

# Transformative Equitable Development for Healthy Communities

## EVALUATION TOOLS TO HELP US GET IT RIGHT

Many policymakers, community members, and private sector leaders are working to anchor equity in the Twin Cities region to ensure that any development that happens benefits communities of color and low wealth communities. There is a groundswell of support for putting equity at the center of our policies, strategic investments, and practices. Parts of the private sector are also beginning to recognize that they will need to prioritize equity to ensure a ready and available workforce in the future. Community members are coming into once-restricted spaces to elevate their vision for their neighborhoods and promote solutions they know will lead to tangible economic benefits. But how does it all add up? And how do we know if we are getting it right?

Any process has to have built-in moments of reflection and evaluation to ensure goals and objectives are met. Evaluation helps ensure that projects stay on track, can provide valuable feedback on why a process did or did not work well, and can also be a powerful tool for holding decision-makers accountable to what they said they would do.

At the seventh session in the Alliance's Transformative Equitable Development series, presenters highlighted some evaluation tools they use to ensure that their work is making tangible contributions to achieving racial, economic, and environmental justice.

### EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT SCORECARD

A local workgroup convened by the Alliance, the Community Engagement Steering Committee, formulated a tool that can guide communities in shaping developments to improve their equity outcomes. Called the Equitable Development Scorecard, this resource can be used to ensure that planners, developers, and community members plan for community benefits, environmental justice, and affordability on the front end of development projects.

**The Alliance**  
ADVANCING REGIONAL EQUITY



The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition comprised of 34 members working to advance racial, economic, and environmental equity in the way growth and development occurs in the Twin Cities region. We work at the intersection of these issues, understanding that a holistic approach to equity will lead to a more vibrant region. Our integrated approach has secured major victories for transformative equitable development.

## *Transformative Equitable Development for Healthy Communities*

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The Equitable Development Scorecard helps stakeholders identify and plan for the essential ingredients for environmental, economic, social, and cultural well-being, including living wage jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, viable housing choices, public transportation, good schools, strong social networks, safe and walkable streets, services, parks, and access to healthy food.

“A tool like the scorecard gives community members the opportunity to decide how they want development in their neighborhoods to take shape, reversing the trend of having government leaders and developers make those decisions for them,” said Joan Vanhala, a coalition organizer for the Alliance. “It’s an evaluation tool that can initiate a community planning process. The community can then lead a dialogue with a city and developer with specific recommendations.”

Before its launch, the Equitable Development Scorecard was thoroughly vetted by community members, regional leaders, and government bodies. Neighborhood organizations, district councils, nonprofit and for-profit developers, and the Met Council responded with positive feedback as well as ideas for strengthening the tool.

The Metropolitan Council has adopted the scorecard into the workplan for its Office of Transit-Oriented Development and included it in its toolkit for local planning. Other local agencies like Metro Transit and the city of Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development department are evaluating the use of the scorecard in their future development decisions. In all, hundreds of organizations and government entities from around the country have accessed the tool.

[Download the Equitable Development Scorecard](#)

### **METRICS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

Wilder Research and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis launched a tool to measure the impact of community development. Called Metrics for Healthy Communities, the tool provides practitioners with an array of resources to help them plan for better community health and wellbeing outcomes. The web-based tool uses logic models to help practitioners identify how their actions will lead to short-, intermediate-, and long-term community health outcomes.

The partners gathered feedback from more than 600 health and community development practitioners in designing the tool. Public health practitioners told the researchers that they needed consistent metrics to measure community health improvements. The resulting Metrics for Healthy Communities tool enables practitioners to quickly identify outcomes and ways to measure those outcomes related to six types of initiatives where community development and health intersect: affordable housing, healthy produce access, physical activity, community health centers, childcare centers, and supportive housing. Each logic model contains links to a variety of resources that practitioners can access for more information.

[Visit Metrics for Healthy Communities](#)