well as direct compensation for providing their expertise for program and policy development. In order for these organizations to become long-term partners in policy development, they have to have the financial resources to succeed.

Residents, businesses, and anchor community institutions (e.g. churches, universities, community health providers) will also need support in the form of financing, grants, and other kinds of assistance to be responsive and compliant with new voluntary initiatives, standards, or mandates for buildings. Communities of color, which have been uniquely harmed by historical cycles of disinvestment, will require significant amounts of funding to improve the building stock. Local governments should anticipate that repairing harm will be just as expensive as the building construction or other actions that originally created the impacts – on the order of billions of dollars nationwide.

The authors recognize that they are describing a significant acceleration of funding and resourcing compared with the status quo. However, this investment is necessary to support the interdisciplinary, cross-sector coalition needed to make our buildings sustainable, resilient, and healthy.

There are a number of different avenues for financing this transition. Given the disproportionate harm, indebtedness, and other financial burdens that BIPOC communities in North America bear, we strongly encourage local governments to think about ways to support investment in these communities without creating additional burdens through debt. In addition, supportive programs should be designed such that low- to moderate-income households and BIPOC communities, which may be cash constrained, can get access to rebates, grants, and incentives. The table below illustrates options beyond local government operating budgets that could be leveraged.

These strategies are meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. While there are tradeoffs in and limitations to these individual mechanisms, all will be required to drive change and achieve scale.

OPTIONS	SELECT EXAMPLES
Federal Funding – There are programs in many federal agencies that can be used to support the built environment. These are not all concentrated in energy-oriented departments and represent an opportunity for collaboration across local government agencies.	• Federal funds may be available from Community Development Block Grants (HUD), BRIC Grants (FEMA), the Weatherization Assistance Program (DOE), and the Healthy Homes and Weatherization Cooperation Program (HUD and DOE).
Grants, Rebates, and Incentives – State energy agencies, local governments, and utilities have offered rebates and grants to support the installation of energy-efficient products. Utility incentives are often governed by strict cost-effectiveness rules that do not often take all non-energy benefits into account. Without reforms, these programs will need to be paired with other funding sources.	• Some states have complemented utility programs by offering pre-weatherization assistance for homes that require health and safety upgrades before energy work is done. • Efficiency programs have rebates and incentives targeted toward income-qualified customers. Outside of these, some utilities have developed energy-efficiency programs to directly benefit renters and to improve program reach.
Financing – There are many financing tools emerging to support the pursuit of sustainability in the built environment. These programs can be supported by local governments or mission-aligned lenders, such as community development finance institutions, green banks, and utilities.	• In California, enabling legislation has allowed some local governments to pass resolutions to create public banks for the investment of public funds. The money can be used to loan to or invest in local communities. This marks a shift away from banking public dollars in money center and other large, national financial institutions. Enabling legislation can allow others to use this strategy for scaling up investment in underserved communities. • Green banks have begun supporting a variety of loan programs to help increase the affordability of retrofits. • On-bill financing is an emerging practice by which loan payments are tied to energy bills at lower-than-prevailing interest rates. • Development or redevelopment capital for major building projects can take time to secure. Bridge loans have been a solution that mission-driven lenders have offered to support housing providers during the period of capital development to keep projects going. • In many of these financial models, payments are structured such that anticipated savings from energy improvements exceed loan payments, creating savings.

In recent years, several communities have used fees, taxes, franchise fees negotiations and assessments to create sustainable, increased funding streams for sustainability work. For example, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina uses a portion of its stormwater fees to launch a flood retrofit program for residents of the county. In November 2020, Denver, Colorado passed a climate sales tax increase to help fund its climate action plan programs. Denver plans to invest a significant portion of these funds in BIPOC communities. These strategies should be considered as ways to complement the funding sources described above.

Part 3: Next Steps

15. CONCLUSION

The crises we face today, from public health inequities to climate change, are all interconnected. When the crises are interconnected, the solutions must be too. It is important for local staff in government to build authentic relationships with communities, key stakeholders, and staff from other departments (e.g., housing, health and human services, and emergency response). By working with those closest to the problem, local government staff will be able to identify solutions that are equitable and impactful. There is no cookie-cutter solution to effectively integrating equity into building policies. Rather, finding a solution requires an iterative process based on constant exploration, learning, and trying things out. While this framework is a guide to beginning that process, it is only the beginning of a journey.

We hope that this framework will be used in conjunction with resources in the Appendix to support practitioners in implementing equity within their buildings work. In addition to this framework, we encourage:

- ❏ review of the linked documents and resources in the Appendix on page 54 relevant to your current context,
- ❏ exploration of the Zero Cities Project and resources to explore how cities and CBOs have applied the ideas in this framework and how they hope to continue to build on their work, and
- ❏ completion of the USDN's Equity Foundations Training, which further explores connections between equity and sustainability.

USDN developed and hosted an initial workshop series to accompany this framework. The training was designed to help practitioners apply the principles from this document in their own context. We view this document as the beginning of transforming how our organizations discuss, conceptualize, and work in the built environment. We are also exploring pathways to continue, evolve and preserve the training and framework for future users. We hope that you will join us as we continue our work together.

"

"Be a student your entire life. Equity is hard, arguably harder than reducing climate emissions."

- Lylianna Allala, Climate Justice Director, Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment

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16. APPENDIX

Additional Source and Supplemental Materials for Part I:

Equity Fundamentals:
- Equity Foundations Training, Urban Sustainability Directors Network, 2017.
- Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity, Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity, 2016.
- The Energy Justice Workbook, Initiative for Energy Justice, 2017.

Examples of Readiness Assessments
- Racial Justice Assessment Tool, Western States Center, 2015.
- Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment Related to Racial Equity 2014, Coalition of Communities of Color.
- Racial Equity Assessment Tool, The Alliance to End Hunger.

Centering Equity in Buildings:
- Centering Equity in the Sustainable Building Sector, Getting Beyond Green: A Baseline of Equity Approaches in Sustainable Building Standards, and Working Retreat Recap, NAACP, 2019.
- Equitable Building Electrification: A Framework for Powering Resilient Communities, The Greenlining Institute, September 30, 2019.
- Ensuring Equity in Energy Innovation and Transformation, USDN, 2018.
- Inclusive Procurement and Contracting: Building a Field of Policy and Practice. Emerald Cities Collaborative and Policy Link, 2018.

Community Engagement and Relationship Building:
- The Climate Equity & Community Engagement in Building Electrification Tool Kit, Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC) and People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Justice (PODER), 2020.
- Equity Assessment Tool of the Zero Cities Project, Race Forward and USDN, 2018. (See also, COVID-19 Addendum 2020 and Lessons Learned.)
- Comprehensive Building Blocks for a Regenerative and Just 100% Policy, The 100% Network.
- Process Guide for City-Community Collaboration. Facilitating Power for Greenlink Analytics, 2021.
- The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership. Facilitating Power, 2019.
- Community Driven Resilience Planning Framework. National Association of Climate Resilience Planners and Movement Strategy Center, 2017.

Additional Source and Supplemental Materials to Support Part II:
- Issue Brief: Protecting Renters from Displacement and Unhealthy and Climate-Vulnerable Housing, SPARCC, 2019.
- How High are Household Energy Burdens?, ACEEE, 2020
- Greening in Place: Protecting Communities from Displacement, Audubon Center at Debs Park, Public Counsel, SEACA-LA, and Team Friday, 2020.
- The Building Electrification Equity Project report, Emerald Cities Collaborative, 2020.

- [Achieving Health and Social Equity through Housing,](#) The Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, No Date.
- [Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs: A Guidebook,](#) The Greenlining Institute, 2019.
- [Racial Equity Readiness Assessment for Workforce Development,](#) Race Forward, 2019.
- [Zero Cities Case Studies and Lessons Learned on Equity and Buildings,](#) Urban Sustainability Directors Network, 2020.
- [Development Without Displacement.](#) Causa Justa Just Cause, 2015.
- [Discussion Paper: Impact of the Built Environment on Mental Wellness.](#) Urban Habitat, 2018.
- [Rise of the Renter Nation.](#) Right to the City Alliance Homes for All Campaign, 2014.

Additional Source and Supplemental Materials to Support Part III:

Funding and Financing Strategies:
- [Funding and Financing Climate Action Plans,](#) Urban Sustainability Directors Network, 2019.
- [A Guidebook on Equitable Clean Energy Program Design,](#) Stage 2-Program Structure, Urban Sustainability Directors Network, 2018.

If you have any follow-up questions, comments or interest in supporting our future work on equity and buildings, please reach out to:

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