Interwoven Equity

Ensure Equal Investment Across All Neighborhoods

Incorporate and Grow Neighborhood Planning

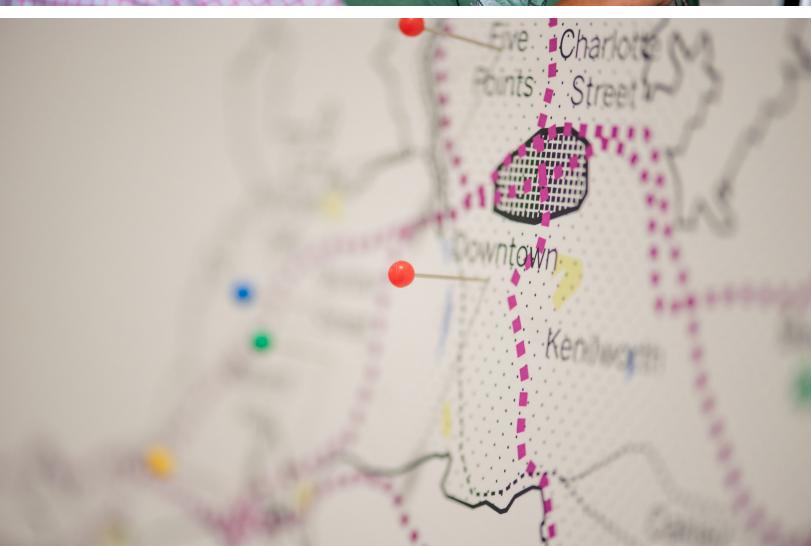**Support Welcoming Strategies for Livability and Connectivity**

Principle #15
Ensure Equal Investment in All Neighborhoods

An equitable community incorporates people of color, ethnic and racial diversity, and a broad range of socio-economic levels at all stages of the planning process. As Asheville works to reverse the historic disenfranchisement of some of the City's most noteworthy neighborhoods, the city is working to pioneer a spirit of inclusivity and shared responsibility for uplifting and maintaining all the City's diverse neighborhoods. The City recognizes that while some values are shared throughout the city, many neighborhoods have unique identities that they would like to preserve or enhance. In many cases the City can serve the important role of helping residents find platforms for shared aspirations that have been lost for generations. Regardless of a community's specific aspirations, it is core to the ethos of "Living Asheville: A Comprehensive Plan for Our Future" that all communities should enfranchised and empowered.

Expand Community Involvement in Decision-Making

OVERVIEW

Successful communities do not result from top-down edicts. Rather, they are the product of planning that reflects the voices of their residents and which encapsulates the unique and diverse spirit that defines the place. With new technologies and an enduring commitment, the City is committed to expanding the accessibility of engaging in the planning process, and to ensuring that the voices that are driving key decisions reflect the diversity that defines this city.

OUTCOMES

- Increased participation in public engagement associated with planning initiatives
- Increase in the level of diversity of those engaged in public decision-making

POLICY METRICS

- Increase in the percentage of policy decision-making with input from public engagement
- Increase in the equitable distribution of engagement per community for Citywide planning exercises

KEY TERMS

- **Asheville's Communication and Public Engagement Division (CAPE)** is responsible for the coordination of Asheville's public engagement and strategic communications efforts. Communication responsibilities include media relations, community and intergovernmental relations and internal communications. CAPE's goal is to help the City to communicate its priorities and achieve its policy objectives in the best way possible. They design public education and community outreach initiatives to inform citizens and the media about City services, programs and policy. CAPE is also responsible for leading, coordinating or supporting efforts between City of Asheville departments, outside partner agencies and consultants.

DIRECT STRATEGIES

- Leverage the role of CAPE to target Asheville as the most engaged city in America.
- Prioritize community engagement activities that engage citizens "where they are", as well as targeted local outreach through localized small group sessions.
- Engage affected communities when conducting planning-related studies and increase participation of vulnerable and disenfranchised groups.
- Increase the reach of public outreach efforts through passive platforms such as administering surveys through texting, apps, online surveys, and reducing the time needed to participate in planning.
- Explore broader and more diverse engagement platforms.
- Benchmark community engagement methods from other communities.
- Promote education about planning topics as an integral component of feedback solicitation.
- Encourage quicker feedback to community concerns.
- Create a centralized database of community feedback to all planning exercises, and establish a process for regular review and action on this feedback.
- Create more community meeting spaces by encouraging developers to supply privately owned public space as part of large projects.
- Maximize public accessibility and utility of existing meeting centers.
- Support the roles of Neighborhood Coordinator, Neighborhood Advisory Committee, and Equity Managers.

Prioritize Investments Equitably and Fairly Across Neighborhoods

OVERVIEW

Given limited public resources, there is a need for the city to make investments equitably across all neighborhood and directs to ensure that all citizens have access to their equitable share of public investments and services. At the same time, given housing affordability challenges and the need to increase housing density and economic opportunity Citywide, each neighborhood and district must provide its equitable share of affordable housing and commercial development opportunities, where contextually appropriate.

OUTCOMES

- Increase in per capita wealth / spending by neighborhood based on age and condition of existing infrastructure
- Equitable attention on addressing "needed investments" per neighborhood over time
- Equitable distribution of public art across neighborhoods

KEY TERMS

- **Community Needs Assessment:** A systematic process for determining and addressing needs, or "gaps" between current conditions and desired conditions or "wants". The discrepancy between the current condition and wanted condition must be measured to appropriately identify the need.

- Develop baseline requirements for neighborhood planning based on Citywide network planning
- Balance social infrastructure investments across neighborhoods city-wide
- Conduct a publicly-accessible spending audit every three to five years to measure equity of capital investments across the City
- Continue to promote the annual Community Needs Assessment program and other surveys on pressing community needs before drafting Citywide capital budgets
- Conduct an evaluation of neighborhood "needs" and "aspirations" and ensure "needs" are addressed in advance of aspirational goals
- Ensure that historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities are better incorporated in broader Citywide investment strategies. Empower the City's new Equity Manager with a voice in ensuring this percolates across departments.

SYNERGISTIC STRATEGIES

- Encourage policies that ensure each neighborhood is providing an "equitable share" of affordable housing, homeless programs and services, and other public services, where contextually appropriate.
- Work to invest City proceeds from tourism activities more equitably across all neighborhoods

Principle #16
Expand Neighborhood Planning

Asheville is a City of engaged residents and unique neighborhoods. While Plan on a Page has offered many neighborhoods the opportunity to voice priorities for their community, moving forward more should be done. Giving voice to the character and uniqueness of the City's neighborhoods is a vital component of maintaining and growing the vitality of the City.

Create a More Formal Neighborhood Planning Process

OVERVIEW

Neighborhood planning is a rich part of Asheville's planning tradition. Formalizing a process to realize and implement the ideas voiced through neighborhood and small area planning will help residents know their voices are being heard.

OUTCOMES

- Expansion of the geographic distribution of completed neighborhood area-wide plans
- Increase in the qualitative assessment of perceived utility of neighborhood planning

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POLICY METRICS

- Number of neighborhoods with a neighborhood plan completed within the last 20 years - target 100% by 2030

- Develop a framework to work with neighborhoods to develop neighborhood plans.
- Create a toolbox and template for neighborhood area plans. Rely on neighborhood groups to help prepare plans.
- Develop a clear platform and path to implementation for neighborhood plans.
- Establish criteria to prioritize areas in the City most in need of a neighborhood area plan.
- Develop an implementation policy for community recommendations provided through Plan on a Page.
- As part of the neighborhood planning process, give neighborhoods the option to develop a manual of non-legally bidding neighborhood-specific design recommendations that focus on 6-8 character elements that should be emphasized in new construction.
- Expand the role of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission.
- Work to undo the barriers and issue associated with public housing across the city.
- Develop Process for evaluating success in neighborhood plan implementation

- Explore city overlays and optional neighborhood incentives (e.g. affordable housing minimums) to be discussed as part of community planning.
- Link subsidies to neighborhoods that pursue planning for greater density, housing affordability, transit-ready densities and greater mix of uses.
- Encourage neighborhods to work together to create area plans that will include several neighborhoods.

Principle #17

Support Welcoming Strategies for Livability and Connectivity

The Asheville dream is one of freedom and opportunity. With colorful residents, an aging population, and diverse communities, Asheville should strive to promote design and policies that foster opportunity for everyone.

Increase Access to Opportunities for Everyone

OVERVIEW

Regardless of age, physical ability, demographics, or anything else, residents should be able to find a welcoming home across all neighborhoods in Asheville. By embracing policies that connect everyone to resources, Asheville can grow its reputation as a welcoming place for all.

OUTCOMES

- Increase in community diversity including mix of races, ethnicities, incomes, ages, and abilities
- Increase in funding for social infrastructure per capita (parks, shopping, and community facilities)
- Increased participation of people of color, women, and individuals from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds and races reflective of the community as a whole on boards and commissions

POLICY METRICS

- Equitable distribution of city amenities by density and character area
- Extent of programs designed to advance civic opportunities for members of disadvantaged communities and minority populations

KEY TERMS

- **Universal design** refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disabilities, and people with disabilities.

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Refers to legislation passed in 1990 that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Under this Act, discrimination against a disabled person is illegal in employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and government activities.

- Create an Asheville Aging Plan that is coordinated with the Buncombe County Aging Plan.
- Conduct a Citywide audit relative to World Health Organization and American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) recommendations for realizing an Age Friendly Community.
- Dedicate a formal process to ensuring broad-based accessibility through ADA and Universal Design is prioritized across decision-making.
- Promote racial and economic minorities, people with disabilities, and women on City boards and commissions.
- Promoted increased equity among City staff and in City contracts by establishing more stringent minority- and women owned business participation incentives, as permitted by law.
- Expand policies that support improved quality and consistency of public K-12 education locally.
- Grow formal linkages between K-12 education, local colleges and universities, and major employers in the region to create pathways to employment for local graduates.
- Ensure adequate paths to prosperity exist for formerly incarcerated residents.

SYNERGISTIC STRATEGIES

- Ensure neighborhood facilities such as transit facilities, parks and city services are ADA compliant and universally accessible
- Develop a social infrastructure checklist for all neighborhoods based on target service catchments - amenities such as parks, gathering areas, shopping nodes and open spaces.
- Promote activities to recruit and nurture diverse small businesses
- Encourage accessibility between neighborhoods with complete streets, sidewalks, trails and greenways.
- Ensure that economically disadvantaged and minority neighborhoods have access to jobs, education, and public facilities such as parks. Devote particular attention to ensuring access to resources and opportunities within the City's historic communities of color.