Leveraging Social Capital to Increase Social Equity, Sustainability and Resiliency
What is Equitable Development?

The practice of enabling communities to prioritize and pursue development that benefits current residents and contributes to neighborhood resilience and improved quality-of-life.
Equitable Development is fundamental to achieving long-term sustainability.

“Sustainable development is necessarily “people-centered and planet sensitive” guided by values of equal rights and social justice ..”

- UN Research Institute of Social Development (2014)
Equity challenges are intersectional!
Connecting Social Capital to Equity

- Community residents are experts on their own community.
- Listen to underserved communities’ goals and concerns.
- Communities need to decide for themselves what is equitable and what is important to them.
- Equity is contextual!
Today’s Objectives

1. Assess gaps and opportunities in your community engagement approach

2. Select from a range of tools to assess equity, sustainability and resiliency

3. Learn how to identify cross-program connections to foster a more integrated planning process
Community engagement needs to move from …

One-way Engagement  Community Empowerment  Collaborative Community Partnerships
Community Engagement Principles

Community knowledge is valid \textit{and} essential to success.

- Extend an open and intentional invitation
- Start a new conversation
- Put relationship first
- Build trust
- Listen to community needs

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Assessment Principles

- Prioritize resident goals and concerns
- Identify related local government priorities
- Consult nationally-recognized frameworks
- Keep resident goals and concerns at the forefront.
- Look for common interests.
- Develop shared understanding.
- Make connections to non-traditional funding sources.
Community Needs Assessment

- Holistic understanding of concerns and needs
- Ask many, many questions!
- Equity is contextual

Questions may address:
- Neighborhood and community context
- Quality-of-life topics
- Hot button issues
- Key stakeholders to engage
- Relationship between community and decision-makers
- Relationship between community and potential implementation partners
Nationally-recognized frameworks

National Equity Atlas
http://nationalequityatlas.org/

Partnership for Sustainable Communities
https://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/

ICLEI – STAR Community Index
http://www.starcommunities.org/
Visualizing Your Assessments
Visualizing Your Assessments

Distribution of Environmental Factors
- none of the factors are present
- one of the factors is present
- two of the factors are present
- three of the factors are present
- Superfund site

Legend:
- 0
- 0.5
- 1
- 2 miles
Case Study: Northern Birmingham

“Fred [Shuttlesworth] didn’t invite us to come to Birmingham. He told us we had to come.”
Andrew Young, Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Photographs courtesy of the Fred Shuttlesworth Foundation.
Community-Driven Vision and Goals

“It is our vision that Northern Birmingham neighborhoods will be vibrant, healthy communities celebrated for their role as cultural and economic touchstones for the City of Birmingham’s Civil Rights movement and industrial heritage.

Together the neighborhoods prosper by supporting jobs, affordable housing and retail options and foster community well-being with access to comprehensive wellness amenities, health services, and a safe and clean environment.”
Assessing Existing Conditions

Residential neighborhoods include Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park and North Birmingham.

- 9% of vacant residential properties are publicly owned.
- 91% of vacant residential properties are privately owned.
Northern Birmingham will have vibrant commercial areas that provide for the daily needs of the community! We are open for business!

**Food, Fuel and Retail**

The existing commercial district in North Birmingham has the space and infrastructure to offer an expanded range of goods and services that meet the daily needs of the community.

Gas stations could be better distributed throughout the neighborhoods and could provide clean fuel alternatives for private and commercial vehicles to reduce air pollution.

Expanding healthy, affordable food options could be accomplished by working with existing store owners to expand their selection and by attracting a new full-service grocery.
Moving to Action!

Northern Birmingham Revitalization Action Plan

Developed by the Northern Birmingham Community Coalition

**Commercial Action Plan**

**Goals**
- Increase access to neighborhood-based economic and social opportunities for Northern Birmingham residents through:
  - CDBG: increase access to home ownership opportunities and affordable housing
  - GPRD: increase access to green space and outdoor recreation
  - HFA: increase access to affordable homeownership

**Strategies**

1. Support initiatives to offer neighborhood services to the existing economic base.
2. Leverage and support job training opportunities within the community.
3. Support business development to generate the community's internal employment in the city.
4. Increase business development and engage residents to collaborate for the community's economic recovery.
5. Encourage capable service providers to improve their existing services.
6. Encourage other business entrepreneurs with viable business proposals.
7. Encourage local businesses and residents to open new firms.
8. Encourage local businesses to use their own sources for financial purposes.
9. Support economic development initiatives to boost local production, processing and distribution.

**Early Commercial Wins**

“[Investing in Northern Birmingham] helps strengthen the neighborhoods. Some of the businesses would probably hire neighborhood residents and help the economy. More privatized shops will not receive revenue.”

— Andrew White, President, Birmingham Community Bank

“[Investing in Northern Birmingham] helps strengthen the neighborhoods. Some of the businesses would probably hire neighborhood residents and help the economy. More privatized shops will not receive revenue.”

— Mr. Johnson, President, Birmingham Community Bank

“Infinite Earth Academy

Northern Birmingham Revitalization Action Plan

INFINITE

EARTH

ACADEMY
Early Wins!

• The Coalition partnered with Habitat for Humanity to repair five Northern Birmingham homes (2014).

• The Coalition partnered with the Greater Birmingham Regional Planning Commission and the City of Birmingham to produce the Northern Birmingham Community Framework Plan (2014-2015).

• The Coalition partnered with the Greater Birmingham Regional Planning Commission and the Georgia Institute of Technology to produce the North Birmingham Health Impact Assessment (2015).

• The Coalition partnered with GASP to provide comments on two Title V Permits to Jefferson County Department of Health for the ABC Coke and Walter Coke plants.

• The Coalition is partnering with UAB to document health disparities in Northern Birmingham (2016).

• The Coalition is partnering with Lawson State and EPA to operate an environmental job training program for residents living in areas impacted by contaminated lands (2016).