

Equity Focus Group Summary

October 24, 2024

General Themes

Equity in Housing and Development

- **Historical Displacement & Ownership:** Participants raised concerns about the lack of ownership opportunities for Black residents who have been displaced or priced out. Suggestions included co-ops, down payment assistance, and dedicated units for BIPOC communities.
- **Business Equity:** There's a perceived lack of support for Black-owned businesses and a desire for social equity programs. Participants noted that outreach efforts have not reached key community groups.
- **Accessibility:** Ensuring housing is accessible for both aging populations and people with disabilities, especially as these demographics grow.

Neighborhoods & Housing

Increase Housing Supply & Diversity

- **Inclusive Design:** Strong support for universal design to promote independent living across all ages and abilities.
- **Zoning Flexibility:** Discussion around allowing multi-unit housing (e.g., ADUs, duplexes) in traditionally single-family zones. Concerns were raised about how this might affect resale value and neighborhood dynamics.
- **Program Continuity:** Questions about the future of grant programs that support aging homeowners, as current funding has run out.

Support Existing Residents & Affordable Housing

- **Community Land Trusts:** Seen as a promising model, but one require significant city investment and long-term maintenance planning.
- **Land Use & Prioritization:** Concerns that city-owned land is being allocated to non-affordable housing projects. Suggestions included earmarking land for affordability and being more intentional in development decisions.
- **Language Sensitivity:** Recommendations to use terms like "support" or "preserve" instead of "protect" to avoid unintended connotations.

- **Homeownership Stability:** Emphasis on helping current homeowners stay in place, rather than cycling residents through temporary affordability.

Walkability & Connectivity

- **Transit Access:** Need to maintain and improve bus line accessibility as part of housing planning.
- **Neighborhood Design:** Consider how neighborhood structure and zoning affect long-term affordability and community cohesion.

Economy & Opportunity

- **Workforce Training:** Suggestions to partner with local institutions (e.g., community colleges) to create pipelines into skilled trades and local employment.
- **Business Incubation:** City-owned commercial spaces that could be leased affordably to local entrepreneurs, with pathways to ownership.
- **Selection Process:** Interest in creating transparent application processes for selecting businesses to support.

Infrastructure & Services

- **Natural Space:** Support for maintaining and improving access to green spaces as part of community well-being.
- **Resilience:** Emphasis on preparing for climate change and disasters while promoting public health.

Open Questions & Reflections

- How can the city better support BIPOC ownership and entrepreneurship?
- What mechanisms can ensure long-term affordability and equity in land use?
- How can language in the plan reflect inclusivity and avoid unintended bias?